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SITTING DAYS—2016

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

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FORTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—FIRST PERIOD

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

House of Representatives Office Holders
Speaker—Hon. Anthony David Hawthorn Smith MP
Deputy Speaker—Mr Mark Maclean Coulton MP
Second Deputy Speaker—Mr Robert George Mitchell MP
Members of the Speaker's Panel—Mr Steven Georganas MP, Mr Ian Reginald Goodenough MP, Mr Andrew William Hastie MP, Mr Kevin John Hogan MP and Ms Maria Vamvakinou MP
Leader of the House—Hon. Christopher Pyne MP
Deputy Leader of the House—Hon. Darren Chester MP
Manager of Opposition Business—Hon. Anthony Stephen Burke MP
Deputy Manager of Opposition Business—Hon. Mark Dreyfus QC MP

Party Leaders and Whips
Liberal Party of Australia
Leader—Hon. Malcolm Bligh Turnbull MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Julie Isabel Bishop MP
Chief Government Whip—Ms Nola Bethwyn Marino MP
Government Whips—Mr Albertus Johannes van Manen MP and Mr Rowan Eric Ramsey MP

The Nationals
Leader—Hon. Barnaby Thomas Gerard Joyce MP
Deputy Leader—Senator the Hon Fiona Nash
Chief Whip—Mr George Robert Christenson MP
Deputy Whip—Ms Michelle Leanne Landry MP

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

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abbott, Hon. Anthony John</td>
<td>Warringah, NSW</td>
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<td>Albanese, Hon. Anthony Norman</td>
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<td>Cowan, WA</td>
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<td>Andrews, Hon. Karen Lesley</td>
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<td>Menzies, VIC</td>
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<td>Melbourne, VIC</td>
<td>AG</td>
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<td>Chisholm, VIC</td>
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<td>McMahon, NSW</td>
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<td>Brod, Mr Andrew John</td>
<td>Mallee, VIC</td>
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<td>Broadbent, Mr Russell Eyles</td>
<td>McMillan, VIC</td>
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<td>Canberra, ACT</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Wright, QLD</td>
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<td>Port Adelaide, SA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Butler, Ms Terri Megan</td>
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<td>Wakefield, SA</td>
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<td>Franklin, TAS</td>
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<td>Parkes, NSW</td>
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<td>Dick, Mr Dugald Milton</td>
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<td>Isaacs, VIC</td>
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<td>Murray, VIC</td>
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<td>Dutton, Hon. Peter Craig</td>
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<td>Brisbane, QLD</td>
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<td>Hunter, NSW</td>
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<td>Members</td>
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<td>Party</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Georganas, Mr Steven</td>
<td>Hindmarsh, SA</td>
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<td>Gillespie, Hon. Dr David Arthur</td>
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<td>Moore, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Solomon, NT</td>
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<td>Perth, WA</td>
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<td>Cowper, NSW</td>
<td>NATS</td>
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<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hawke, Hon. Alexander George</td>
<td>Mitchell, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Fowler, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Henderson, Ms Sarah Moya</td>
<td>Corangamite, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Hill, Mr Julian Christopher</td>
<td>Bruce, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hogan, Mr Kevin John</td>
<td>Page, NSW</td>
<td>NATS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howarth, Mr Luke Ronald</td>
<td>Petrie, QLD</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunt, Hon. Gregory Andrew</td>
<td>Flinders, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Husar, Ms Emma</td>
<td>Lindsay, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Husic, Hon. Edham Nurredin</td>
<td>Chifley, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Irons, Mr Stephen James</td>
<td>Swan, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Whillam, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joyce, Hon. Barnaby Thomas Gerard</td>
<td>New England, NSW</td>
<td>NATS</td>
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<td>Katter, Hon. Robert Carl</td>
<td>Kennedy, QLD</td>
<td>AUS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keay, Ms Justine Terri</td>
<td>Braddon, TAS</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Keenan, Hon. Michael Fayat</td>
<td>Stirling, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kelly, Mr Craig</td>
<td>Hughes, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Kelly, Mr Michael Joseph</td>
<td>Eden-Monaro</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Khalil, Mr Peter</td>
<td>Wills, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>King, Hon. Catherine Fiona</td>
<td>Ballarat, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Brand, WA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Longman, QLD</td>
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<td>Laming, Mr Andrew Charles</td>
<td>Bowman, QLD</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Landry, Ms Michelle Leanne</td>
<td>Capricornia, QLD</td>
<td>NATS</td>
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<td>Laundy, Hon. Craig Arthur Samuel</td>
<td>Reid, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Leigh, Hon. Dr Andrew Keith</td>
<td>Fraser, ACT</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Leeser, Mr Julian Martin</td>
<td>Berowra, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Ley, Hon. Sussan Penelope</td>
<td>Farrer, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>LNP</td>
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<td>Macklin, Hon. Jennifer Louise</td>
<td>Jagajaga, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Forrest, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Corio, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Dobell, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Riverina, NSW</td>
<td>NATS</td>
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<td>McGowan, Ms Catherine, AO</td>
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<td>LNP</td>
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<td>Mitchell, Mr Brian Keith</td>
<td>Lyons, TAS</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Members of the House of Representatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell, Mr Robert George</td>
<td>McEwen, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morrison, Hon. Scott John</td>
<td>Cook, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morton, Mr Ben</td>
<td>Tangney, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<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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<tr>
<td>O'Brien, Mr Ted Lynam</td>
<td>Fairfax, QLD</td>
<td>LNP</td>
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<td>Gorton, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>O'Dowd, Mr Kenneth Desmond</td>
<td>Flynn, QLD</td>
<td>NATS</td>
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<td>Higgins, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>O'Neil, Ms Clare Ellen</td>
<td>Hotham, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O'Toole, Ms Catherine Elizabeth</td>
<td>Herbert, QLD</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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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>
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<td>Moreton, QLD</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pitt, Hon. Keith John</td>
<td>Hinkler, QLD</td>
<td>NATS</td>
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<td>Plibersek, Hon. Tanya Joan</td>
<td>Sydney, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Pearce, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Ryan, QLD</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Price, Ms Melissa Lee</td>
<td>Durack, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Sturt, SA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Grey, SA</td>
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<td>Kingston, SA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Sharkie, Ms Rebekha Carina Che</td>
<td>Mayo, SA</td>
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<td>Maribyrnong, VIC</td>
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<td>Gilmore, NSW</td>
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<td>Paterson, NSW</td>
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<td>Hume, NSW</td>
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<td>Wannon, VIC</td>
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<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Kingsford Smith, NSW</td>
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<td>Fisher, QLD</td>
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<td>Gellibrand, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Robertson, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Denison, TAS</td>
<td>IND</td>
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<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Members of the House of Representatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members</th>
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<th>Party</th>
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<td>Wilson, Mr Richard James</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zimmerman, Mr Trent Moir</td>
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PARTY ABBREVIATIONS
AG—Australian Greens; ALP—Australian Labor Party; AUS—Katter’s Australia Party; IND—Independent; LNP—Liberal National Party; LP—Liberal Party of Australia; NATS—The Nationals; NXT—Nick Xenophon Team

Heads of Parliamentary Departments

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

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

Each box represents a portfolio. **Cabinet Ministers are shown in bold type.** As a general rule, there is one department in each portfolio. However, there is a Department of Human Services in the Social Services portfolio and a Department of Veterans’ Affairs in the Defence portfolio. The title of a department does not necessarily reflect the title of a minister in all cases. Assistant Ministers in italics are designated as Parliamentary Secretaries under the *Ministers of State Act 1952.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Shadow Minister</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leader of the Opposition</strong></td>
<td>Hon Bill Shorten MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Minister for Indigenous Affairs and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders</strong></td>
<td>Hon Bill Shorten MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Senator Patrick Dodson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Cabinet Secretary</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Shadow Assistant Minister for Preventing Family Violence</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Assistant Minister to the Leader (Tasmania)</strong></td>
<td>Senator Helen Polley</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Hon Tanya Plibersek MP</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Minister for Women</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Assistant Minister for Schools</strong></td>
<td>Andrew Giles MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Assistant Minister for Universities</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Senator the Hon Penny Wong</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Shadow Minister for Consumer Affairs</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Justice</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Employment Services and Workforce Participation</td>
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<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Workplace Relations</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Defence</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Kim Carr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education and Development (1)</td>
<td>Hon Kate Ellis MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for TAFE and Vocational Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Senator Helen Polley</td>
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<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

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

MONDAY, 10 OCTOBER 2016

Chamber
STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER—
Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry .......................................................... 1195
COMMITTEES—
Petitions Committee—
Report ........................................................................................................... 1195
PETITIONS—
Belmont Medicare and Centrelink Office ..................................................... 1195
Superannuation Complaints Tribunal ............................................................ 1196
Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture ............................... 1196
Strategies to Stop Violence Against Women ............................................... 1197
Constitutional Recognition of Indigenous People .................................... 1197
Refugee and Asylum Seeker Processing and Resettlement ..................... 1197
Live Animal Export .................................................................................. 1198
Persecution of Falun Gong ...................................................................... 1198
Manus Island and Nauru Detention Centres ............................................. 1198
Australian Ownership of Land .................................................................. 1199
Carbon Fee and Dividend Policy ................................................................. 1199
Christians in the Middle East ................................................................... 1200
Mandatory Immigration Detention for Children ..................................... 1200
Permanent Residency Application .............................................................. 1200
Citizenship of the Member for Warringah .............................................. 1201
Persecution of Falun Gong ...................................................................... 1201
Persecution of Falun Gong ...................................................................... 1201
Health Care Card for Chronic Illnesses .................................................. 1201
PETITIONS—
Responses ............................................................................................... 1202
Permanent Residency .............................................................................. 1202
Children in Detention .............................................................................. 1203
Children in Detention .............................................................................. 1204
Asylum Seekers ....................................................................................... 1205
Professional Year Program ........................................................................ 1206
Permanent Residency .............................................................................. 1207
Permanent Residency .............................................................................. 1208
Refugee Settlement .................................................................................. 1208
Asylum Seeker Policy ............................................................................... 1209
Asylum Seeker Policy ............................................................................... 1210
Medical Treatment Visas ........................................................................ 1210
Permanent Residency .............................................................................. 1211
Hinkler Electorate: Mobile Coverage ....................................................... 1211
Children in Detention .............................................................................. 1214
Animal Research ..................................................................................... 1215
Children in Detention .............................................................................. 1216
## CONTENTS—continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visitor Visas</td>
<td>1217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Immigration and Border Protection</td>
<td>1218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manus Regional Processing Centre</td>
<td>1218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asylum Seeker Policy</td>
<td>1218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meningococcal B Vaccine</td>
<td>1220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asylum Seekers</td>
<td>1221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children in Detention</td>
<td>1222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PETITIONS—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statements</td>
<td>1224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUSINESS—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rearrangement</td>
<td>1224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BILLS—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Acquisitions and Takeovers Amendment (Strategic Assets) Bill 2016—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Reading</td>
<td>1224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Reading</td>
<td>1224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking Commission of Inquiry Bill 2016—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Reading</td>
<td>1226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Reading</td>
<td>1226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUSINESS—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rearrangement</td>
<td>1229</td>
</tr>
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<td>1229</td>
</tr>
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<td>1229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOTIONS—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Violence And Technology Facilitated Abuse</td>
<td>1229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam Veterans Day</td>
<td>1237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BILLS—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Foreign Political Donations) Bill 2016—</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>First Reading</td>
<td>1245</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second Reading</td>
<td>1245</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aged Care (Living Longer Living Better) Amendment (Review) Bill 2016—</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Reading</td>
<td>1247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Reading</td>
<td>1248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget Savings (Omnibus) Bill 2016—</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Returned from Senate</td>
<td>1250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMITTEES—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>1251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BILLS—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Industries Levies and Charges Collection Amendment Bill 2016—</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Registration of Deaths Abroad Amendment Bill 2016</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Budget Savings (Omnibus) Bill 2016—</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Corporations Amendment (Auditor Registration) Bill 2016—</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Customs Tariff Amendment (Tobacco) Bill 2016—</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Excise Tariff Amendment (Tobacco) Bill 2016—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statute Update Bill 2016—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assent</td>
<td>1251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMITTEES—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONTENTS—continued

MOTIONS—
  Equal Rights ........................................................................................................ 1251

BILLS—
  Treasury Laws Amendment (Income Tax Relief) Bill 2016—
    Report from Federation Chamber ................................................................. 1260
    Third Reading .................................................................................................. 1260
  Migration Amendment (Character Cancellation Consequential Provisions) Bill 2016—
    Second Reading .............................................................................................. 1260
    Third Reading .................................................................................................. 1263

MOTIONS—
  Health Care ......................................................................................................... 1263

BUSINESS—
  Rearrangement .................................................................................................. 1268
  Rearrangement .................................................................................................. 1268

GOVERNOR-GENERAL’S SPEECH—
  Address-in-Reply ............................................................................................... 1268

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS—
  Diggeress Cup ..................................................................................................... 1275
  Canning Electorate: Waroona Agricultural Show and Karragullen Expo .......... 1275
  Rio de Janeiro Paralympic Games ..................................................................... 1276
  Corangamite Electorate: Ford ........................................................................... 1276
  Workplace Relations .......................................................................................... 1276
  Newcastle Electorate: Sporting Achievements ................................................ 1277
  Page Electorate: Palmers Island Public School ................................................ 1277
  Indi Electorate: Schools .................................................................................... 1278
  Queensland Government ..................................................................................... 1278
  Australian Football League: Western Bulldogs .............................................. 1278
  Forrestfield Airport Rail Link ........................................................................... 1279

CONDOLENCE—
  Peres, Mr Shimon ............................................................................................... 1279

MINISTERIAL ARRANGEMENTS ........................................................................... 1282

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE—
  Medicare .............................................................................................................. 1282
  Workplace Relations .......................................................................................... 1283
  Medicare .............................................................................................................. 1284
  Economy ............................................................................................................... 1285
  Automotive Industry: Victoria ......................................................................... 1286
  Automotive Industry .......................................................................................... 1286

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS .............................................................................. 1288

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE—
  Renewable Energy ............................................................................................. 1288
  Renewable Energy ............................................................................................. 1289
  Defence Industry ................................................................................................. 1290
CONTENTS—continued

Renewable Energy ................................................................. 1291
Exports ............................................................................. 1292
Banking and Financial Services ............................................ 1293
National Security ................................................................. 1294
Attorney-General ................................................................. 1295
Infrastructure .................................................................. 1295
Attorney-General ................................................................. 1296
Afghanistan ...................................................................... 1296
Attorney-General ................................................................. 1297
Mental Health .................................................................... 1297

CONDOLENCES—
Peres, Mr Shimon .................................................................. 1298

DOCUMENTS—
Presentation ...................................................................... 1299

AUDITOR-GENERAL’S REPORTS—
Reports Nos 17 to 19 of 2016-17 ........................................... 1299

DOCUMENTS—
Commonwealth Ombudsman—
Presentation ...................................................................... 1299

BUSINESS—
Days and Hours of Meeting .................................................. 1299

BILLS—
Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2016-2017—
Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2016-2017—
Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Bill (No. 1) 2016-2017—
Reference to Federation Chamber ........................................ 1300

COMMITTEES—
Membership ...................................................................... 1300

GOVERNOR-GENERAL’S SPEECH—
Address-in-Reply ................................................................ 1300

BILLS—
Migration Amendment (Family Violence and Other Measures) Bill 2016—
Second Reading .................................................................. 1307
Third Reading ...................................................................... 1310

GOVERNOR-GENERAL’S SPEECH—
Address-in-Reply ................................................................ 1310

BILLS—
Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2016-2017—
Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2016-2017—
Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Bill (No. 1) 2016-2017—
Second Reading .................................................................. 1316

ADJOURNMENT—
McEwen Electorate: Sunbury Neighbourhood Kitchen ..................... 1359
Broken Hill: Heritage City Week ............................................. 1361
National Police Remembrance Day .......................................... 1362
Banks Electorate: Community Organisations ............................. 1363
CONTENTS—continued

Hindmarsh Electorate: Infrastructure ............................................................... 1364
Wright Electorate: Broadband ........................................................................ 1365
Wright Electorate: Infrastructure ................................................................. 1365
Working Holiday Maker Program ............................................................... 1365
NOTICES ........................................................................................................... 1366

Federation Chamber

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS—
  Greyhound Racing ....................................................................................... 1369
  O’Connor Electorate: Wellness and Respite Centre ..................................... 1370
  Steel Industry ............................................................................................... 1370
  Canta, Mr Dan ............................................................................................. 1371
  Robert Connor Dawes Foundation ............................................................ 1371
  Employment .................................................................................................. 1372
  CSL Brisbane ................................................................................................ 1372
  Mobile Black Spot Program ........................................................................ 1373
  Lowles, Mr Charlie ....................................................................................... 1373
  Republic of Armenia ..................................................................................... 1374
  Workplace Relations .................................................................................... 1375
  Bennelong Electorate: Eureka Prizes ............................................................ 1376

MOTIONS—
  International Day of the Girl Child ............................................................. 1377
  Anti-Poverty Week ....................................................................................... 1384
  National Police Remembrance Day ............................................................ 1394
  Defence Personnel ....................................................................................... 1404

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS—
  Indi Electorate: Lake Hume ......................................................................... 1409
  Mental Health Week ...................................................................................... 1410
  Calwell Electorate: Ford Australia ............................................................... 1410
  Grains Industry .............................................................................................. 1411
  Stay Smart Online Week .............................................................................. 1411
  North Sydney Electorate: Lane Cove Village Fair ....................................... 1412
  Indi Electorate: Wangaratta Show ............................................................... 1412
  La Trobe Electorate: South Belgrave Football Club .................................... 1413
  El-Iman, Sheikh Fehmi Naji ....................................................................... 1413
  Goldstein Electorate: Sailing ........................................................................ 1414
  Myrtleford Farmers Market ......................................................................... 1414
  Emergency Services ...................................................................................... 1415
  Doar, Mr Manni ............................................................................................ 1415
  Moore Electorate: YouthCARE ................................................................... 1416
  Asylum Seekers ............................................................................................ 1416
  Mallee Electorate ......................................................................................... 1416
  Parramatta Electorate: Australian Goalball Championships .................... 1417
  Dawson Electorate: Mental Health Week .................................................... 1417
  Fremantle Electorate: Infrastructure ........................................................... 1418
CONTENTS—continued

World Mental Health Day ................................................................. 1418
Indi Electorate: Ben Dean ................................................................. 1419
Banks Electorate: Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre ...................... 1419
Canberra Electorate: Bisonhome ..................................................... 1420
Wright Electorate: Beaudesert Show ............................................ 1420
Patsikatheodorou, Councillor Helen ............................................. 1420
Murray Electorate: Dairy Farmers’ Big Day Out ............................... 1421
Forde Electorate: Football ............................................................. 1421
Brisbane 2022 New World City Action Plan ................................... 1422

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ BUSINESS—
Victims of Family Violence and Court Proceedings ........................ 1422
Bruce Highway .................................................................................. 1433
Penalty Rates .................................................................................. 1440
Higher Education .......................................................................... 1448
World Mental Health Day ............................................................... 1456

Questions In Writing
Tweed Coast: Koala habitat—(Question No. 11) .............................. 1465
The SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Smith) took the chair at 10:00, made an acknowledgement of country and read prayers.

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry

The SPEAKER (10:01): In May 1986 the parliament established, by legislation, a parliamentary commission of inquiry to advise the parliament whether any conduct of the Hon. Lionel Keith Murphy was such as to amount, in its opinion, to prove misbehaviour within the meaning of section 72 of the Constitution.

In August 1986, following a special report to the Presiding Officers relating to the terminal illness of the judge, the inquiry was discontinued and the act establishing the commission repealed. The Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry (Repeal) Act 1986 gave to the Presiding Officers exclusive possession of the documents of the commission for 30 years from its commencement.

The repeal act commenced on 25 September 1986 and the period of exclusive possession expired from 26 September 2016. The Presiding Officers may now grant access to documents of the commission by written authority.

With the expiration of the period of exclusive possession, the President of the Senate and I have determined that the clerks of the Senate and the House of Representatives and other nominees approved by us can access and examine the records of the commission for the purposes of providing advice to assist in our responses to requests for access. The examination of the records by parliamentary officers commenced on 29 September 2016. We are awaiting advice on the contents of the records before determining any arrangements for wider access to them. It should be understood that this process may take some time as the records are extensive. I thank the House.

COMMITTEES
Petitions Committee

Mr VASTA (Bonner) (10:03): I present the first report of the Petitions Committee for the 45th parliament, together with 18 petitions and 23 ministerial responses to petitions previously presented.

PETITIONS

Mr VASTA (Bonner) (10:03): Thirteen of the 18 petitions and 21 of the 23 ministerial responses presented today were certified by the committee of the 44th Parliament just prior to the dissolution, and the remainder were received after the dissolution. The terms of the petitions will be printed in Hansard. I present the petitions:

Belmont Medicare and Centrelink Office
To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives.
This petition of residents in and around the electorate of Shortland draws to the attention of the House:

- the decision by the Federal Government to close the co-located Medicare and Centrelink office in Belmont, NSW, and the hardship it will cause to local seniors and families.

The Belmont Medicare / Centrelink office is a vital public service for the local area. Shortland electorate has one of the highest numbers of seniors and pensioners compared to other electorates. Older people do not always have internet access, are unable to wait on the phone for long periods and are unable to drive far due to their restricted driving licences. The removal of this Medicare office will therefore cause hardship to older residents and families.

We therefore ask the House to: take urgent action to do everything in its power to reverse the decision to close the Medicare / Centrelink office in Belmont, NSW, and ensure it remains open and accessible to those who need it.

from 1,784 citizens

Superannuation Complaints Tribunal

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

This petition on behalf of: All Australians with a Superannuation Fund, and draws the attention of the House to: The SCT’s negligent application of the Superannuation Complaints Act resulting in harm to the public.

We therefore ask the House to: Remove the Superannuation Complaints Tribunal’s (SCT) powers to review Death Benefits.

Any complaint about the Superannuation Trustee’s decision should be referred to a Court where evidence can be tested under Federal rules of evidence, in a fair and structured manner.

The SCT has no place in disregarding the Federal Law and rules of evidence.

from 29 citizens

Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture

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

This petition calls for the Ratification of the OPCAT.

The OPCAT is a UN treaty that Australia has signed up to that would ensure national and international monitoring of people in these vulnerable situations.

Countries simply agreeing not to torture and to respect human rights doesn’t work, especially for people that are in detention.

The transparency this creates acts as a deterrent to violating human rights in the first place. It is much harder to torture and abuse people when you are being watched.

The OPCAT has bipartisan support, but has not been put into effect. Australia has sat on it since 2009.

Why is this important?

To ensure oversight and monitoring of places of detention, with an emphasis on deterrence of human rights abuses through transparency. This is especially significant within Immigration Detention. The Australian Human Rights Commission has called for a Royal Commission. The UN special rapporteur has found Australia in breach of the Convention Against Torture.

It would also provide a framework to ensure that there are protections and monitoring within other areas of concern such as police lock ups, disability care, aged care homes and involuntary psychiatric admissions.

from 1 citizen
Strategies to Stop Violence Against Women

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives from the undersigned citizens of Australia.

Five years after the introduction of the "National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022", the statistics for women experiencing violence in Australia have now increased to one woman in three (ABS, Australian Crime Statistics, Our Watch).

25% of Australians believe it is alright for a man to hit a woman — Hannah Grant, Our Watch 2015.

We urge immediate action by the House of Representatives on the following:

1. All Australian states and territories (not just NSW and Vic) introduce ongoing mandatory school and TAFE programs to change cultural attitudes towards violence against women
2. Funding for an ongoing Australia wide advertising and media campaign (billboards, newspaper, TV, radio, social media) to broaden public awareness and responsibility
3. More refuges provided for women and children — 50% of women and children are being turned away from refuges in Australia (less Hill, ABC Radio National Reporter in The Monthly 14/3/15)
4. A large increase in funding for Men's behaviour and family relationship programs in all states

Constitutional Recognition of Indigenous People

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

This petition of certain citizens of Australia draws to the attention of the House:

The eighth Annual Prime Minister's Report on the Government's Close the Gap Campaign and the Close the Gap Steering Committee's 2016 progress and priorities Report. These reports indicate that:

- Constitutional recognition of Australia's First Peoples is essential to their well being
- Many targets were not met and only modest gains in progress were achieved in many areas
- Greater Indigenous control of programs at the local level is required
- A target to reduce levels of Indigenous incarceration needs to be included in the Close the Gap campaign
- An enquiry into institutional racism in the health sector is required

We therefore ask the House to:

- Move urgently to recognize Australia's First Peoples in the Australian Constitution and to remove racist elements in the Constitution
- Act to make meaningful consultation with local communities compulsory in regard to programs which affect them, fund them adequately and draw on successful models
- Provide the necessary funding for effective Aboriginal Legal Services and Justice Reinvestment Programs
- Provide the final two years of recommended Gonski funding to Aboriginal education programs

Refugee and Asylum Seeker Processing and Resettlement

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

This petition of
Rural Australians for Refugees Queanbeyan (RARQ) and other concerned citizens draws to the attention of the House:

The unprecedented numbers worldwide of refugees escaping violence, intimidation and poverty. The unacceptable conditions for asylum seekers and refugees in the Manus Island and Nauru detention centres where various incidents have demonstrated that the safety and wellbeing of people held cannot be guaranteed.

We therefore ask the House to:

• increase the number of refugees to be accepted for resettlement
• abolish closed detention centres and resettle those living there in Australia. As an alternative, establish reception centres on the mainland to allow us to provide support to the most vulnerable
• process people in a timely and humane way no matter how they arrive and ensure that there is a fair and adequate appeal system
• treat every refugee and every asylum seeker as you would want a citizen of Australia to be treated if they were in the same situation

from 73 citizens

**Live Animal Export**

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

Petition calling for an end to live animal export

This petition of the undersigned citizens of Australia calls on the House of Representatives to end the export of live animals for slaughter. We the undersigned therefore call on the House to end this trade and, in so doing, restore Australia's reputation as a compassionate and ethical nation.

from 6,661 citizens

**Persecution of Falun Gong**

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

This petition of certain citizens and residents of Australia draws to the attention of the House that Falun Gong is a peaceful meditation practice based on the principles of Truthfulness, Compassion and Tolerance. Falun Gong practitioners in China have been subjected to the most brutal and relentless persecution by the Chinese Communist regime since July 1999.

According to investigative reports published by human rights lawyer David Matas and former Canadian Secretary of State for the Asia Pacific David Kilgour, a large number of imprisoned Falun Gong practitioners have been subjected to forced organ harvesting for China's transplant market and lost their lives (www.organharvestinvestigation.net).

We therefore ask the House to request the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister to openly and forthrightly call for an immediate end to the persecution of Falun Gong in China.

from 13,471 citizens

**Manus Island and Nauru Detention Centres**

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

This petition of the Grandmothers against Detention of Refugee Children (GADRC) Ballarat and the undersigned members of the public-

Draws to the attention of the House:
The grievous concerns regarding the welfare of people especially children who may be returned to Nauru after the High Court’s decision on the 3rd February 2016.

We are further concerned about the people on Manus Island and Nauru who are assessed to be genuine refugees, yet are offered no chance of resettlement or future in Australia.

We therefore ask the House to:

Ensure that from now on no asylum seeker/refugee child or their parents/guardians now residing in Australia are returned to Nauru.

That Detention Centres on Manus Island and Nauru be immediately closed, and that those refugees and asylum seekers who are currently on Manus Island and Nauru be immediately transferred to Australia.

from 364 citizens

**Australian Ownership of Land**

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

This petition of the 'Certain Citizens of Australia'
draws to the attention of the House: The fact that at the present time trusts, companies and land in Australia can be more than 49% owned by international persons, companies and other entities.

We therefore ask the House to:

Create legislation which forces all land, companies and trusts in Australia to be greater than 51% owned by Australian citizens.

from 110 citizens

**Carbon Fee and Dividend Policy**

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

This petition of citizens of Western Australia, in particular the Tangney Electorate, draws to the attention of the house:

To maintain a liveable planet the United Nations is stating we need to keep 80% of the earth's carbon emitting fossil fuels in the ground. To enable the Australian society and economy to accommodate this goal we must rapidly reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and encourage the expansion of clean, renewable energy. Fossil fuel prices are kept artificially low because they do not include the costs of their side effects such as air pollution and the associated healthcare costs of respiratory conditions and premature deaths. Correcting this market failure requires fossil fuel prices to account for their true social costs. A Carbon Fee and Dividend Policy puts a steadily rising fee on the carbon content of fossil fuels which is then returned to all Australian households as a dividend and uses border adjustments to level the playing-field with trading partners. This would move the economy in an orderly transition from fossil fuels towards clean, renewable energies and energy efficiency. This policy will stimulate job creation and the economy.

We therefore ask the House to:
Introduce a Fee and Dividend Policy that
1. puts a fee on carbon based fuels and returns all the revenue to Australian households,
2. incorporates a border adjustment process to preserve our competitiveness,
3. encourages other countries to join such a program.
from 240 citizens

**Christians in the Middle East**

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

This petition of certain citizens of Australia draws the attention of the House to the plight of persecuted Christians throughout the Middle East.

We ask the House to:

- Work with governments in the Middle East to provide and support secure areas for displaced Christian communities that have fled from violence and persecution;
- Increase the humanitarian intake, especially for the displaced vulnerable minorities (Christians) from the Middle East;
- Consider granting humanitarian visas for internally displaced people from Iraq and Syria who will never be able to return /resettle in their own villages;
- Allow Churches and faith based communities to sponsor/ propose vulnerable families for humanitarian visas in order to be resettled in Regional Australia

from 6,601 citizens

**Mandatory Immigration Detention for Children**

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

This petition of certain citizens of Australia who support the efforts of Grandmothers against Detention of refugee children draws the attention of the House our concerns relating to all legislation which has the effect of initiating and enforcing the mandatory detention of any and all children who seek refuge and/or asylum in Australia. We are concerned that the mandatory detention of children causes irreparable harm both mental and physical.

We therefore respectively ask the House to review and repeal all legislation that effects the mandatory detention of children; to immediately release all such children and their families from mandatory detention; and to take all steps necessary to ensure that the claims of such children and their families to refuge and/or asylum in Australia are examined and determined in a timely manner.

from 2,434 citizens

**Permanent Residency Application**

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

This petition of concerned family members, friends and South Gippsland community members draws the attention of the House the delays in the processing of a permanent residency application on behalf of Australian citizen Andrew Watt, his wife Lynda Watt, their children Evelyn, 6, and Joseph, 3, and Andrew's sister in law Gillian Meyer, 45, who has Down Syndrome. Andrew was both in Mirboo North, growing up and running the family daily farm before heading overseas at the age of 28. Twenty-one years later he is keen to return with his wife to raise their children and care for Gillian in a safe and nurturing environment that's close to his Australian family - mum Shirley and siblings Stephen Judy and Michael.

We therefore ask the House to review and approve the family's permanent residency application as a matter of urgency
from 404 citizens

**Citizenship of the Member for Warringah**

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

This petition of a concerned citizen of Australia requests the House to ask the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection and his department to determine if former Prime Minister Mr Abbott MP applied for Australian citizenship by descent properly and correctly with regards to all rules, regulations and laws governing the immigration application procedures at the time. Former Prime Minister Mr Abbott's citizenship application is available in the National Archives of Australia. It is signed by Fay Abbott, his mother and citizenship for Mr Abbott granted 1 July 1981 to be effective from this date. It is not back dated to birth. The file in the National Archives does not contain anything filled out or signed by Mr Abbott even though he was 23 years old at the time and considered a competent adult. Immigration rules at the time the citizenship by descent application was lodged say that the mother may lodge an application for citizenship for a child but when that child reaches adulthood the child must fill in the form themselves.

I beg the House to determine if the former Prime Minister Mr Abbott MP filled in his citizenship by descent forms correctly and that he was granted Australian citizenship with regard to all rules, regulations and laws operating in the department when the application was made

from 1 citizen

**Persecution of Falun Gong**

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

This petition of certain citizens and residents of Australia draws to the attention of the House that Falun Gong is a peaceful meditation practice based on the principles of Truthfulness, Compassion and Tolerance. Falun Gong practitioners in China have been subjected to the most brutal and relentless persecution by the Chinese Communist regime since July 1999, causing thousands to lose their lives from illegal detention and systematic torture. Such conduct stands in blatant violation of all international human rights charters that the Chinese government has itself ratified. According to investigative reports published by human rights lawyer David Matas and former Canadian Secretary of State for the Asia Pacific; David Kilgour, tens of thousands of imprisoned Falun Gong practitioners have been subjected to forced organ harvesting for China's transplant market and lost their lives (www.organharvestinvestigation.net)

We therefore ask the House to request the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister to openly and forthrightly call for an immediate end to the persecution of Falun Gong in China.

from 11,591 citizens

**Health Care Card for Chronic Illnesses**

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

This petition of Health Care Card for Chronically Ill Australians draws to the attention of the House: Many Australians with lifelong chronic illnesses and/or rare diseases are currently ineligible for a health care card unless they receive Centrelink payments. There ability to work is compromised and many can only work part time, spending much of their income on out of pocket medical costs. This financial pressure means they often:

- Delay or even skip follow up medical appointments;
- Not have ongoing necessary treatments;
- Prioritise which health professional to see, based on their most immediate needs;
- Sometimes they even have to prioritise which medications to buy and which they can live without.
As many earn just enough to be ineligible for a low income health care card, they struggle to meet living costs as a significant amount of their income is spent on medical expenses. A health care card not linked to income levels will enable these vulnerable Australians to access health care privately to better manage their complex conditions, thus relieving pressure on the national health care system and emergency rooms. These necessary changes are supported by many Australians.

We therefore ask the House to: Create a health care card category specifically for Australians with multiple lifelong chronic illnesses and rare diseases. We request that the health care card be allocated on the basis of having incurable illnesses and not just based on income levels or a Centrelink allowance.

from 152 citizens

PETITIONS

Responses

Mr VASTA (Bonner) (10:03): Ministerial responses to petitions presented to the House have been received as follows:

Permanent Residency

Dear Mr Jensen,

On 3 June 2013 the former Chair of the Standing Committee on Petitions, the Hon. John Murphy MP, wrote to the former Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, the Hon Brendan O'Connor MP, concerning a petition (74511192) regarding Mr Roger Hugh Hunter and Ms Irene May McCarthy of Metung, East Gippsland and their desire to obtain permanent residence.

The Investor Retirement (Subclass 405) visa was introduced in 2005 to allow self-funded retirees who can benefit Australia through significant investment in state/territory government bonds to reside in Australia during their retirement years. While it does not provide permanent resident status, visa holders are able to remain in Australia indefinitely subject to meeting the criteria for subsequent visa grants.

The intention of the Investor Retirement visa is to ensure that retirees have a minimal impact on the Australian budget in terms of welfare, health and similar costs. To that end, applicants must meet asset and income requirements set at levels deemed necessary to ensure that they are able to finance their ongoing stay in Australia. In addition, they are required to make a significant long term financial investment in Australia and to pay a second Visa Application Charge (VAC) each time they renew their visa. The second VAC is set at a level considered sufficient to help offset any future cost to the Commonwealth.

Investor Retirement visa applicants need to consider a lot of factors when deciding whether to apply for this visa including their ability to meet the financial requirements on an ongoing basis. It must also be taken into consideration that the visa is only a temporary visa and applicants may, at some stage, need to depart Australia to reside in their home country.

I appreciate that, having lived in Australia for 6 years, Mr Hunter and Ms McCarthy wish to become Australian permanent residents. Investor Retirement visa holders are not precluded from applying for a permanent visa if there is one for which they believe they may be eligible. Information on the full range of visa categories, and how to lodge a valid visa application, can be obtained from the Department of Immigration and Border Protection's website at: www.immi.gov.au.

I note that the petition requests that the House of Representatives do all in its power to grant Mr Hunter and Ms McCarthy permanent residence. Neither the Parliament nor the department can grant a permanent visa to a person who does not meet the specific legislative requirements and the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection is only able to intervene in limited circumstances. The requirements for ministerial intervention are set out in the Migration Act 1958. An applicant would need to have applied for a visa, had that application refused by the department, and then had the refusal decision
reviewed by the relevant tribunal or the courts. It is only after this process that the Minister has the non-compellable power to grant the person a visa in exceptional and compassionate circumstances which are in the public interest. While the contribution Mr Hunter and Ms McCarthy have made while in Australia is appreciated the Minister is unable to intervene to grant them permanent residence at this time.

Thank you for bringing the concerns of the residents and friends of the village of Metung to my attention.

Yours sincerely
from the Assistant Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, Ms Michaelia Cash

Children in Detention

Dear Mr Jensen,

Thank you for the Committee's letter of 18 March 2013 enclosing Petition Number 752/1199, concerning the release of children in immigration detention with any accompanying family members. I apologise for the delay in responding.

Much has changed since this petition was received, including the election of a Coalition Government and the establishment of Operation Sovereign Borders in September 2013. Since then, the Australian Government has focused on disrupting and deterring people smugglers, detecting and intercepting illegal maritime arrivals (IMAs), and supporting regional processing and resettlement of asylum seekers, as well as returns of those not found to be owed protection. These measures are intended to deny people smugglers a product to sell to often vulnerable people and to restore integrity to the migration programme. From 1 January 2014 any IMAs who arrive in Australia will be transferred to either the Manus or Nauru Regional Processing Centres (RPCs). Those who come to Australia illegally by boat are not eligible for permanent residency in Australia.

The Australian Government views immigration detention as an essential component of strong border control. Detention is not limited by a set timeframe but is dependent upon a number of factors, including identity determination, progress with visa status resolution, and individual circumstances relating to health, character or security matters.

Immigration detention is subject to both administrative and judicial review, and to full parliamentary scrutiny for accountability. The length and conditions of detention are regularly reviewed by senior Department of Immigration and Border Protection officers and the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

A combination of community detention and the grant of Bridging visas E (BVEs) allows about 29,000 IMAs to live in the Australian community while they await the resolution of their visa status, including families with children.

There are a small number of families with children detained within the Immigration Detention Network. Where families and children are detained, they are accommodated in the least restrictive forms of placement possible: immigration residential housing; immigration transit accommodation; or an alternative place of detention. At these facilities, they can access services, support and care according to their assessed needs.

Wherever possible, family unity is maintained. As with all placement decisions, family arrangements are subject to many variables, including operational, capacity and security requirements. For example, a family may live together in immigration detention because one member is not eligible for community detention or the grant of a bridging visa.

As at 7 March 2016, there were 48 IMA children in held detention in Australia, compared with a peak of 1,992 children in July 2013. Of the 48 children, 41 are temporarily in Australia (usually to access specialist medical treatment) and these children and their families are subject to regional processing in Nauru. The Government is working to reduce the remaining small number of cases in
Australia further, although national security or character issues with a parent might be a barrier to the placement of a family in the community. Cases are reviewed regularly.

There is a legal obligation under the Migration Act 1958 to take a transferee temporarily in Australia back to a regional processing country when that person no longer needs to be in Australia for the temporary purpose for which they were brought to Australia. Accordingly, when an individual no longer needs to be in Australia for that temporary purpose, the Department of Immigration and Border Protection considers whether it is reasonably practicable for them to be taken to a regional processing country. Any decision to return an individual to Nauru will be undertaken in a considered and compassionate manner.

The Nauru RPG operates as an open centre and transferees are free to come and go at any time without restriction. Transport is provided to assist transferees to move around Nauru.

The Government of Nauru is responsible for the management and administration of the refugee status determination process and has made determinations for most transferees. Refugees are provided with support to settle into the local community.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, Mr Peter Dutton

Children in Detention

Dear Mr Jensen,

I refer to Petition Number 78311243, received on 26 June 2013, from Mr Bevil Purnell OAM, of the Refugee Resettlement Committee and Social Justice Group of the St John the Apostle Parish, Kippax, concerning children in immigration detention. I apologise for the delay in responding.

Much has changed since this petition was received, including the election of a Coalition Government and the establishment of Operation Sovereign Borders in September 2013. Since then, the Australian Government has focused on disrupting and deterring people smugglers, detecting and intercepting illegal maritime arrivals (IMAs), and supporting regional processing and resettlement of asylum seekers, as well as returns of those not found to be owed protection. These measures are intended to deny people smugglers a product to sell to often vulnerable people and to restore integrity to the migration programme. From 1 January 2014 any IMAs who arrive in Australia will be transferred to either the Manus or Nauru Regional Processing Centres (RPCs). Those who come to Australia illegally by boat are not eligible for permanent residency in Australia.

The Australian Government views immigration detention as an essential component of strong border control. Detention is not limited by a set timeframe but is dependent upon a number of factors, including identity determination, progress with visa status resolution, and individual circumstances relating to health, character or security matters.

Immigration detention is subject to both administrative and judicial review, and to full parliamentary scrutiny for accountability. The length and conditions of detention are regularly reviewed by senior Department of Immigration and Border Protection officers and the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

There are a small number of families with children detained within the Immigration Detention Network. Where families and children are detained, they are accommodated in the least restrictive forms of placement possible: immigration residential housing; immigration transit accommodation; or an alternative place of detention. At these facilities, they can access services, support and care according to their assessed needs.

Wherever possible, family unity is maintained. As with all placement decisions, family arrangements are subject to many variables, including operational, capacity and security requirements. For example, a
family may live together in immigration detention because one member is not eligible for community detention or the grant of a bridging visa.

A combination of community detention and the grant of Bridging visas E (BVEs) allows about 29,000 IMAs to live in the Australian community while they await the resolution of their visa status, including families with children. IMAs living in community detention are supported via the Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) programme. Those BVE holders who need some assistance might also be eligible for support under the SRSS Programme. This programme is provided by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection through contracted service providers, and is designed to assist IMAs to meet their basic and essential needs in the community.

Arrangements are in place for all IMA children, whether in detention, community detention or granted BVEs, to attend local schools.

As at 7 March 2016, there were 48 IMA children in held detention in Australia, compared with a peak of 1,992 children in July 2013. Of the 48 children, 41 are temporarily in Australia (usually to access specialist medical treatment) and these children and their families are subject to regional processing in Nauru and will be transferred there once they and their families are fit to transfer. The Government is working to reduce the remaining small number of cases in Australia further, although national security or character issues with a parent might be a barrier to the placement of a family in the community. Cases are reviewed regularly.

Any decision to return an individual to Nauru will be undertaken in a considered and compassionate manner.

The Nauru RPC operates as an open centre and transferees are free to come and go at any time without restriction. Transport is provided to assist transferees to move around Nauru.

The Government of Nauru is responsible for the management and administration of the refugee status determination process and has made determinations for most transferees. Refugees are provided with support to settle into the local community.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, Mr Peter Dutton

Asylum Seekers

Dear Mr Jensen,

Thank you for the Committee's letter of 17 June 2013 enclosing Petition Number 786/1247, concerning regional processing of asylum seekers, immigration detention in Australia, and work rights and support for those in the Australian community. I apologise for the delay in responding.

Much has changed since this petition was received, including the election of a Coalition Government and the establishment of Operation Sovereign Borders in September 2013. Since then, the Australian Government has focused on disrupting and deterring people smugglers, detecting and intercepting illegal maritime arrivals (IMAs), and supporting regional processing and resettlement of asylum seekers, as well as returns of those not found to be owed protection. The ongoing success of Operation Sovereign Borders has denied people smugglers a product to sell to often vulnerable people and restored integrity to the migration programme. The Government remains committed to the regional processing and resettlement arrangements in place in Nauru and Papua New Guinea.

The Australian Government views immigration detention as an essential component of strong border control. Detention is not limited by a set timeframe but is dependent upon a number of factors, including identity determination, progress with visa status resolution, and individual circumstances relating to health, character or security matters.
Immigration detention is subject to both administrative and judicial review, and to full parliamentary scrutiny for accountability. The length and conditions of detention are regularly reviewed by senior Department of Immigration and Border Protection officers and the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

Resolving the immigration status of the IMA legacy caseload of almost 30,000 people in Australia who arrived under the former government is expected to take several years. Information on Temporary Protection visas and the new Safe Haven Enterprise visa and access to services and support for IMAs is available at: http://www.border.gov.au/travlRefunlegal-maritime-arrivals.

The Government has reduced the detention population by approximately 90 per cent by placing eligible IMAs in the community on bridging visas or in community detention while they await the resolution of their status. Those who are granted bridging visas will, in most cases, have permission to work. IMAs in community detention are not permitted to work.

Before their release into the community, an assessment of personal circumstances and stage in the immigration status resolution process is undertaken to identify what, if any, transitional and ongoing support might be required.

IMAs living in the community access support through the Status Resolution Support Services Programme. This programme is provided by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection through contracted service providers and is designed to assist IMAs to meet their basic and essential needs in the community.

There are a small number of families with children detained within the Immigration Detention Network. Where families and children are detained, they are accommodated in the least restrictive forms of placement possible: immigration residential housing; immigration transit accommodation; or an alternative place of detention. At these facilities, they can access services, support and care according to their assessed needs.

Wherever possible, family unity is maintained. As with all placement decisions, family arrangements are subject to many variables, including operational, capacity and security requirements. For example, a family may live together in immigration detention because one member is not eligible for community detention or the grant of a bridging visa.

As at 7 March 2016, there were 48 IMA children in held detention in Australia, compared with a peak of 1,992 children in July 2013. Of the 48 children, 41 are temporarily in Australia (usually to access specialist medical treatment). These children and their families are subject to regional processing in Nauru. Any decision to return an individual to Nauru will be undertaken in a considered and compassionate manner.

The Nauru Regional Processing Centre operates as an open centre and transferees are free to come and go at any time without restriction. Transport is provided to assist transferees to move around Nauru.

The Government of Nauru is responsible for the management and administration of the refugee status determination process and has made determinations for most transferees. Refugees are provided with support to settle into the local community. Many adult refugees are now in either full or part-time employment.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely
from the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, Mr Peter Dutton

Professional Year Program

Dear Mr Jensen,

Thank you for the Committee's letter of 24 June 2013 to the former Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, the Hon Brendan O'Connor MP, enclosing Petition Number 798/1260 which requests the
provision of a stipend or daily allowance for international students during their internship whilst undertaking the Professional Year programme. I apologise for the delay in this response.

The Professional Year (PY) programme was introduced to the points tested visa programme in 2007 to encourage international students to gain formal learning and workplace experience in order to enhance their employability in the Australian labour force. The PY aims to:

- familiarise participants with the Australian workplace;
- teach participants how to communicate effectively and professionally; and
- educate participants about all aspects of the Australian workplace through its internship component.

PY programmes are developed and administered by industry professional bodies according to guidelines set by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection and the Department of Employment. Students are required to pay a fee to undertake the PY programme. The fees for each PY programme are set by the provider, who in most instances oversees the programme while it is delivered by a partner organisation such as a Technical and Further Education institution (TAFE) or other registered training organisation.

As students make the decision to undertake the PY programme to improve their prospects in the Australian labour force, it is their responsibility to ensure they have the appropriate means to fund their stay in Australia. The PY programme information is clear in that the work experience offered is in the form of an unpaid internship. Should students seek a stipend from their internship placement employers they may wish to discuss this directly with the employer.

I understand that there is a strong expectation from PY candidates that they will achieve permanent residence upon successful completion of the PY programme. However, successful completion of the PY programme is not a guarantee of permanent residence, and there is no requirement under the points tested visa programme for an international student to undertake the PY.

Thank you for bringing the Committee's concerns to my attention.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, Mr Peter Dutton

Permanent Residency

Dear Mr Jensen,

I refer to a letter from the former Chair of the Standing Committee on Petitions, the Hon John Murphy MP, of 24 June 2013 to the former Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, the Hon Brendan O'Connor MP, concerning a petition requesting that Dr Mihaela Guguila be granted permanent residency, waiving obligations under the Temporary Work (Skilled) visa (subclass 457) programme.

For privacy reasons, I am unable to comment on Dr Guguila's case. However, I can provide the following general information.

Individuals who wish to travel to, or remain in, Australia need to apply for an appropriate visa and be assessed against the criteria set out in Australia's migration legislation. My power to personally intervene is not enlivened until a refusal decision has been made by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection and is upheld by a review tribunal.

The subclass 457 visa programme has been designed to ensure that employers sponsor overseas workers only when they cannot find suitably qualified and experienced available Australian citizens or permanent residents. It is designed to fill temporary vacancies only.

The pathway to permanent residency most used by subclass 457 visa holders is the Temporary Residence Transition stream of the Employer Nomination Scheme or the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme. The Employer Nomination Scheme (ENS) (subclass 186) visa and Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS) (subclass 187) visa are demand-driven programmes which allow employers
to nominate skilled workers for permanent residence to fill genuine vacancies in their business. These skilled workers can be from overseas or already living and working in Australia as temporary visa holders.

Applicants who are 50 years of age or over must meet one of the specified age exemptions in order to be granted an ENS (subclass 186) visa or a RSMS (subclass 187) visa. If Dr Guguila pursues a permanent residence visa under the Permanent Employer Sponsored Entry Programme, as a medical practitioner, she may already satisfy the age requirement. Unless an exemption applies, the ENS and RSMS visas require applicants to be under 50 years of age. This is to ensure that the focus of the skill stream of the permanent migration programme is on attracting highly skilled migrants with appropriate English language ability, who can make a long-term contribution to Australia.

However, in certain circumstances, Australia will benefit from skilled applicants who are older than 50 years of age. With this in mind, there are provisions for additional flexibility with regard to the age requirement. Exemptions are available to applicants who are nominated in certain occupations, such as senior academics, medical practitioners, scientists, eligible New Zealand citizens and their families, or those who have held a subclass 457 visa for the last four years and were paid at least the Fair Work Commission's Fair Work High Income Threshold in each of these years.

Further information about the ENS and RSMS visas is available on the Department's website at:
- ENS - http://www.border.gov.au/TravVisa-1/186-

Thank you for bringing Dr Guguila's case to my attention.

Yours sincerely
from the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, Mr Peter Dutton

Permanent Residency

Dear Mr Jensen,

Thank you for the Committee's letter of 15 May 2014 enclosing Petition Number 903/1371, regarding the case of Ms Eunsil (Chloe) Park, the parent of an Australian citizen child, Miss Ari Jae Illingworth, now aged 6 years. I apologise for the delay in responding.

Circumstances have changed since this petition was received. On 2 September 2014 the former Minister intervened under section 417 of the Migration Act, to grant a permanent Former Resident (Subclass 151) visa to Ms Park.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely
from the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, Mr Peter Dutton

Refugee Settlement

Dear Mr Jensen,

Pursuant to Standing Order 209(b), relating to referring a petition to a Minister for response, please find response to Petition Number 942/1410.

This petition was submitted by the Standing Committee on Petitions for a response from the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, in writing, on 1 September 2014.

The petition raises concerns about the settlement of those found to be refugees by Nauru to Cambodia.

As a party to the Refugees Convention, Cambodia is bound by international legal obligations to protect the rights of refugees. Cambodia is also party to a range of international human rights treaties which ensure the safety of refugees who settle in Cambodia, including the International Covenant on
Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

For its part, the Australian Government has taken the necessary steps to assist the Cambodian Government where required to ensure that those who settle in Cambodia are provided with adequate essential services.

The government takes its international obligations and humanitarian commitments very seriously. In the 2014-15 programme year, Australia accepted 13,750 refugees through Australia's Humanitarian Programme, many of whom have spent years as refugees while waiting for durable solutions to their plight. The success of the Government's policies, which were upheld by the High Court on 3 February 2016, has allowed an increase in Australia's Humanitarian Programme to 18,750 places up until the 2018-19 programme year.

However, the government is committed to achieving the right balance between helping genuine refugees and preventing and disrupting people smuggling ventures that endanger the lives of vulnerable people. Cooperation with regional partners, like Cambodia, will help accomplish this by discouraging people from risking their lives while at the same time ensuring that genuine refugees are resettled.

Thank you for bringing the petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, Mr Peter Dutton

Dear Mr Jensen,

Pursuant to Standing Order 209(b), relating to referring a petition to a Minister for response, please find response to Petition Number 944/1412.

This petition was submitted by the Standing Committee on Petitions for a response from the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, in writing, on 1 September 2014.

The petition raises concerns about Australia's asylum seeker policy.

Offshore processing and third country settlement deters people from risking their lives in the hands of people smugglers in an attempt to enter Australia without a visa. The denial of permanent settlement in Australia eliminates a product for people smugglers to sell. The Government's offshore processing policy gives asylum seekers the opportunity to have their protection claims assessed in accordance with the Refugees Convention, and if they are found to be refugees, settled in a third country and provided with an opportunity to establish a new life. The Government remains resolute in its commitment to protecting Australia's borders and the 3 February 2016 High Court ruling on the matter has upheld the validity of the Government's policies.

Illegal maritime arrivals that are transferred to Nauru and Papua New Guinea (PNG) have any claim for protection assessed under Nauruan or PNG law. Both Nauru and PNG are signatories to the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, and its 1967 Protocol. They have Refugee Determination processes which have been developed with due regard to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Refugee Determination principles and guidelines.

The Department of Immigration and Border Protection has contracted service providers with the expertise to deliver a range of services to transferees, including health, catering and cleaning services, programmes and activities, and education to help ensure the well-being of transferees.

Current government policies are yielding positive results, with no arrivals through illegal maritime ventures in 2015. This has allowed the Government to respond to refugee crises in Syria and Iraq by granting 4,400 visas in the 2014-15 programme year to refugees fleeing those conflicts and guaranteeing 12,000 further places for Syrians in the next three years through the annual Humanitarian
Programme. The border protection policies have allowed an increase in the Humanitarian Programme from 13,750 to 18,750 places up until the 2018-19 programme year.

Thank you for bringing the petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, Mr Peter Dutton

Asylum Seeker Policy

Dear Mr Jensen,

Pursuant to Standing Order 209(b), relating to referring a petition to a Minister for response, please find response to Petition Number 95211421.

This was submitted by the Standing Committee on Petitions for a response from the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, in writing, on 1 September 2014.

The petition raises concerns about Australia's asylum seeker policy.

Offshore processing and third country settlement deters people from risking their lives in the hands of people smugglers in an attempt to enter Australia without a visa. The denial of permanent settlement in Australia eliminates a product for people smugglers to sell. The Government's offshore processing policy gives asylum seekers the opportunity to have their protection claims assessed in accordance with the Refugees Convention, and if they are found to be refugees, settled in a third country and provided with an opportunity to establish a new life. The Government remains resolute in its commitment to protecting Australia's borders and the 3 February 2016 High Court ruling on the matter has upheld the validity of the Government's policies.

Illegal maritime arrivals that are transferred to Nauru and Papua New Guinea (PNG) have any claim for protection assessed under Nauruan or PNG law. Both Nauru and PNG are signatories to the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, and its 1967 Protocol. They have Refugee Determination processes which have been developed with due regard to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Refugee Determination principles and guidelines.

The Department of Immigration and Border Protection has contracted service providers with the expertise to deliver a range of services to transferees, including health, catering and cleaning services, programmes and activities, and education to help ensure the well-being of transferees.

Current government policies are yielding positive results, with no arrivals through illegal maritime ventures in 2015. This has allowed the Government to respond to refugee crises in Syria and Iraq by granting 4,400 visas in the 2014-15 programme year to refugees fleeing those conflicts and guaranteeing 12,000 further places for Syrians in the next three years through the annual Humanitarian Programme. The border protection policies have allowed an increase in the Humanitarian Programme from 13,750 to 18,750 places up until the 2018-19 programme year.

Thank you for bringing the petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, Mr Peter Dutton

Medical Treatment Visas

Dear Mr Jensen,

Thank you for the Committee's letter of 1 December 2014 enclosing Petition Number 996/1477, concerning Mr Rashpal Singh Toor and his spouse, Ms Jasbir Kaur. I apologise for the delay in responding.
I am pleased to advise that on 22 June 2015 Mr Toor and his spouse were granted temporary Medical Treatment visas valid for a ten year period, following consideration of their request for Ministerial Intervention under section 417 of the Migration Act.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely

from the **Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, Mr Peter Dutton**

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**Permanent Residency**

Dear Mr Jensen

Thank you for the Committee's letter of 1 December 2014 enclosing Petition Number 998/1479, concerning Mr Rajendra Prasad Joshi and his family. I apologise for the delay in responding.

I am pleased to advise that Mr Joshi and his family were all granted permanent resident visas, on 1 August 2015 following consideration of their request for Ministerial Intervention under section 351 of the Migration Act.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely

from the **Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, Mr Peter Dutton**

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**Hinkler Electorate: Mobile Coverage**

Dear Mr Jensen,

Thank you for your letter of 2 December 2015 about a petition submitted to the Standing Committee on Petitions regarding mobile coverage in the electorate of Hinkler, Queensland.

I understand the concerns of the residents of Doolbi, Horton, Abington, Goodwood, North Isis and Redridge regarding mobile phone coverage. While mobile carriers claim to provide coverage to 99 per cent of Australia's population, there are still large areas that have no coverage, particularly in regional and remote locations. Expanding mobile coverage has clear economic and social benefits, as well as public safety benefits for people living, working and travelling in regional and remote areas of Australia.

**Mobile Black Spot Programme - Round 1 outcomes**

The Australian Government committed $100 million through round 1 of the Mobile Black Spot Programme to invest in telecommunications infrastructure to address mobile black spots along major regional transport routes, in small communities and in locations prone to experiencing natural disasters.

On 25 June 2015, the Government announced that under Round 1, 499 new or upgraded mobile base stations will be deployed across regional and remote Australia 429 Telstra base stations and 70 Vodafone base stations. The number of base stations funded nationally is well in excess of expectations.

Nationally, the funded base stations will provide new and upgraded handheld coverage to 68 600 square kilometres and new external antenna coverage to over 150 000 square kilometres of regional and remote Australia. In addition, over 5 700 kilometres of major regional transport routes will receive new handheld or external antenna coverage.

The programme has been highly successful in maximising co-contributions from third parties, including state and local governments and local communities. The collective total being invested in the 499 base stations under round 1 of the programme is $385 million.

**How the funded base stations were selected**

The Government undertook an extensive public consultation process to inform the development of the programme. As part of this consultation process, members of the public were asked to nominate locations across regional Australia where they believed mobile coverage was either poor or non-
exist. Over 6 000 locations reported by the public were added to the Government's database of reported locations.

In addition, the Government consulted extensively with Telstra, Optus, Vodafone and other industry participants in relation to the design and delivery of the programme. In December 2014, the Programme Guidelines were released and the competitive selection process commenced, with funding proposals due from mobile network operators and infrastructure providers in April 2015.

The operators were asked to come forward with proposals to build new or upgraded mobile base stations to deliver improved mobile coverage to one or more of the locations on the database which had been reported by members of the public. Applications for funding were received from Optus, Telstra and Vodafone.

All proposed base stations included in the applications submitted by the operators were assessed and ranked according to the assessment criteria outlined in the Programme Guidelines. The assessment criteria included the expected benefits that each base station would deliver, such as the amount of square kilometres, the number of premises, and the length of major transport routes to receive new mobile coverage.

Consideration was also given to the total cost of the base station, the amount of Commonwealth funding being sought, the amount of funding the operator was proposing to co-contribute, and the amount of co-contribution, if any, it had secured from a third party such as a state or local government.

Regrettably, the predictive coverage maps indicate that Doolbi, Horton, Abington, Goodwood, North Isis and Redridge will not receive improved mobile coverage from base stations funded under round 1 of the programme.

Round 2

Naturally, the primary concern of the residents of Doolbi, Horton, Abington, Goodwood, North Isis and Redridge will be whether there is an opportunity for them to receive improved mobile coverage in the future.

The Government has announced that it will commit $60 million for round 2 of the programme, with funding to be made available over two years from July 2016. Round 2 is expected to operate under similar guidelines as the first round. The Government will again seek to leverage additional funding from the mobile network operators and other levels of government, with a view to maximising the number of new or upgraded base stations which can be delivered.

The Government will also again seek to leverage existing infrastructure in the form of in-kind contributions as well as utilising NBN Co's Fixed Wireless network to provide coverage in a location more cheaply than would otherwise be the case.

Round 2 will continue to utilise the database of mobile black spot locations nominated by members of the public. I am advised that Goodwood and Redridge have previously been reported as regional mobile black spots and have been added to the database. Following receipt of your correspondence, I have requested that Doolbi, Horton, Abington and North Isis be added to the database to be used for round 2.

The competitive selection process for round 2 is expected to commence in early 2016, after allowing time for further locations to be reported and added to the database. The locations to be funded under round 2 are expected to be announced by the end of 2016.

I encourage the residents of Doolbi, Horton, Abington, Goodwood, North Isis and Redridge to highlight to the mobile network operators their interest in obtaining improved mobile coverage in their area.

Further information about the Mobile Black Spot Programme is available on the Department's website at www.communications.gov.au/mobile_coverage
Triple Zero

I also note the concern of the residents of Doolbi, Horton, Abington, Goodwood, North Isis and Redridge about access arrangements to the Triple Zero (000) service and adequacy of current contact methods for the Triple Zero service, particularly for elderly.

My Department has recently completed a review of the national Triple Zero operator to ensure the service can take full advantage of new and emerging technologies, respond to changing community expectations, and provide improved services into the future. As communications technology continues to advance, the Australian Government considers new opportunities to improve the existing Triple Zero service and assist Australians during an emergency should be examined. The review also examined the effectiveness of the Triple Zero service in large scale emergency events where network congestion and large emergency call volumes where experienced by the national Triple Zero operator.

In conducting the review, my Department released a public discussion paper to seek the views of key stakeholders against eight specific questions and the terms of reference for the review more generally. In parallel, my Department also undertook some consumer research activity, which included an online survey as well as targeted focus groups. Although submissions to the discussion paper have now closed, the submissions received by my Department are publicly available on the Department's website at www.communications.gov.au

There were a number of consistent themes and messages throughout the submissions. Importantly, these include the issues regarding the potential use of new or different technologies that offer enhancement functionality, or which may be a more suitable communication option for consumers across different demographic groupings, including the elderly.

I am currently assessing the findings and recommendations of the review for the consideration of the Australian Government.

Priority assistance

Telstra is required as a condition of its licence to have an effective policy for offering priority services to anyone with a life-threatening medical condition. Telstra's arrangements for priority assistance are set out in its Priority Assistance for Individuals policy.

Telstra's Priority Assistance for Individuals Policy provides Telstra residential customers who have a diagnosed life threatening medical condition (as described more fully in Section 3 of the Priority Assistance for Individuals Policy) with the highest level of service practicably available at the time on:

- the supply of a first standard telephone service (where no other standard telephone service exists, whether provided by Telstra or another provider); and
- the fault repair of an existing standard telephone service (where all other standard telephone services at the place of residence are inoperative, whether provided by Telstra or another provider).

Generally this means Telstra will effect supply and/or repair faults for eligible priority assistance customers within 24 to 48 hours as prescribed in its Priority Assistance for Individuals Policy.

Other carriage service providers and carriers may provide priority assistance services to their customers. Part 6 in Schedule 2 of the Telecommunications ACT 1997 requires carriage service providers and carriers to either offer a priority assistance service or inform customers of the names of carriage service providers and carriers which do.

I have attached an ACMA factsheet about Priority Assistance and an application form to this letter.

Thank you for bringing the concerns of the Doolbi, Horton, Abington, Goodwood, North Isis and Redridge communities to my attention. I trust this information will be of assistance.

—Copies of the Priority Assistance factsheet can be obtained from the Australian Communications and Media Authority website.

Yours sincerely
from the Minister for Communications, Arts and Manager of Government Business in the Senate Mr Mitch Fifield

Children in Detention

Dear Mr Jensen,

Thank you for your letter of 9 February 2016 enclosing Petition Numbers 1120/1621 and 1120/1625, concerning children in immigration detention.

The Australian Government views immigration detention as an essential component of strong border control. Detention is not limited by a set timeframe but is dependent upon a number of factors, including identity determination, progress with visa status resolution and individual circumstances relating to health, character or security matters.

Immigration detention is subject to both administrative and judicial review, and to full parliamentary scrutiny for accountability. The length and the conditions of detention are subject to regular review by senior Department of Immigration and Border Protection officers and the Commonwealth Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is required by the Migration Act 1958 to assess the appropriateness of the immigration detention arrangements for each person detained for more than two years. The Department sends the Ombudsman a report relating to each person in detention for more than two years, and every six months thereafter.

Community detention provides a positive combination of environment and services to support families and individuals with vulnerabilities, such as unaccompanied minors. Through the grant of Bridging visas E (BVEs), about 29,000 illegal maritime arrivals (IMAs) are able to live in the Australian community while they await the resolution of their visa status, including families with children. The Department is aware that studies in recent years have highlighted that detention has an adverse impact on children and families and the need to minimise the length of time that people spend in detention. As a result, most children live in the community.

A small number of families with children are detained within immigration detention facilities in Australia. Where families and children are detained in facilities, they are accommodated in the least restrictive environment possible. They also have access to services, support and care according to assessed needs.

Wherever possible, family unity is maintained. As with all placement decisions, family arrangements remain subject to multiple variables including operational, capacity and security requirements. For example, a family may live together in immigration residential housing, immigration transit accommodation or an alternative place of detention, because a parent is not eligible for community detention or the grant of a BVE.

As at 12 February 2016, there were 74 IMA children in held detention in Australia, compared with a peak of 1,992 children in July 2013. Of the 74 children, 67 are temporarily in Australia (usually to access specialist medical treatment) and these children and their families are subject to regional processing in Nauru and will be transferred there once they and their families are fit to transfer. The Government is working to reduce the remaining small number of cases in Australia further, although national security or character issues with a parent might be a barrier to the placement of a family in the community. Cases are reviewed regularly.

All persons, including children, who arrive by boat on or after 13 August 2012 as an IMA are liable to be transferred to a regional processing centre (RPC). The Nauru RPC accommodates a number of families and their children, as well as single adult females. Single men are accommodated in the Manus RPC. Appropriate accommodation, health and welfare arrangements are in place for all transferees.

The Nauru RPC operates as an open centre within the community and transferees are free to come and go at any time without restriction.
The Government of Nauru has made refugee status determinations for most transferees. Refugees are provided with support to settle into the local community.

Thank you for bringing these petitions to my attention.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, Mr Peter Dutton

Animal Research

Dear Mr Jensen,

Thank you for your correspondence of 9 February 2016 (Ref: 1121/1634) regarding the petition lodged by Humane Research Australia regarding banning the importation of non-human primates for research. The use of non-human primates for scientific purposes raises special ethical and welfare issues. The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) seeks to ensure that any non-human primates used in NHMRC funded research are used ethically and treated humanely and only used when there is no valid alternative.

The state and territory governments in Australia are responsible for regulation of animal welfare, including the care and use of non-human primates for scientific purposes. Any use of animals for scientific purposes (including research) must be in accordance with relevant state and territory legislation.

NHMRC has developed the Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes (http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/ea28) (the Code). All states and territories have taken up the Code in their legislation. The Code sets out the common framework for each Australian state and territory for ensuring the ethical, humane and responsible care and use of animals used for scientific purposes.

The use of non-human primates in NHMRC funded research must comply with the NHMRC policies and guidelines and state and territory animal welfare or animal research legislation. This includes compliance with the NHMRC’s Policy on the care and use of non-human primates for scientific purposes (2003) (http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelinespublications/ea14). Given this policy is now 10 years old, it is currently under review.

The Department of Environment and the Department of Agriculture are responsible for regulating the importation of non-human primates. This includes regulation of compliance with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). CITES is implemented under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (the EPBC Act). Under the EPBC Act, the approval of a permit for importation of non-human primates requires provision of evidence in the form of an export permit from the government of the exporting country that the animals proposed for importation meet CITES requirements, which include that the animals are not wild caught.

NHMRC provides direct funding support to the two national non-human primate breeding facilities. These are the National Non-Human Primate Breeding and Research Facility (macaques and marmosets) and the National Baboon Colony (baboons). The national non-human primate breeding facilities were established to centralise breeding, provide a consistently high standard of animal care and management and to allow access to non-human primates for research. Any breeding of non-human primates for research purposes and the care and management of animals in the national non-human primate breeding facilities must be approved by an institutional AEC.

However, in order for the colonies to be sustainable into the future, there may be times when some importation of non-human primates is required to:

(i) maintain genetic diversity and avoid problems of inbreeding within small colonies
(ii) supply animals, or provide for rapid expansion of the colonies, to meet urgent need, if one arises.
NHMRC raised this issue for consideration by the Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications Legislation that is currently considering the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Prohibition of Live Imports of Primates for Research) Bill 2015, in its submission to the Committee.

Under state and territory legislation, an animal ethics committee must approve the source of any non-human primates used for scientific purposes and must be satisfied that any importation of the animals is necessary. NHMRC's Policy on the care and use of non-human primates for scientific purposes (2003) currently requires non-human primates to be obtained from colonies in Australia or, if importation is essential, from captive-bred populations.

As the issue of importation of non-human primates falls within the portfolio responsibilities of the Hon Greg Hunt MP, I have referred your representations to Mr Hunt MP for his consideration and appropriate action.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

from the Minister for Health, Aged Care and Sport, Ms Sussan Ley

Children in Detention

Dear Dr Jensen

Thank you for your letter of 9 February 2016 enclosing Petition Number 1123/1626, concerning the Australian Government's immigration detention and regional processing policies.

The Petition requests that all children be released from Australian immigration detention facilities (IDFs); that journalists be permitted access to IDFs and the Manus and Nauru Regional Processing Centres (RPCs); and that those who work in IDFs and RPCs be able to speak freely.

The Government views immigration detention as an essential component of strong border control. Detention is not limited by a set timeframe but is dependent upon a number of factors, including identity determination, progress with visa status resolution, and individual circumstances relating to health, character or security matters.

Immigration detention is subject to both administrative and judicial review, and to full parliamentary scrutiny for accountability. The length and conditions of detention are regularly reviewed by senior Department of Immigration and Border Protection officers and the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

There is a small number of families with children detained within the Immigration Detention Network. Where families and children are detained, they are accommodated in the least restrictive forms of placement possible: immigration residential housing; immigration transit accommodation; or an alternative place of detention. At these facilities, they can access services, support and care according to their assessed needs. Wherever possible, family unity is maintained.

As at 12 February 2016, there were 74 illegal maritime arrival children in held detention in Australia, compared with a peak of 1,992 children in July 2013. Of the 74 children, 67 are temporarily in Australia (usually to access specialist medical treatment) and these children and their families are subject to regional processing in Nauru and will be transferred there once they and their families are fit to transfer. The Government is working to reduce the remaining small number of cases in Australia further, although national security or character issues with a parent might be a barrier to the placement of a family in the community. Cases are reviewed regularly.

In regards to scrutiny of IDFs, a number of external bodies help to ensure that detainees are treated humanely and fairly. These parties include parliamentary committees, the Minister's Council on Asylum Seekers and Detention, the Ombudsman, the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Australian Red Cross and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.
In regards to access to the Manus and Nauru RPCs, these are the responsibility of the respective Governments of Papua New Guinea and Nauru. However, the Nauru RPC operates as an open centre within the community and transferees are free to come and go at any time without restriction.

Claims that the *Australian Border Force Act 2015* (ABF Act) will restrict health professionals from fulfilling their duty and advocating the best possible care for their patients are not accurate. The secrecy provisions in the ABF Act aim to protect departmental information from unauthorised disclosure. They are not aimed at restricting the ability of medical professionals to raise concerns about conditions in detention. The successful operation of sensitive border protection functions could be jeopardised if certain information becomes public. The secrecy provisions in the ABF Act are consistent with partner agencies with similar national security responsibilities.

The *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013* (PIO Act) provides protections for officials, including contractors, who wish to make a disclosure in the public interest. An officer who makes a public interest disclosure, as defined within the PIO Act, would not be subject to a criminal prosecution under the ABF Act. The provisions of the ABF Act do not override or prevent the application of mandatory reporting obligations already in existence.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely

from the **Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, Mr Peter Dutton**

**Visitor Visas**

Dear Mr Jensen,

Thank you for your letter of 9 February 2016 enclosing Petition Number 1124/1627, concerning a proposal to introduce a ten-year Visitor visa for parents of Australian citizens and residents. Your letter has been referred to me as the Assistant Minister for Immigration, as the mailer raised falls within my portfolio responsibilities.

I acknowledge that many Australian citizens and residents with parents living overseas would like to have their parents live in Australia with them. The Australian Government appreciates that the substantial cost of the Contributory Parent visa and the limited number of places for the Non-Contributory Parent category may be disappointing for some members of the community. However, the Migration Programme must strike the right balance between sustainable family reunion, which prioritises the reunion of partners and children, and maximising Australia's longer-term economic growth and prosperity.

Since November 2012, parents of Australian citizens and permanent residents have been able to apply for Visitor visas to visit Australia for longer periods. Recognising the length of the Parent visa queue, these longer validity visas allow parents who meet the criteria for a Visitor visa to have regular extended visits with their family in Australia without needing to apply for a new visa on each visit. Under these arrangements, the Department of Immigration and Border Protection may consider granting multiple entry Visitor visas with up to five years' validity and with a maximum stay of 12 months on each entry on a case-by-case basis.

Visitor visas are not intended for maintaining ongoing residence in Australia. Parents, like all Visitor visa holders, are expected to spend extended periods of time outside Australia between visits. Accordingly, longer Visitor visas are not available for parents who are already in Australia, or have spent the last 12 months in Australia. Parents who have spent the last 12 months in Australia are expected to wait for 6 months before applying for a new Visitor visa, if they wish to be considered under these new arrangements.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely
from the Assistant Minister for Immigration, Mr James McGrath  
Department of Immigration and Border Protection

Dear Dr Jensen,

Thank you for your correspondence of 9 February 2016 enclosing Petition 1125/1629, requesting a lift of the ten-year ban for Ms Zuhra Enayat to enable her to be reunited in Australia with her husband, Mr Nasim Yusufi.

I can confirm that the petition has been forwarded to the appropriate area within the Department of Immigration and Border Protection for their consideration.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, Mr Peter Dutton

Manus Regional Processing Centre

Dear Mr Jensen,

Thank you for your letter of 11 February 2016 enclosing Petition Number 11213/1632, concerning the welfare of Mr Behnam Satah who is at the Manus Regional Processing Centre (RPC). I appreciate the time you have taken to bring this matter to my attention.

The Manus RPC is a facility within Papua New Guinea’s (PNG) sovereign borders and, as such, the Government of PNG is responsible for managing all aspects of the operation of the RPC, such as providing appropriate arrangements and support to meet the needs of transferees. Issues relating to the safety and security of transferees at the Manus RPC are matters for the PNG Government to determine.

Australia’s presence at the RPC is to assist and mentor our regional partners in an area in which the Australian Government has substantially greater experience, as well as to manage the contracts of service providers which have been contracted by Australia to deliver services at the RPC. In this context, the Department of Immigration and Border Protection and its service providers are committed to supporting the Government of PNG in providing a safe environment for all transferees at the Manus RPC.

It would be inappropriate for me to discuss any information about Mr Satah’s personal circumstances without his expressed consent, due to the requirement to protect his privacy. I can confirm, however, that Mr Satah is receiving the appropriate care for his needs as provided and coordinated by International Health and Medical Services, the contracted health services provider.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, Mr Peter Dutton

Asylum Seeker Policy

Dear Mr Jensen,

Thank you for your letter of 3 March 2013 enclosing Petition Number 1138/1645, presented by the Federal Member for McMillan, Mr Russell Broadbent MP, concerning the Australian Government’s asylum seeker policies.

The petition requested an increase in Australia’s refugee intake; the closure of regional processing centres (RPCs) and bringing transferees to Australia for processing and settlement; and the timely processing of protection claims.

Australia works closely with the international community and is an active partner in internationally coordinated resettlement efforts to respond to refugee situations. Fewer than 30 countries worldwide
offer resettlement places each year. Of this number, only 10 countries have established annual resettlement programmes that resettle 500 or more refugees referred by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Australia consistently ranks among the top three of these countries, along with the United States and Canada.

On 5 December 2014, the Government made a commitment to increase the size of the Humanitarian Programme over the next four financial years, from the current number of 13,750 places up to 18,750 places by 2018-19. This will allow 7,500 more people to be resettled in Australia over this period. This intake will represent the largest offshore humanitarian intake in more than 30 years.

As you would be aware, the Government has committed to resettling an additional 12,000 people who have been displaced by conflicts in Syria and Iraq. The first families arrived in Australia in November 2015. These places are in addition to the existing Humanitarian Programme.

The Government remains committed to the regional processing and resettlement arrangements in place in Nauru and Papua New Guinea (PNG). These measures are intended to deny people smugglers a product to sell to often vulnerable people and to restore integrity to the migration programme. All arrivals from 1 January 2014 will be transferred to either the Manus or Nauru RPCs Anyone who comes to Australia illegally by boat will not be eligible for permanent residency in Australia.

Nauru and PNG are both parties to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol (the Refugees Convention), and their Governments are processing protection claims and making refugee status determinations. Transferees to PNG found to be refugees will be settled in PNG. Transferees to Nauru found to be refugees will be permitted to remain in Nauru for up to ten years, pending resettlement in Cambodia or any other participating third country. Transferees found not to be refugees are expected to return to their country of origin or to a third country where they have the right to reside.

The Australian Government is assisting the respective Governments of Nauru and PNG to provide settlement services to meet the initial needs of these refugees. In PNG, refugees are provided with initial services, such as language instruction and cultural orientation at an open facility at East Lorengau in Manus Province. In Nauru refugee settlement support services include: assisting refugees to access complementary community services, including health and mental health support, promoting independence and self-agency, cultural orientation: support with income, if eligible: vocational and language training providing early maternal, child and youth specific support services; and linking to accommodation, education and employment opportunities. The intention is to have refugees established and self-sufficient within 12 months. Many adult refugees are now in either full or part-time employment.

The Australian Government views immigration detention as an essential component of strong border control. Immigration detention supports Australia’s well-managed migration system and is used to identify individuals and manage potential risks to the Australian community, including national security, health and character risks.

Detention is not limited by a set timeframe but is dependent upon a number of factors, including identity determination, developments in country information and the complexity of processing due to individual circumstances relating to health, character or security matters. Detention that is indefinite or arbitrary is not acceptable. All persons in immigration detention are subject to regular review, both from within the Department of Immigration and Border Protection and by external agencies.

Resolving the immigration status of the illegal maritime arrival (IMA) legacy caseload of almost 30,000 people in Australia who arrived under the former government is expected to take several years.

The Government has reduced the IMA detention population by approximately 90 per cent by placing eligible IMAs in the community on bridging visas or in community detention (that is, requiring IMAs to reside at a specified address and be subject to certain reporting conditions) while they await the
resolution of their status. Those who are granted bridging visas will, in most cases, have permission to work.

The Fast Track Assessment process was a pre-election commitment made by the Government. This new process is designed to allow protection claims to be assessed by the Department more efficiently by introducing a new review pathway and shorter timeframes to respond to requests for additional information and adverse information. This new process provides for a more robust approach to protection assessments and was a key element of the border protection strategy to combat people smuggling and discourage people from making dangerous boat voyages to Australia.

IMAs who arrived on or after 13 August 2012 but before 1 January 2014, who have not been transferred to Nauru or PNG, will be assessed in Australia under the Fast Track Assessment Process.

Fast Track applicants who have been found to engage in Australia’s protection obligations and meet all other criteria (such as health, security, character and identity requirements) will be eligible for a Temporary Protection visa or a Safe Haven Protection visa.


Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention,

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, Mr Peter Dutton

Meningococcal B Vaccine

Dear Mr Jensen,

Thank you for your letter of 3 March 2016, offering me the opportunity to respond to a petition received by the Committee, presented by the Member for Barker, on 2 March 2016 for the inclusion of the Meningococcal B Vaccine on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) and the National Immunisation Program (NIP). I apologise for the delay in responding.

In general, essential vaccines are subsidised via the NIP and not through the PBS. The Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC), an independent, expert advisory body, makes recommendations to the Australian Government about PBS and NIP listings, in accord with the requirements of the National Health Act 1953.

The Government does not have the legal power to include any medicine or vaccine on the PBS or NIP without a positive recommendation from PBAC.

The process of considering products for listing on the PBS or NIP is evidence based. The PBAC considers each PBS and NIP listing submission, having regard to the safety, clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness (value-for-money) of the medicine or vaccine for the intended use, in comparison with other available treatments. The same evaluation requirements are applied in all cases, as required by the legislation, to ensure consistency and fairness in the listing process.

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) advises the PBAC on matters relating to the ongoing strength of evidence pertaining to existing, new and emerging vaccines in relation to their effectiveness and use in Australian populations.

The PBAC considered the inclusion of a four component meningococcal group B (recombinant, adsorbed) vaccine (4CMenB) (Bexsero®), currently marketed by GlaxoSmithKline Australia Pty Ltd, for the prevention of meningococcal B disease in infants and adolescents on the NIP on three occasions, in November 2013, July 2014 and most recently in July 2015, but did not recommend listing on any of those occasions.

The PBAC acknowledges the clinical need for a vaccine against meningococcal B disease. However, on each occasion it has considered this vaccine for inclusion on the NIP, the PBAC has rejected the
sponsor's submission because the cost effectiveness of the vaccine is unacceptably high and uncertain at the price proposed by the sponsor.

In July 2015, the PBAC reconfirmed its November 2013 and July 2014 conclusion that the vaccine is effective in inducing antibodies against the component antigens of 4CMenB. However, in the context of a population-based intervention against invasive meningococcal disease, the Committee considered the clinical claim of superiority over no vaccination in terms of comparative effectiveness with an acceptable tolerability profile in infants and adolescents, was highly uncertain. This is because of the likely short persistence of the antibody response in children, uncertainty about the correlation between antibody responses and protection, the uncertain effect on carriage of the bacteria, the overall uncertain long term protective efficacy against infection and disease, and the unknown influence of projected herd immunity effects on overall disease burden. These issues were not addressed in the July 2015 submission, although the PBAC acknowledged the limitations of the evidence base.

The outcomes of the committee's July 2015 meeting are available on PBS' webpage by entering 'PBAC meetings' in the search bar at www.pbs.gov.au.

The sponsor company can reapply to the PBAC at any time. However sponsors cannot be compelled to lodge further applications.

NPS MedicineWise, which receives funding from the Government, is an independent, not-for profit and evidence-based organisation. NPS MedicineWise provides practical tools, such as medicines lists, evidence-based information and continuing professional development educational activities, with the aim to improve the way health technologies, medicines and medical tests are prescribed and used. NPS MedicineWise has published information to inform medical professionals and members of the community about this and other meningococcal disease vaccines on its website on a number of occasions.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

from the Minister for Health, Aged Care and Sport, Ms Sussan Ley

Asylum Seekers

Dear Chair,

I refer to the correspondence of 5 May 2016 enclosing Petition 1141/1648, concerning the return of transferees from Australia to Nauru for regional processing and resettlement. I apologise for the delay in responding.

On 3 February 2016, the High Court of Australia upheld the Australian Government's regional processing and resettlement arrangements in place in Nauru.

Nauru is a signatory to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol (the Refugees Convention). The Government of Nauru is responsible for operating and managing all aspects of the regional processing centre (RPC) and providing appropriate support to meet the needs of transferees and refugees. The Australian Government provides assistance through funding and contract management for the delivery of services at the RPC, including security, accommodation, health care, welfare, programmes and activities, and education.

The Nauru RPC operates as an open centre and transferees are free to come and go at any time without restriction. Transport is provided to assist transferees to move around Nauru.

All transferees have access to a range of health services, including mental health care, broadly comparable to those available within the Australian community. If a transferee has a significant medical condition that cannot be treated locally, they may be transferred to Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea (PNG), for treatment.

The Government of Nauru is responsible for the management and administration of the refugee status determination process and has made determinations for most transferees.
Transferees found to be refugees by the Government of Nauru will be permitted to remain in Nauru for up to ten years, pending resettlement in Cambodia or any other third country. Transferees found not to be refugees are expected to return to their country of origin or to a third country where they have the right to reside.

There is a legal obligation under the Migration Act 1958 to take a transferee temporarily in Australia back to a regional processing country when that person no longer needs to be in Australia for the temporary purpose for which they were brought to Australia. Accordingly, when an individual no longer needs to be in Australia for that temporary purpose, the Department of Immigration and Border Protection considers whether it is reasonably practicable for them to be taken to a regional processing country. Any decision to return an individual to Nauru will be undertaken in a considered and compassionate manner.

Based on an assessment of individual circumstances, transferees in need of additional support may be accommodated in the Australian community for a period under community detention arrangements. They are still subject to return to Nauru once all medical or legal matters have been finalised.

The Australian Parliament has scrutinised the operations of the Nauru regional processing arrangements on a number of occasions and continues to do so.

A number of independent organisations, including the Commonwealth Ombudsman and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), conduct regular monitoring visits to RPCs. Transferees are able to communicate with bodies such as the Ombudsman, the ICRC and Amnesty International. The ICRC regularly inspects the RPCs with the permission of the Governments of Nauru and PNG.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, Mr Peter Dutton

Children in Detention

Dear Chair


The Australian Government remains committed to regional processing and resettlement.

On 3 February 2016, the High Court of Australia upheld the Government's regional processing and resettlement arrangements in place in Nauru.

Nauru is a signatory to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol (the Refugees Convention). The Government of Nauru is responsible for operating and managing all aspects of the regional processing centre (RPC) and providing appropriate support to meet the needs of transferees and refugees. The Australian Government provides assistance through funding and contract management for the delivery of services at the RPC, including security, accommodation, health care, welfare, programmes and activities, and education.

The Nauru RPC operates as an open centre and transferees are free to come and go at any time without restriction. Transport is provided to assist transferees to move around Nauru.

All transferees have access to a range of health services, including mental health care, broadly comparable to those available within the Australian community. If a transferee has a significant medical condition that cannot be treated locally, they may be transferred to Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.
The Government of Nauru is responsible for the management and administration of the refugee status determination process and has made determinations for most transferees.

Transferees found to be refugees by the Government of Nauru will be permitted to remain in Nauru for up to ten years, pending resettlement in Cambodia or any other third country. Transferees found not to be refugees are expected to return to their country of origin or to a third country where they have the right to reside.

There is a legal obligation under the Migration Act 1958 to take a transferee temporarily in Australia back to a regional processing country when that person no longer needs to be in Australia for the temporary purpose for which they were brought to Australia. Accordingly, when an individual no longer needs to be in Australia for that temporary purpose, the Department of Immigration and Border Protection considers whether it is reasonably practicable for them to be taken to a regional processing country. Any decision to return an individual to Nauru will be undertaken in a considered and compassionate manner.

The Australian Parliament has scrutinised the operations of the Nauru regional processing arrangements on a number of occasions and continues to do so.

A number of independent organisations, including the Commonwealth Ombudsman and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), conduct regular monitoring visits to RPCs. Transferees are able to communicate with bodies such as the Ombudsman, the ICRC and Amnesty International. The ICRC regularly inspects the RPCs with the permission of the Governments of Nauru and PNG.

Claims that medical practitioners and educators who express opinions on the outcome of the recent High Court case relating to regional processing are "risking jail by speaking out" are false and misleading. The Department and the Commissioner of the Australian Border Force have consistently and clearly stated this is not the case.

Many medical practitioners and educators who engage with individuals in their day-to-day work are not departmental staff and are therefore not subject to the secrecy and disclosure provisions in Part 6 of the ABF Act.

Secrecy provisions are not unique to the ABF Act. They are in line with provisions that apply to Commonwealth and partner agencies that have responsibilities for the management of confidential or protected information.

In the case of the Department, this involves the collection, use and holding of information that can be described as sensitive, confidential or protected, such as personal information about a visa applicant or information about border operations. The ABF Act prevents the disclosure of such information.

It does not prevent medical professionals from seeking the best clinical outcomes for their patients or educators from expressing concerns about schooling or other educational arrangements. More specifically, the secrecy provisions of the ABF Act do not apply if the information being disclosed is not protected information or was obtained outside a person's role in relation to the Department.

The ABF Act does not prevent the exercise of mandatory reporting obligations in relation to sexual assault or other risks to vulnerable people.

As Australia is a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Department ensures that the best interests of every child in immigration detention in Australia are taken into account as a primary consideration.

The Department continually reviews the placement of all children and their families in detention in Australia and, where eligible, will progress their release into the community as a priority.

As at 2 May 2016, there were no illegal maritime arrival children in held detention in Australia, compared with a peak of 1,992 children in July 2013.
Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention.
Yours sincerely
from the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, Mr Peter Dutton

PETITIONS

Statements

Mr VASTA (Bonner) (10:04): I am pleased to note that in the previous sitting fortnight
the House introduced an electronic, or e-petition, system, which provides petitioners with the
option of petitioning the House electronically. This system is accessed through the House of
Representatives website. Such a system was explored by the Procedure Committee in 2009
and it follows its recommendations and the consequential government response in 2015. The
first batch of e-petitions has been considered by the committee and these petitions are
currently available for members of the public to sign on the website. The Petitions Committee
is pleased that members of the public are able to create and sign petitions through this system
and anticipate, with some interest, an increase in petitions.

I look forward to overseeing the House's petitions process as the chair of the committee in
the 45th Parliament.

BUSINESS

Rearrangement

Ms SHARKIE (Mayo) (10:06): At the request of the member for Kennedy, I move:
That private members' business No. 1 be moved to a later hour this day.
Question agreed to.

BILLS

Foreign Acquisitions and Takeovers Amendment (Strategic Assets) Bill 2016

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Katter.
Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr KATTER (Kennedy) (10:09): I move:
That this bill be now read a second time.

I do not know about other Australians but I personally have difficulty seeing clearly, in my
rage over the sale of the Port of Darwin. And it will stay in the memory of Australians
indefinitely. I think that a state of shock would not be an overemphasis. In my entire life, I
can never remember a president of the United States ticking off the leader of a foreign
government, and particularly a key ally. Even the most cursory glance at the history of the
Second World War would indicate that you need naval bases. Many of the history books
simply say the war in the South Pacific was about the reach of the fighter plane. It is now, if
you look at the strategic papers which are available to all of us, the reach of a cruise missile or
a drone. But you need bases.

The only safe naval base as a port the Americans had in the southern Pacific—and I am is
defining the southern Pacific not as the Philippines, which I would describe more in terms of
the central Pacific—was Darwin. It now belongs to a person. If you read the quarterly essays, there was an excellent lead article recently about the Chinese clearly building defence strategic aggression facilities throughout the South China Sea.

The VIP countries, being Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines, have 500 million people living in them. I have not even included Japan there, which would take it up to over 650 million people. It is not as if they are small and they need to be terrified. I do not think they are going to sit idly by and let China take over all of the South China Sea.

I am not here to scare people or to worry people but I am here to say that in this place in 1938, the argument was put up that we did not need any defence. The British would come and save us was what Mr Lyons told us. And the ALP said that war was the product of capitalist warmongers. That is a quote from the soon-to-be leader of the ALP at the time—a man I had great respect for too, I might add. So that was the attitude here at the time.

If you were looking around for potential enemies and potential future trouble, you have just given your own port in the South Pacific over to them. You took it off our allies that saved us in the last war and gave it to their enemies. It is unbelievable.

For me, as a person who takes very great interest in economics and the economic welfare of our nation, we have only one outlet in the north-west quarter of Australia. In that quadrant of Australia which we call the north-west, there is only one deepwater port. In the south-east quadrant, there is no deepwater port. Unless you include a specific coal port, Abbot Point, there is nothing over here either. It is 3,000 kilometres to the nearest deepwater port that can be used like Darwin. That is one aspect to it.

The other aspect is that the only way you can get into or out of the north-west quadrant of Australia is past the gatekeeper and the gatekeeper, under the free trade agreement with China, can charge whatever the gatekeeper feels like charging. So the gatekeeper has complete control of all trade going in and out of the north-west quadrant of Australia. And the government, in its wisdom, has also given up the Ord. We have only six rivers we can develop in Australia for irrigation and the Ord happens to be one of them. A combination of environmentalists and First Australians will argue that you will not be able to touch the Fitzroy, so that will leave the Daley, the Gilbert or the Flinders. Heaven only knows, we have been trying for 30 years on the Flinders, the Burdekin and the Gilbert and we have not got anywhere. The one river that is being developed is the Ord. It is only one of six and it is no longer for the benefit of Australians. What benefit will we get out of it?

Under the free trade agreement, for new projects the Chinese can bring their own people in to man the project. We here in this place constantly speak of foreign investment. Tell me what foreign investment has developed anything in the last 15 years in this country. I say 15 years because the foreign investment into iron ore development in the Pilbara went in 15 years ago. There has been no development since. It has just been the takeover of existing assets, the Ord being a classic case in point. So what do we get out of it? If they are going to fly their people in they will be paying them Chinese wages, so there will not be a lot of PAYE tax or income tax. They will transfer price; they would be stupid not to. Every other corporation on earth transfers prices, so there will be no profits made in Australia. They fly in their own food—this happens all the time now in the mining areas—and their own accommodation. It is all built overseas and they bring it in. It does not even need to be assembled, actually, in most cases. So what do we get out of it? The port belongs to them, so they will get the benefit from this
stuff going through that port or whatever port it goes through. What advantage has Australia
got in the last 15 years out of foreign investment?

When I was one of the three or four people running the state of Queensland, for about a
decade or so, we always insisted that there be a benefit for Australia. Even in a very
controversial tourist development near Rockhampton, we insisted upon a benefit for
Australia—that we could see a benefit for Australia. In almost every mining arrangement that
was made, there was a massive benefit for Australia. I simply do not see the benefit now. I am
very pro Adani, but does anyone have any illusions that there will be profits made in
Australia? He owns the port, he owns the railway line, he owns the mine and he can bring his
own people in from overseas under 457 visas to man his operations—and he has already said
publicly that he would not be able to run the mine with just Australian labour.

What is taking place at one of our sugar mills is very interesting. They had an office and
they built a second office. The second office is occupied by people from a foreign country—
foreigners; they are not Australians—and the office that was running the sugar mill has got
smaller and smaller, and the office that is run by foreigners is getting bigger and bigger. There
are foreign key personnel now moving in as foremen and supervisors in the sugar mill itself,
and no-one has any illusions that we will lose 100 or 200 jobs there to people coming in.

Where has been the benefit for Australia in this? We were getting all of the tax and all of
the jobs, and now we will be getting none of the tax, or very little tax, and very few jobs. It
has been negative, and I defy anyone in this place to tell me what has happened. I will tell you
one of the things that has happened: the price of a house in Sydney has soared from $400,000
to an average now of $980,000. It has forced Australians out of their homes. That is one of the
many consequences we have seen. So there are people making a squillion dollars out of this
and profiting. (Time expired)

The SPEAKER: Is the motion seconded?

Ms Sharkie: I second this motion and reserve my right to speak.

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.

Banking Commission of Inquiry Bill 2016
First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Katter.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr KATTER (Kennedy) (10:20): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

In both of the recent cases, the seconders have had aeroplane delays of three and four hours
this morning. Mr Speaker, I thank very much the member from South Australia, and the
member from Victoria who has now arrived. It is rather interesting that we were nearly two
hours late getting in last night and two others have also been late getting here this morning.

I do not wish to go over all of the issues that we have canvassed previously, but I start off
with the one that is simple, that everyone can understand—that is, recourse lending. The
government have said there is no need for a full and far-reaching inquiry. Each of the banks have come along and said 'mea culpa.' They admit to doing the wrong thing. But this government have decided that they are not going to do anything about it. They just gave the banks the opportunity to say, 'We're guilty, we're sorry and we won't do it again,' and we are going to trust them.

Let's look at whether the banks have irresponsibly loaned money to people. I think most of us have heard about the movie The Big Short and have read the book The Big Short, where the person who personally made $2 billion out of what happened in the GFC started checking out the lending practices. One of the first accounts that he looked at was a strawberry picker of Mexican descent on $40,000 a year. The banks had given him $790,000 to buy a house. Clearly, he could never meet those repayments.

If that situation had existed in Australia, the banks would foreclose and the house would be sold for, say, $500,000 instead of the $800,000. The Australian banks would then go to the Mexican worker and he would be a debt slave to them for the rest of his life. These people can take bankruptcy but most people do not even know what bankruptcy is. The ordinary, knock-about sort of person does not know the implications of bankruptcy. So the banks keep the $300,000 on their books and this poor wage slave will have to work for the rest of his life to repay it. Of course, the banks play a rather interesting game here.

They take the bad debt and get the tax benefit, but they keep the asset on their books. That issue alone should warrant a searching inquiry. I can speak with some considerable authority because the cabinet of Queensland gave me primary responsibility, not ultimate, for the Bank of Queensland, and we had to take some very tough decisions. One of them led to the chair of the Bank of Queensland 'leaving'—and I choose my words carefully. I was attributed with sacking, according to the front page of The Courier Mail. Whatever the case may be, he left because he did not believe that we should back the sugar industry in Queensland. He believed it should be left to the tender mercy of the banks and he said 30 per cent of the industry had to go—the biggest industry in Queensland in every sense except for the monetary value of exports. Coal is bigger in a monetary export sense. But, in every other sense, it is the biggest industry in Queensland. It is the biggest employer. It is the base industry for every single city north of Brisbane. The sugar industry is a considerable element of the economy, if not the state's driving economic imperative. It is our fourth-biggest agricultural export industry and has been for most of Australia's history. Queensland has been about coal, cane, cattle and copper, but cane has always been the predominant industry.

Let me go back to the proposition that 30 per cent of the industry should go. We had a lower cost structure than Brazil, so we were going to be the last man standing. It was considered by the cabinet and by all parties concerned, including Sir Leo Hielscher, that we go in and rescue the industry with two per cent loans with no repayments for a few years and pull the industry through, and I think all bar about four per cent of the industry was pulled through. It is a very cyclical industry and the price doubled in that time period. We went to commercial interest rates from two per cent up to about 8½ per cent and we made about $300 million profit. That left the person who had been the chairman of the board looking extremely stupid, which was very appropriate, in my opinion. Get a handle on this: one-third of the greatest industry in the state of Queensland was going to be abolished by a person who did not know much about what he was talking about. It was not only saved but the public purse
made $300 million profit out of it. That is good government, and I praise Sir Leo Hielscher and William Gunn, the Treasurer, and I do not praise myself.

So I have experience in these areas. If I had to make that decision again now, I would not make it. Brazil has moved to ethanol—we cannot possibly compete; they are cross-subsidising from the ethanol pool. I make the point that these are considered judgements upon the economic realities that one faces in banking.

Having said those things, let me return to recourse lending, because this is just the most clear-cut case. This poor person in Australia paid the average price for a house in Sydney—let's be conservative and say he paid $800,000—and it was sold out from under him for $500,000. He owes the banks $300,000. He is a fitter working for the council in Sydney, he has a $300,000 debt and he has no house. He has to pay $40,000 a year for a house for accommodation because he does not have a house now, and he has a $300,000 debt to pay off. If he were an American, the $300,000 would be written off. After all, who would know whether a fitter on $72,000 a year is going to be able to repay a mortgage of $800,000? Would this 24-year-old fitter know that or would a bank know that? Who is the most culpable in making this criminally irresponsible loan? The bank, of course. What does the bank lose? Nothing. They have the house, they get their money back and they get this poor bloke as a debt slave for the rest of his life thrown into the bargain. And he has to keep his mouth shut because he has been under duress and signed all these agreements where he cannot open his mouth and say what has taken place. In America they call it jingle mail—'Sorry, Mr Bank, I can't pay you. Here are the keys to the house. Bye-bye. I leave with no debt.' The fitter I speak of lost his house and lost the money that he put in the house, quite rightly, because he was irresponsible as a fitter and turner in borrowing that money, but the bank has been infinitely more irresponsible.

Again I speak with authority. For five or six years of my life before I came into this place I was mining and running cattle, but I also had a very lucrative insurance agency. If we sold contracts that the clients could not fulfil, we would be sacked. We would lose our agency; we would lose our business—and quite rightly so. It was our duty to see that that person could afford to pay the $50 or $60 a week, as it then was half a century ago, because he would not know, but I was paid to know as a professional in this field.

There is no responsibility placed upon the bank to make a responsible loan. They get away scot-free and they have skimmed the poor beggar who borrowed the money for $200,000 or $300,000—that is the way this works out—and they have skimmed the public purse as well. We have had numerous of these cases, and it gives me no joy to say that another day out of our lives was lost last week with another person who wanted to do away with himself.

This comes from a discretionary punitive power that the banks have, and I know because I got hit with this myself. I was considered an at-risk proposition, for a number of reasons that I will not go into, so the banks put a 2½ per cent discretionary punitive charge on me. Then, because I was in an at-risk industry—it was during the days of the cattle collapse—they put another 2½ per cent on me. Because I was in an at-risk area, as we were going through a long period of drought, they put another 2½ per cent on me. Then they insisted upon certain charges, which put another two per cent on. The official rate was 17 per cent; I was on 27 per cent. (Time expired)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Rob Mitchell): Is the motion seconded?
Ms McGowan: I am pleased to second the motion on behalf of my colleague and I reserve my right to speak.

The DEPUTY 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.

BUSINESS

Rearrangement

Mr KATTER (Kennedy) (10:32): For a number of reasons, I crave the House's indulgence and postpone the introduction of the Dairy Produce Amendment (Milk Marketing Board) Bill 2016 to the next sitting Monday. There have been some problems with drafting which we could not fix on Friday.

Rearrangement

Ms SHARKIE (Mayo) (10:33): At the request of the member for Denison, who I believe has been delayed due to inclement weather in Melbourne, I request to fix a later hour this day for the time for presenting the Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Foreign Political Donations) Bill 2016.

Rearrangement

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler) (10:33): At the request of the member for Franklin, I ask that a later hour this day be fixed as the time for presenting the Aged Care (Living Longer Living Better) Amendment (Review) Bill 2016. Briefly, due to weather conditions in Melbourne, flights from Tasmania have been delayed and hence the Tasmanian representatives are unable to be here at this time.

MOTIONS

Domestic Violence And Technology Facilitated Abuse

Ms FLINT (Boothby) (10:34): I move:

That this House:

(1) recognises the importance of changing the national culture to make disrespecting women un-Australian;

(2) welcomes the Government's $100 million Women's Safety Package to combat domestic violence;

(3) supports efforts at the upcoming COAG meeting to engage all levels of government and the broader community on this shared national endeavour;

(4) places on record its deep concern about the use of new technology and in particular smart phone tracking applications by family violence perpetrators to obtain and monitor the location of their victims; and

(5) calls on all governments to consider this as part of their strategy to combat domestic violence and technology facilitated abuse.

I move this motion today to continue to raise awareness of the terrible problem of domestic violence in our community and the steps the Turnbull government is taking to address this most serious of issues. The Turnbull government is leading the way in terms of policy development and funding and, through COAG, is working with our state government counterparts to ensure all levels of government are doing their part.
Addressing the scourge of domestic violence, however, is not just the responsibility of government; it is the responsibility of each and every Australian. We must all do our part to make it un-Australian to disrespect women. I note the Prime Minister and the Minister for Women this morning condemned the appalling behaviour and language by US presidential candidate Donald Trump in relation to women. It is crucial that we all condemn such actions because, as the respect.gov.au website records, there is a clear link between violence towards women and attitudes of disrespect and gender inequality.

Even though most Australians recognise that violence against women is a serious issue, fewer people realise where the behaviours and attitudes can start—in childhood. Adults have the strongest influence on young people's attitudes about disrespect towards women. But when we see it in action, we tend not to get involved. Without realising it, what we say and do is shaping young people's views about more serious behaviours. We need to, as respect.gov.au says, stop violence against women at the start.

The problem of domestic violence in Australia is incredibly serious. Statistically speaking, according to a 2012 Australian Bureau of Statistics personal safety survey, one in three women has been a victim of physical or sexual violence since the age of 15 by someone known to them. The same survey found that one in four women have been emotionally abused by a partner. But the most distressing figure comes from the 2015 Australian Institute of Criminology report, which found that almost one woman dies almost every week at the hands of a current or former partner.

Addressing the awful problem of domestic violence has been at the forefront of the Turnbull-Liberal-coalition government agenda. The first act of the Turnbull government was to announce a $100 million Women's Safety Package on 24 September 2015. At the time of the announcement, a staggering 63 women had been killed by a current or former partner for the year. I know the Prime Minister and the Minister for Women have a special interest in this issue as they have again demonstrated today. The Women's Safety Package is part of the Turnbull government's approach to take real, practical and immediate action to keep women and children safe. The $100 million package focuses on improving training for frontline workers, enhancing service delivery and providing the best educational resources to change attitudes in our community.

The Turnbull government, in partnership with the states and territories, has also launched a $30 million national campaign to change young people's attitudes to women and violence. The campaign website has received almost 400,000 views and there have been more than 32 million online views of the TV commercials. Crucially, we are doing a number of specific things and have funded a range of specific activities to keep women and children safe. In relation to Indigenous women, who are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised as a result of family violence, we have announced up to $15 million to help police in Queensland to better respond to domestic violence in remote communities, $1.4 million to extend the Community Engagement Police Officers program in remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory and up to $1.1 million to help remote Indigenous communities prevent and better respond to the incidence of domestic violence through targeted support.

There is a range of frontline services, support services, education, as I have mentioned, and technology initiatives that we are undertaking. And I would again like to place on record my deep concern about the use of new technology and in particular smart phone tracking...
applications by family violence perpetrators. This is something that we must have all governments working on as part of their strategy to combat domestic violence and technology facilitated abuse.

I commend the Prime Minister, the Minister for Women and the government for all they are doing to address domestic violence, and to support and protect Australian women.

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

**Mr Alexander:** I second the motion and reserve the right to speak.

**Ms BURNEY (Barton) (10:40):** I thank the member for Boothby for bringing this motion to the House. It is a very important issue and one that is very topical at the moment. I come to this debate with considerable experience in this space—experience from my time as shadow minister for human services, 40 years community advocacy and personal experience.

The genesis of domestic violence does not discriminate. Intergenerational poverty, neglect and often historical violence add to this terrible mix. I think it is important, though, for me to put on record exactly what this $100 million commitment is really about. There are a lot of new and innovative ways for perpetrators to inflict harm on their targets, but the solutions are still mostly the same: better legal help for victims, helping victims navigate the complex legal system, reforming systems and having community based approaches. This motion does congratulate the government for the $100 million funding commitment, but let us be very clear: the domestic violence package does nothing to boost the frontline services available to women escaping violence. Of the $100 million offered, not a cent will go towards shelters or refuges.

While state Liberal governments, like the one in New South Wales, are slashing services and refuges are closing, this government is doing a very similar thing. Refuges are closing their doors, and women have increasingly fewer places to turn. Despite the promise of $10 million a year for legal assistance for women and children escaping violence, this government is still cutting funding to community legal centres by $35 million per year. If this government is really committed to helping victims of domestic violence, it will start funding frontline services rather than window-dressing. Announcing GPS trackers, safe phones and CCTV does not make up for 30 per cent cuts to community legal centres—not when the Productivity Commission tells us that every dollar spent on CLCs saves the community $18.

There is also the issue of the Minister for Women, who the member for Boothby mentioned. The Minister for Women does not support domestic violence leave in the Commonwealth Public Service agreements being negotiated, despite the fact that the ABC's new enterprise agreement will include domestic violence leave. I suggest that supporting domestic violence leave would be a very good place to start for the Minister for Women. Why do you have to trade-off annual leave to get some support if you are in a domestic violence situation? It really is quite unacceptable.

The member for Boothby rightly mentioned the issue for Aboriginal women, who are 35 times more likely to be hospitalised. We know those statistics very well. The response of this government to that particular issue is nothing short of despicable. Half a billion dollars worth of funding for Indigenous affairs has been cut, and much of that funding was designed to prevent cycles of violence in our communities. In New South Wales, programs like Hey Sis, which is working with communities, have not been able to secure any government money.
That is a program that is community driven. The Commonwealth has also withdrawn all of its funding from the Tackling Violence program, which uses local Rugby League teams to achieve exactly the kind of cultural change that this motion is talking about.

It is important to put on record that we all collectively are very concerned about this issue. It does not mean that any side has the high moral ground, but it is important, from my perspective, that when there is a self-congratulatory motion like this in the House in relation to domestic violence funding we need to be honest about what that funding is actually for. As I said, it is not making one single additional bed available. For people who are in domestic violence situations, for women who are in domestic violence situations, there needs to be the security that they will be able to go to a safe place. You would think that a government's priority would be making those safe places available instead of reducing availability—particularly, as we have seen the Baird government do in New South Wales.

At the end of the day, domestic violence is the responsibility of all. There are no two ways about that. This is not a time to congratulate ourselves on this issue, because it is, in fact, getting worse. I support efforts to combat this issue at COAG. And I support, of course, additional funding for family violence services, but not at the cost of cuts such as the ones we have seen.

Mr ALEXANDER (Bennelong) (10:45): Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this important motion on domestic violence, raised by the honourable member for Boothby. As a White Ribbon ambassador, I have spoken on this vital issue a number of times and I congratulate every member who has also spoken on this issue. I have stood here on several occasions and talked about some of the horrifying numbers that summarise the extent of this problem. One in six Australian women has experienced violence from a current or former partner and 63 women have been killed so far this year. This is a problem that strikes at the core of our nation.

The Turnbull government are unequivocal in their position that domestic violence is absolutely unacceptable, which is why we are implementing measures to prevent and respond to this matter as a key priority. We are currently providing over half a billion dollars to frontline services to support vulnerable Australians, including survivors of domestic violence. The National Domestic Violence Order Scheme will ensure the protection of survivors through an automatic national registration of offenders rather than the current state-by-state system.

I also welcome the government's announcement of a $100 million package of measures to provide a safety net for women and children at high risk of experiencing violence. The package will improve frontline support and services, leverage innovative technologies to keep women safe and provide education and resources to help change community attitudes to violence and abuse. The package also includes $21 million for specific measures to help Indigenous women in communities. Indigenous women are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised as a result of family violence. So this commitment is essential.

Today's package is in addition to the government's $100 million investment in the second action plan of the national plan and the $30 million National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, jointly funded by the states and territories. This money will be essential in helping victims and I look forward to seeing these funds start to make a difference.
on the ground. I would also like to speak specifically about the role of technology in protecting women.

The motion we are discussing raises the concern that phone-tracking systems can be used by perpetrators to monitor the location of their victims. This is a real concern and something that must be addressed. However, as is often the case, technology can also offer positive opportunities for the protection of women and the deterrence of violence. There is a company based in my electorate of Bennelong who seem to have perfected this technology—a small company by the name of 3M! We are touching or surrounded by 3M products right here in this place right now. Many people around the world know this global scientific innovation company as the inventor of the humble Post-It note. Yet, as someone who has been fortunate enough to tour the 3M innovation centre in North Ryde on multiple occasions, I can verify that they make much more than the revolutionary stationery product. Products by 3M can be found on aeroplanes, dusty outback road signs and even in surgery on the human body.

I spoke to this earlier this year: 3M have developed a GPS based domestic violence prevention system, empowering women to go about their normal lives freely and without threat or constraint. This technology identifies the victim and perpetrators, then sends alerts when they come into proximity of each other. These alerts work at several ranges, from several kilometres to 100 metres—at which point imminent danger alerts are triggered. These alerts go to a monitoring centre and directly to the victim as well, so they can take the most appropriate action. The system also features a distress button that can alert law enforcement authorities.

This system has been trialled in many locations around the world with great success. Spain has been using the system since 2009. In that time, 3,300 pairs of the system have been issued, resulting in not one victim being killed. On average, the panic button is activated 30 times per month.

The last few years have seen renewed commitments to end the scourge of domestic violence but fighting domestic violence needs to take place on many fronts. The government’s new measures and funds will go a long way to supporting those who desperately need our help. But there is more always more that can be done, and I commend 3M on its continued commitment to helping victims and preventing abuse. We look forward to working with all Australians to say that enough is enough and that women and children must be safe in their homes and on the streets, and that domestic and family violence is never acceptable.

Ms BUTLER (Griffith) (10:50): I welcome the continued political attention being given to family violence. I also call for that attention to be matched with action. There are delays from the Turnbull government in relation to the national plan to reduce violence against women and their children. The government is also slow to address technology facilitated abuse, which is the subject of this motion, and the government is refusing to deal with some other areas in urgent need of reform, like cross-examination in family law.

The national plan is underpinned by three action plans. I am very concerned that the third action plan, which was due to commence in July this year, has yet to be published even in draft form for comment. The government’s website claims the third action plan is due for release in mid-2016. I wrote to the government on 3 August 2016 asking when it would be published. It was not until 30 September that I received a response from Minister Cash, who blamed her delay in publishing the action plan on state elections. Minister Porter also wrote to
me indicating that the national plan would be published after the ACT election in October. But there is not even a draft or proposed version of the plan available. I also wrote to the government on 4 October asking when we can expect to see the 2015-16 progress report on the national plan.

The government published a national evaluation plan in June 2014 and that national evaluation plan said:

Annual progress reports will be made publicly available. They will be a key mechanism for governments to share key learnings, discuss barriers to implementation, identify gaps and emerging issues and to make necessary amendments to activities as required.

The annual progress report for the year 2014-15 is publicly available, but the annual progress report from the 2015-16 year does not appear to be. So I have asked the government for a copy or, if it has not been done yet, which is possibly the case, to let me know when it will be done. I sent a request on 4 October and I am looking forward to receiving an answer.

I turn now to the subject of this motion, which is technology facilitated abuse. This is the second time in recent months that a motion of this kind has been moved in the parliament. The last one was in the 44th Parliament, towards the end of it. It was in very similar terms. But in fact the government has failed to move promptly on technology facilitated abuse. The opposition, as it has been so often the case with the Turnbull government, has had to take the running on this issue. So last year in October, the member for Gellibrand and I moved a private member's bill in this place seeking to criminalise the phenomena that is colloquial referred to as 'revenge porn', which is the sharing of intimate images or videos without consent or threats to do so. That bill was tabled in October last year. We sought the government's support for the bill. In fact the then member for Dobell actually spoke in favour of the bill, and I was very grateful to her for doing so.

But the government has dragged the chain on responding to the challenge of non-consensual sharing of intimate images and videos in this country and the consequence is even though some of the states have started to seek to criminalise this conduct, certainly not all of the jurisdictions have done so and there is no overarching Commonwealth law that can provide some consistency across the nation. In fact, there was a Senate inquiry into that bill. And in that Senate inquiry, the Commonwealth Department of Public Prosecutions submitted that there should be Commonwealth law in relation to this phenomena. It was made very clear that there should be law in relation to this egregious conduct that is deeply harmful and hurtful, particularly to the victims of it, who tend to be women and young women.

The government has refused to support legislation to criminalise revenge porn in federal legislation. Originally, Minister Cash wrote to the member for Gellibrand and I saying it was a matter for COAG, but, of course, in November, at the Law, Crime and Community Safety Council, there was a working group paper put up to that council, for consideration subsequently at COAG, that dealt with issues of technology facilitated abuse. That working group paper ultimately did go to COAG, and yet, nine months later, there has been no action from the Commonwealth on revenge porn.

Labor committed, at the federal election, that we would legislate to criminalise revenge porn if we were to win the election. We also committed to working with the states to criminalise covert installation of surveillance apps on mobile phones. These things are urgent,
as is the reform of cross-examination, which the Liberal government has also refused to commit to or even agree to. The government should be ashamed.

Mr HASTIE (Canning) (10:55): I rise today to support the member for Boothby's call for the House to recognise the importance of eradicating domestic violence against women and children. The COAG Advisory Panel on Reducing Violence against Women and their Children notes in its final report some alarming statistics. One in three Australian women has experienced physical violence; almost one in five has experienced sexual violence; one in four Australian women has experienced physical or sexual violence at the hands of a current or former male partner; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised from partner assaults than the general female population; and women with disabilities are more likely to experience violence than women without a disability.

To localise this problem, in Canning, my electorate, in 2014-15 Pat Thomas House, a domestic and family violence crisis accommodation service, assisted or housed a combined total of 280 women and 417 children. Sadly, not all instances of domestic violence are reported. For example, Pat Thomas House notes that there were some 467 women and 636 children who were unattended in the same year, with reasons including wrong phone number, the call going to voicemail or the number having been disconnected.

No woman or child should have to live with domestic violence. The coalition has already implemented a number of strategies to reduce violence against women and children, including the 'Stop it at the start' campaign, which aims to break the cycle of violence at a young age through education and increased awareness; the eSafetyWomen website, which teaches women how to protect themselves and their children online; the $100 million Women's Safety Package, which includes funding for innovative technology to keep women safe; and the second action plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022, which underpins our whole-of-government approach and focuses on understanding diverse experiences of violence, improving perpetrator interventions and driving whole-of-community action to prevent violence. Heading up the public policy effort for the coalition is the Minister for Women, Senator Michaelia Cash, who is unrelenting in her pursuit of better outcomes for women and children who experience family violence. Last year, the minister visited Canning to help me host a women's safety forum, the purpose of which was to begin a local conversation about stopping domestic violence before it starts. I said it at the time and I will say it again: I am disappointed that more men did not attend the event. While the government is doing everything it can to increase community awareness about how domestic violence starts, the change must come from homes, schools, community groups and sporting clubs. We need an organic revolution of sorts, and men need to be involved. I was disappointed by the absence of men at that meeting and I seek to bring more men into this conversation.

I am pleased to inform the House that in Canning this is starting to happen. In July, the Peel Community Development Group was granted $147,000 by the coalition for its 'Peel says no to violence' project. The purpose of this project is to create a regional alliance against domestic violence made up of business ambassadors and community leaders. The alliance will be used to trial and promote a zero-tolerance community education campaign, with a full evaluation to be undertaken after. I commend the Peel Community Development Group on its grassroots initiative and I look forward to working with the group throughout the trial.
It is my hope that the government continues to work with local people to deliver local solutions and put an end to violence against women and children. Government can only get us so far. It must start with local leadership. As I look across the floor of the chamber, I am proud to say that I am working with the member opposite and the member for Mallee. We are going to be hosting events over the next year or so to promote stopping violence against women.

Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (11:00): I am pleased to rise today to speak on the motion, because it is an opportunity to consider a public cause and a private effect. Family violence is the leading cause of injury and death of Australian women under 45 years old. More than two women are murdered by an intimate partner every single week. This happens everywhere, every day and it affects women of every age, every income, every postcode, every religion and every race. It does not come out of nowhere. The Prime Minister has said that violence against women begins with disrespecting women. I believe this is very true. And it is appropriate that the motion calls for a change to a culture that normalises disrespect for women, because the effects of this cultural standard are borne out in research and borne out in practice.

The findings of a report last year by VicHealth are incredibly sobering. One in four young people—25 per cent—feel it is 'normal' for a male to pressure a female into sex. Fifteen per cent of young people think it is acceptable for a boy to pressure a girl for sex if they are both drunk. One in four young people—again, 25 per cent—think it is reasonable if a man sometimes slaps his girlfriend when he is drunk or has had a bellyful. Sixteen per cent of young people think that women should know their place. This is absolutely frightening. This survey was conducted in 2015, one year ago.

Long-term cultural change begins with this generation but cannot succeed without the support of the next generation. It is true what the Prime Minister says—that not all instances of disrespecting women will result in violence against women—but violence against women always begins with disrespect for women. We owe it to the next generation of young women to ensure that we instil a culture of respect in the next generation of young men. But how do we do that?

I am reminded of the Canberra community response to the brutal and tragic murder of Tara Costigan last year. Just as Canberrans have come together to support the children of Tara Costigan, we need to come together, as a nation and as a community, to take action against this blight on our society and this deep-rooted cultural problem—and it is deep rooted. Action begins when we talk about the issue, call it out for what it is and stop making excuses. This can be difficult, because often women are experiencing physical, emotional or economic violence at the hands of someone they love. It means raising the issue with our family and friends, in our schools and workplaces, at our local footy clubs and walking groups, and speaking out when we see it. It means strong leadership from our politicians; community, business and sporting leaders; and policymakers. It means commending the organisations who have signed up to the White Ribbon Workplace Accreditation Pilot Project, including the Australian Defence Force. It means adopting a zero-tolerance approach and having the courage to act when we see. It means remembering that only weak men hit women. And it means providing funding to legal, housing, health and child protection services, the police,
justice and the courts to ensure every part of our community is working to end violence against women.

Tara Costigan's death was a shocking and tragic reminder that family violence is happening today in our community, behind doors that we must do everything we can to open. It is a reminder that there is a role for the community: to support and to educate. Today, on the day I rise to support this motion, ACT police will attend to eight separate reports of family violence here in Canberra. This is unacceptable. There is no such thing as 'a woman's place'. This is a tragedy yet a challenge. It is up to all of us to rise and meet it.

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.

Vietnam Veterans Day

Mr WATTS (Gellibrand) (11:06): I ask leave of the House to amend notice No. 7, private members' business, in the terms circulated to honourable members.

Leave granted.

Mr WATTS: I move:
That this House:
(1) recognises that 18 August is Vietnam Veterans Day;
(2) notes that:
   (a) prior to 1987, Vietnam Veterans Day was referred to as Long Tan Day;
   (b) 2016 marks the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan, a battle that took place on 18 August 1966; and
   (c) at the Battle of Long Tan:
       (i) less than 120 soldiers from Delta Company faced over 2,000 soldiers;
       (ii) 18 Australian soldiers lost their lives during battle, with 25 more injured; and
       (iii) over 245 Vietnamese soldiers also lost their lives;
(3) further notes that:
   (a) approximately 60,000 Australians served in Vietnam; and
   (b) upon their return to Australia, many Vietnam Veterans struggled with post-traumatic stress disorder and a disregard from an Australian public unsupportive of the Vietnam War;
(4) acknowledges:
   (a) the soldiers who fought alongside Australians;
   (b) the hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese soldiers and civilians that lost their lives during the Vietnam War;
   (c) the sacrifices of the Vietnamese are rarely mentioned in Australia's collective stories of the Vietnam War; and
   (d) that Vietnam Veterans deserve the respect and recognition of all Australian Society; and
(5) recognises the:
(a) bravery and heroism of the soldiers of Delta Company that fought at Long Tan; and

(b) sacrifices made by Australian and former Republic of Vietnam soldiers that fought alongside each other during the Vietnam War."

On 18 August this year, as every year, Australians commemorated Vietnam Veterans Day. This year’s commemoration had particular significance, however, as it marked the anniversary of the battle for which Vietnam Veterans Day was selected and for which the day was formerly known: the Battle of Long Tan. Long Tan is a battle that is already etched in Australian military and cultural history. The story of the deeds of Delta Company 6 RAR in the Long Tan rubber plantation are now well known. Amidst torrents of rain and as bullets and artillery poured down on an isolated Australian infantry company in the Long Tan rubber plantation, many of the soldiers that were caught there that day thought it would be their last. Wave after wave of Vietcong forces drove themselves at these young men until, after hours of fighting, the battle concluded. As assistance arrived to bury the dead, there was the realisation that fewer than 120 soldiers from Delta Company had defeated as many as 2,500 Vietcong.

News of this battle became an international news story, and whilst we celebrated the heroics of these brave young men, as we know, for many of them, the real battle was yet to come. Upon returning to Australia, returning soldiers found themselves without a warm welcome or the recognition they deserve. They found themselves facing new foes: fighting against mental illnesses, such as PTSD, and, to our ongoing national shame, they were also fighting a hostile public—terrible names, name-calling, being spat on, and rejection from ex-service clubs all characterized the experience of these returning soldiers. For those of us who were not there at the time, such as me, it seems incomprehensible. For the returned Australian servicemen, it must have been equally incomprehensible, but also deeply personally affecting.

In time, we began to recognise the sacrifice that these servicemen made. We remember the bravery of the soldiers from Delta Company who were outnumbered on that day. We remember their bravery, just as we remember the bravery of the 161st Battery of the Royal New Zealand Artillery, whose deadly accuracy fended off the oncoming threat in Long Tan. We even remember the bravery of our former foe and acknowledge their pain and sacrifices, as they do ours. But what the pages of time have not justly reflected is the contribution of Vietnamese allies, who, along with thousands of civilians, bravely aided the ADF personnel throughout the war. When Saigon fell, in 1975, we did what we could to repay their efforts by opening our hearts and our borders to those that were fleeing persecution. Regardless of one’s views on the war, what is undeniable is that this has been an Australian immigration success story, and one that is no more apparent than in my home electorate of Gellibrand. Walking down the main street in Footscray, where I live and where my electorate office is based, it is apparent that the Vietnamese community has successfully established itself here, with restaurants and other small businesses all adding to the multicultural success story that is my home community.

We realise the vibrancy of the Australian Vietnamese community through their festivals, which we celebrate jointly, such as the Tet or Moon Lantern festivals, and so on. We enjoy the Vietnamese contribution to Australia through their most famous sons and daughters, such as the former Young Australian of the Year Khoa Do and his equally talented brother Ahn. And, finally, we continue to benefit from their connection to home as greater opportunities for trade and investment are realised in this emerging powerhouse. It is these contributions to our
great society that continue to promote the benefits of multiculturalism and make Australia the vibrant place that it is today.

So, as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan, I ask that we not only consider the bravery of our defence personnel, but also the bravery of the Vietnamese who served with Australian forces in the Vietnam war, and their contribution, as well as that of the broader Vietnamese community in Australia. Like Australian returned servicemen, those who fought alongside Australians in the Vietnam War have struggled for recognition. Those who remained in Vietnam frequently faced very difficult circumstances indeed.

Those who were offered a second life in Australia faced different challenges. Like Australian returned servicemen, the recognition of these allies in Australia has evolved over time. The personal sacrifices and service of these men are being increasingly recognised, and Australian-Vietnamese servicemen are now a feature of Anzac Day ceremonies in electorates like mine with significant Australian Vietnamese communities, not as a political statement, but as a recognition and commemoration of the personal sacrifices of service made by these men.

So, today, I want to add my recognition of their service in this place. So much of what we do as members of parliament in this place is about recognition and acknowledgement. Representatives of the community saying in the people's chamber, 'We see what it is that has happened, and that this is a part of our community, and that it matters and it has meaning.' This is what I say today to all the people who served in the Vietnam War who live in my community today. We see it, we recognise it and we acknowledge it.

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

Ms LANDRY (Capricornia—Deputy Nationals Whip) (11:11): I second the motion. In the past year, many significant battles in Australian history have been recognised, such as the Centenary of Anzac, 100 years since the battle of Pozieres, in France, and many others. Recently, it was my privilege, and indeed an honour, to be invited to Cockscomb Veterans Bush Retreat at Cawarral, near Yeppoon, to mark two equally important occasions: Vietnam Veterans Day and the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan.

In 1987, the then Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, declared Long Tan Day, on August 18, as Vietnam Veterans Day. However he did not have that date gazetted as a military historic date. Fifty years on, since the battle of Long Tan, it is now time the Commonwealth government got on with the job of officially gazetting the date.

I have approached the Minister for Veteran's Affairs and I will continue to maintain my support of our Vietnam veterans, pushing at their request for the gazetting of this day. Already, I have been in contact with many national Vietnam veterans organisations seeking their input into an official day to be gazetted. I will continue to keep the House informed of my progress. And I will continue to stay in touch with the minister to provide him with the views of those I speak with.

Meanwhile, to those who specifically served their country in the controversial Vietnam War, your country owes you a thank you. So, as a federal member of the Australian Parliament, I turn to you with dignity and say to each and every Vietnam Vet: thank you. Thank you for doing your job as armed servicemen and women. Thank you for risking your
lives. Thank you for looking out for your mates on the battlefield and thank you for being here with us today.

Vietnam was the longest war Australia has participated in—from 1962 to 1973—and the battle of Long Tan was one of the historic battles that epitomises the courage and grit that Aussie diggers are made of. Fifty years ago in the Long Tan rubber plantation about 105 Aussies and a few New Zealand blokes began to engage with the enemy, which outnumbered them by somewhere between 1,500 to 2,500 Viet Cong soldiers. They battled it out until they were finally joined by reinforcements. Fifty years on we salute and commemorate their bravery.

As I mentioned earlier, I was fortunate enough to attend a ceremony at Cockscomb, near Cawarral, to mark 50 years since Long Tan. It was put on with the help of $2,500 federal government grant. The grant was applied for under the Capricornia and Rockhampton region RSL sub-branch on behalf of B Company, 2RAR, which served in Vietnam from 1967 to 1968.

All wars carry great trauma, but the soldiers who served in Vietnam under Australian government policy of the 1960s and 1970s arguably had one of the greatest traumas inflicted upon them on their return home. History well shows that Vietnam veterans were mistreated, abused and even spat upon when they arrived back in Australia. Again, I say to our Vietnam veterans, it was not your fault that the government of your day ordered you to Vietnam, it was not your fault that the Australian policy of the day was to align with the United States presence in Vietnam and it was not your fault that you experienced atrocities that will haunt you for the rest of your lives. The way you were mistreated on your return home should go down as one of the most disgraceful acts by Australian citizens against fellow citizens in our modern history, and I am sorry that you experienced this adversity and hurt.

Finally, on the 50th anniversary to mark Long Tan, let us reflect on those who did not make it back or who have since passed away. May they rest in peace. Lest we forget.

Mr HAYES (Fowler—Chief Opposition Whip) (11:15): I also thank the member for Gellibrand for his motion and allowing us to reflect on Vietnam Veterans Day and marking the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan, which took place on 18 August 1966. To commence my contribution I would like to read from the book written by Harry Smith, who led the company that engaged in the Long Tan battle. He says:

The Battle of Long Tan on 18 August 1966 was a savage action in which 108 men from my former Delta Company 6RAR, supported by artillery, fought off an enemy regiment of four regular Viet Cong and NVA battalions. My company sadly lost 17 killed and 23 wounded, but the enemy's casualties were in the order of 500 killed and 800 wounded. The battle was applauded as one of the most savage company actions of Australian involvement and was later selected by the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia as their icon of that war.

The Battle of Long Tan depicts the unwavering bravery and struggle endured by our veterans during Australia’s involvement in Vietnam. The battle is still considered one of the most significant engagements involving the Australian military. As is the case throughout our military history, New Zealand soldiers were also lending critical support, in the finest traditions of Anzac. New Zealand artillery provided an invaluable source of support and assistance throughout that battle. Vietnam veterans deserve the same amount of pride, praise and commemoration from our nation as those who served so gallantly in Gallipoli, Tobruk
and the Kokoda Trail. Out of the 60,000 Australians who served in Vietnam, 521 were killed and more than 3,000 were wounded. It is certainly to our nation's shame that it was not until some 29 years later that this country offered veterans a welcome-home parade.

Since that war, Australia has welcomed a large number of Vietnamese refugees to our shores who today make a tremendous contribution to the fabric of our multicultural society. As I represent an electorate where 20 per cent of my constituents are of Vietnamese origin, I am certainly aware of the level of appreciation that the Vietnamese community still has to the Australian soldiers who fought so valiantly in the Vietnam conflict. More than 1,000 Australians travelled to Vietnam to mark the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan but were left confused, disappointed and unable to attend the formal Long Tan ceremony that had been so long planned, with very little notice from the Vietnamese authorities who withdrew permission for that event. For many, this would have been the first time since the war that they had travelled to Vietnam—such a very emotional period for them. It is only right at this time that we also remember the quarter of a million Vietnamese soldiers who died fighting to defend South Vietnam and the more than two million Vietnamese who left their land, fleeing the repressive forces of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in search of freedom and democracy.

While many South Vietnamese soldiers made the ultimate sacrifice on the battlefields, those who survived suffered greatly from debilitating conditions and the treatment they received at the hands of the communist regime. In Vietnam today, Vietnam veterans are among the most disadvantaged and receive little or no support from their government because of their efforts to defend South Vietnam. These Vietnamese veterans are not treated honourably or equitably. They are treated as second-class citizens. For many years now, the Vietnamese Invalid Veterans Association, as well as the ARVN association of Australia, have been supporting these ex-servicemen in Vietnam who fought for freedom and democracy. I also acknowledge the efforts of Vietnamese Sydney Radio for their support of invalid veterans. These organisations have made a phenomenal difference in the lives of invalid Vietnamese veterans through their financial support.

I commend all those who served in this conflict, and I think at this time we should also remember— (Time expired)

Mr CRAIG KELLY (Hughes) (11:21): It is a pleasure to rise to speak on this motion and to support the comments of the members for Gellibrand, Capricornia and Fowler. We owe a great deal to every serviceman who served in the Vietnam War, because ultimately the Vietnam War was about stopping the spread of communism. Later this week we will have the Prime Minister of Singapore visit our parliament, and I think it is worthwhile, when we reflect back on the Vietnam War, to look at the words of Lee Kuan Yew, in his autobiography:

Although American intervention failed in Vietnam, it bought time for the rest of Southeast Asia. In 1965, when the US military moved massively into South Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines faced internal threats from armed communist insurgents and the communist underground was still active in Singapore.

He continued, 'America's action in Vietnam enabled the non-communist South-East Asia to put their own houses in order. By 1975, when the war ended, they were in better shape to stand up to the communists.' Further:
Had there been no US intervention, the will of these countries to resist them would have melted and Southeast Asia would have most likely gone communist. The prosperous emerging market economies of ASEAN … were nurtured during the Vietnam War …

They are the words of Lee Kuan Yew and that is why we should always remember with great pride the service and the sacrifice of the Australians who served in Vietnam and also the South Vietnamese.

At that time, it was very easy for people to believe that the future and the best way for prosperity for the average person was through a Communist regime. We have seen the results after the war, when two million Vietnamese fled their country and an estimated half a million actually perished at sea. We have seen the great prosperity in South-East Asia, of nations like Singapore and the growing prosperity of Thailand. As Lee Kuan Yew says, that would not have happened if it was not for the bravery of our soldiers in support with the Americans of Vietnam.

We also need to look at the situation in Vietnam today. We need to give that nation our support. They are trying to introduce democratic reforms, but there are still significant issues with human rights. Recently in Vietnam we have seen an incident where there was a toxic release from a Taiwanese steel plant that poisoned many millions of fish and caused an estimated $500 million worth of damage. Many Vietnamese in that province took to the streets to protest about that, but police in helmets and with shields were deployed against them.

We hope that Vietnam learns from its surrounding countries. The way to increase their prosperity and the way to uplift their people is to open their country, to open it to free trade, allow greater human rights and freedom in the country and allow the media to be free. Although these may seem short term to the rules of Vietnam and are difficult issues, ultimately, that can only make the country much stronger.

Vietnam Veterans Day on 18 August is a very important day in our calendar, something that all Australians should remember. We should also remember with shame the way that many of our servicemen and troops were treated when they returned. That was a terrible mistake and a stain upon our nation, but we can right that by remembering and saying with great pride— (Time expired)

Mr ROB MITCHELL (McEwen) (11:26): I rise in support of this motion from my friend the member for Gellibrand. Across the electorate of McEwen, we have a long and rich history supporting our armed forces. Since the Boer War, the area has trained many thousands of soldiers heading into theatres of war across the globe. The township in Seymour has a particularly proud military tradition. This tradition in Seymour continued again on 18 August this year, as it does every year when veterans join their mates, their families, their neighbours and friends, spanning generations, and gather at the Vietnam veterans commemorative walk for Vietnam Veterans Day and, this year, to mark the 50th anniversary of the famous Long Tan battle.

This day reminds us of the honour and sacrifice and the toll that war leaves in its wake. The Vietnam War is a crucial marker in Australia's service history and the battle of Long Tan is unique with that experience. One of the most substantial engagements in the Vietnam War for our Australian forces, this battle was where a small but brave cohort of 105 Australians and three New Zealanders fought and weathered an attack of some 2½ thousand Vietcong and...
North Vietnamese troops in a rubber plantation. That is the personification of the grit, the courage and the determination to never give up that is synonymous with Australia's armed forces.

Many have written and spoken about what made Long Tan such a pivotal battle for our forces. It is something that has stayed in our national memory. For me, it has something to do with perseverance, through seemingly insurmountable odds, that Aussies are really the largest team on the field and you can always count on them to show an outsize of courage against all odds.

Because of the significance of Long Tan in our national memory, Vietnam Veterans Day was chosen as the day where veterans come together with members of the community to pay their respects. In McEwen, and all over Australia, veterans and family, friends and supporters joined together to reflect and to remember the 62,100 Australian service personnel who fought in the name of our country, but also to recognise the 521 Australians who made the ultimate sacrifice and the 2,398 who returned wounded. It is our responsibility to remember them. It is our duty to tell their stories.

We must also remember that it is just as vital to consider the heroes who have different stories—those who returned to a grateful nation but to a home where they were not properly acknowledged or afforded the dignity and respect that they deserved as returned service personnel. They returned to a nation divided, where they carried the most horrendous memories and scars—scars which never heal, memories that never fade and pains that never cease. And, sadly, we know that since then many have suffered as a result of the trauma of their wartime experience.

It is why I believe that 521 may have lost their lives in Vietnam, but there are many, many more who have since gone directly and indirectly as a result of this war. At the time, we did not know what we know today about the deep and lasting impacts of post-traumatic stress disorder and the mental and physical burden on returning servicemen from their experience and the manner in which they are welcomed back to civilian life. The later parts of the war were the cause of the greatest social and political dissent in Australia since the conscription referendums of the First World War. It was a time of great passion and debate, and a time in which our service personnel were often caught up in the battle, but it was not about their sacrifice. This is a part of our history that time has begun to heal. It is my belief that acknowledging this part of the conflict helps in some way to mend those emotional wounds.

While the war itself was politically contentious, there can be no doubt about the courage and sacrifice of those who served and those who wore our uniforms with pride. I have stood in this place on more than one occasion to make clear my feelings on this subject, and it is always important to reaffirm them. We have countless examples of loss and sacrifice during our time in Vietnam, not only for those directly involved but also for their families, left behind to keep businesses afloat, raise children and contribute to society, all while carrying the heaviest of burdens—the fear that this might be the day that their loved one does not return from the fight. I recognise and pay tribute to the often overlooked group of people, heroes in their own right. Whatever the opinions of people in regard to the motivations for the Vietnam War, I personally want to state my total appreciation, respect and thanks to all those who bravely went to war, many of them without the luxury of choice. For that courage and that bravery, I say thanks. (Time expired)
Mr DRUM (Murray) (11:31): It is a great honour to be able to stand here in this place and talk in relation to the commemorative services that have taken place this year in relation to Vietnam veterans marking the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan. Over the last few years, Australia has adopted the commemoration and the anniversary date of the Battle of Long Tan as the overarching commemorative date for all of the conflicts that took place in the Vietnam War. I have also had the opportunity to visit Vietnam and look at the Cu Chi tunnels and a range of other significant sites around Vietnam and to engage with the Vietnamese people in relation to what they call ‘the American war’. It was certainly an amazing experience to be able to see that.

In relation to the commemorative events that have happened in the last year, when you meet so many of the Vietnam veterans—and I had the honour of doing this as Victoria’s Minister for Veterans’ Affairs—I think their darker, mischievous sense of humour endears them to many Australians. They certainly have a different way of looking at things! Whilst they may be a little bit more bent over and they may have a few more pains, backaches, hip aches and so forth than they had their prime, they are still a very tight bunch. I think their motto signifies what is unique about Vietnam veterans. That motto is, ‘Let’s honour the dead but fight like hell for the living.’ I think it very clearly shows us that they have incredible feelings of loss and of sympathy for the families of those comrades and those colleagues that did not come home, but they also realise that they really need to fight for the welfare, the wellbeing and the health of those of their colleagues who did come home and who had an incredible range of impacts on their psyche from those conflicts they endured in Vietnam. In talking to many Vietnam veterans, you would have no idea that they had been through these conflicts, because, in the broad speak, they are coping very well and have never given it another moment’s thought. There are others that struggle from day to day and have good days and bad days. Then there is another cohort that served in Vietnam and have not been able to really cope with the trauma and the stress that they were put through over extensive periods of time.

In commemorating the anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan, which has been well documented—the rainforest, the torrential downpours, the incredible outnumbering of Allied troops versus the Vietcong, the North Vietnamese armies, the associated losses and the hero status of those troops—we also need to be very mindful that a range of other heroic actions and heroic battles took place throughout the entire conflict. We need to be mindful that, in commemorating the anniversary of Long Tan, we do not in any way overlook the amazing efforts in so many other conflicts, where young men went over there and fought for our freedoms.

It was fitting that we brought the Vietnam veterans to the forefront of our Anzac Day anniversary commemorations this year. I think it has put them front and centre, and that is something that was really well received throughout the course of the year. It was fitting that the Prime Minister made such a fantastic speech at the commemorative service that was held this year in the Great Hall in Parliament House, and that we brought all of those veterans along to Canberra to show our appreciation. The services that have taken place right around Australia this year have proven that Australians are incredibly appreciative of the efforts of all of our servicemen who went to Vietnam to protect our freedoms. (Time expired)
The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr S Georganas): 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 Monday.

BILLS

Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Foreign Political Donations) Bill 2016

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Wilkie.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr WILKIE (Denison) (11:37): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill would, in effect, ban foreign donations to political parties and candidates. It is a very simple reform—nothing more than an amendment to the Commonwealth Electoral Act. It is a necessary reform, as evidenced in recent weeks by the controversy over foreign donations. And it would be a popular reform—one the public overwhelmingly want.

In drafting this bill, I have looked at best practice around the world and largely resorted to the United Kingdom's model. In essence it would make it unlawful for any federal political party or candidate to accept a donation from what the Foreign Acquisitions and Takeovers Act defines as a 'foreign person'. What this means is any individual not ordinarily resident in Australia, which effectively means anyone who is not a citizen or a permanent resident, or any corporation in which a substantial interest is held by a foreign individual, corporation or government.

Importantly, the bill has a threshold of $1,000, which allows for small donations, such as guests' attendance at fundraising events, and does not impose an excessive burden on parties and candidates to establish the identity and background of every single small donor. The bill also includes a provision for parties or candidates to pay the money back within 30 days so as to prevent them from being instantly in breach of the law when they receive a donation from a foreign person if they had not been aware of the donation's source. The bill also includes a provision that ensures that it does not limit the constitutional right to freedom of political communication.

The spotlight was obviously thrown on foreign donations when Senator Sam Dastyari had a private debt paid by a donor linked to the Chinese government and then immediately afterwards came out with a pro-Chinese government stance on the South China Sea, a view at odds with his party. Clearly this was unacceptable and Senator Dastyari did the right thing by stepping down. But what often gets missed in this whole episode is the broader problem with foreign donations in this country. Senator Dastyari's resignation is not the end of things by any means, and in some ways it is a distraction. But it has shone a light on the issue, and what we learned from the Dastyari episode is that, overwhelmingly, the Australian people do not want foreign corporations or governments wielding an undue influence on our political processes. Certainly the view of the great many people who have contacted my office just want the government to do something about foreign donations.
Of course it undermines confidence in our political system when campaigns are effectively paid for by big money coming in from overseas. So, of course, to allow it to continue is entirely at odds with the public interest, and in some cases, where foreign governments are involved, it could even be a serious threat to our national security.

The two major political parties receive between them an enormous amount of money from overseas interests. We are not talking small change here. We are dealing, in fact, with millions of dollars—and that is just based on the figures that are publicly available. Let us not forget that every donation under $13,200 effectively remains secret forever. Who knows how much money is being donated to political parties and candidates that falls under that threshold? And let us not kid ourselves. No-one—be it an individual, corporation or government—gives enormous sums of money to a political party or candidate without expecting something in return.

This is an issue where Australia is severely lagging behind the rest of the world. Indeed 114 out of 180 countries have placed bans on foreign donations. So no wonder expert after expert is telling us our political donations framework is one of the weakest and least transparent in the Western world.

In fact pretty much every country you can think of is doing better than us. The United Kingdom, for example, restricts donations to a category of permissible donors which includes individuals on the electoral roll and companies carrying out business in the UK. The USA and Canada ban donations from corporations and unions altogether, and further restrict donations to citizens and permanent residents. Russia, India, Brazil, France—you name it—have all placed some sort of ban on donations from foreign interests. Even the countries who do allow foreign donations—which are few and far between—have restrictions, for instance New Zealand, Germany, Spain and Switzerland. By comparison, the Australian government has done absolutely nothing. And that is to our shame.

Of course it varies by jurisdiction to jurisdiction and the exact solution that works in one country might not work here. For example, we know that there are constitutional limitations in Australia, and the High Court struck down a ban on donations from permanent residents when the New South Wales government tried. What we know for certain though, is that the federal parliament has within its power to amend the Commonwealth Electoral Act to fix this issue. Let us talk about the specifics of how to achieve reform and let us open that discussion by all means. But above all, let us just do something. I make the point again that most other countries have managed to do something about the issue of foreign donations, so why can't we?

Virtually everyone in this chamber and the other place has at least said that they think foreign donations reform is a good idea. Indeed over the last few weeks we have heard a lot of talk from all sides of politics about the issue. The Prime Minister and the Leader of the House no less have both said they favour limiting donations to people on the electoral roll. The Leader of the Opposition and the member for Grayndler have also said that they support reform. Members of the Senate crossbench have called for a ban on foreign donations as have the Greens, who have to their credit tried to progress their own legislation on this issue. You would think then that foreign donations reform is a no brainer.

So why hasn't it happened yet? It is because the major parties receive millions of dollars from these foreign sources and they do not want to do anything to jeopardise that. It is all
about self-interest. It is the same thing we see with gambling reform, where the parties are
terified to do anything because they are on the take from the industry. It is one of the reasons
why we cannot get meaningful action on climate change in Australia, because the coal and
gas industries tip enormous buckets of money into political campaigns. Time and time again
in politics we see self-interest being put above the public interest.

We also need to look at this issue in the broader context of political donation reform. As I
mentioned earlier we have one of the weakest donation frameworks in the Western world.
And that is not my opinion—that is the opinion of experts, of academics and of respected
organisations like the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.

Let us look at a few examples. The disclosure threshold—currently $13,200—is far too
high and allows people or organisations who donate significant amounts to remain secret.
What we need instead is a much more sensible threshold, like $1,000. The current reporting
requirements for parties and candidates is also far too relaxed, and currently we have a
situation where, when we do manage to find out who is bankrolling these campaigns, it is not
disclosed until months after an election. What we should be doing instead is forcing parties
and candidates to disclose this information much more quickly, and if not in real time it
should be done in a matter of weeks rather than months.

Moreover we need a cap on donations, rather than the ludicrous situation at the moment
where big business can essentially buy a party or a candidate by tipping in hundreds of
thousands of dollars. And we need to do something about the hotchpotch of state and federal
laws on donations to avoid rich individuals or big companies flouting the laws in one
jurisdiction by donating to a party in another jurisdiction.

Once again it is left to us on the crossbench to listen to the Australian people and to stand
up for sensible reform. I thank the member for Indi for seconding this bill. I have also reached
out to the Prime Minister and to the Leader of the Opposition to support the bill, and I am
more than happy to work with them to fine-tune it if it means that we will then see genuine
reform. So it is my hope that the government and the opposition will put their political self-
interest aside and focus on the public interest, and get behind the bill before the parliament
today.

The alternative is for the Dastyari episode to be just another example of politicians
mouthing a whole lot of hollow nonsense to placate the community until the heat goes out of
an issue. And then they do nothing. And then they wonder why people ridicule and even
despise them.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr S Georganas): Is the motion seconded?
Ms McGowan: I am very pleased to second the motion and I reserve my right to speak.

The DEPUTY 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.

Aged Care (Living Longer Living Better) Amendment (Review) Bill 2016
First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Ms Collins.

Bill read a first time.
Ms COLLINS (Franklin) (11:48): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

It is a well-known fact that Australia, like many other Western nations, has an ageing population.

There are currently around 3.6 million Australians aged over 65—and this figure will triple in the coming decades.

More than 1.2 million services are currently provided to older Australians and that demand is rapidly growing.

The need to provide quality, affordable and sustainable services for an ageing Australia is not a future issue—it has been upon us for some time now.

And that is why almost five years ago the former Labor government introduced a landmark package of reforms to transform aged care in Australia and to prepare for the challenges and the opportunities of an ageing population.

Labor delivered the biggest reforms to aged care and to ageing in a generation.

The $3.7 billion 10-year strategy known as the Living Longer Living Better package was formulated in line with the Productivity Commission's report Caring for older Australians.

Labor did the heavy lifting and tackled the provision of services for older Australians head on.

It included extensive consultation, which ensured that the reforms had broad public and sector support as well as bipartisan political support.

The Living Longer Living Better reforms provided a 10-year plan to build a better, fairer, more sustainable and nationally consistent aged-care system to meet the challenges of an ageing population.

The reforms delivered a clear vision that by 2022 Australia's aged-care system would:

- be sustainable and affordable, long into the future,
- provide diverse and rewarding career opportunities,
- encourage aged-care businesses to invest and to grow,
- offer greater choice, with control in the hands of the consumers, the older Australians themselves, and
- support people to stay at home and to be part of their communities for as long as possible or as long as they choose.

Significant progress has been made regarding the provision of residential aged care, including:

- arrangements to ensure that those that can afford to contribute to some of their care and accommodation do so,
- greater choice and flexibility in accessing and paying for residential care,
- greater transparency around accommodation prices and services, and
- more support for older people to stay independent and in their own home.
Labor laid a strong framework to build the aged-care services that Australians who have contributed to our community for their entire lives deserve.

Unfortunately the instability and inaction of the Turnbull Liberal government—more focused on its internal divisions—is threatening the continued progress of these critical reforms.

Between Tony Abbott and Malcolm Turnbull the government has made ageing a dirty word and treated older Australians as second-rate citizens.

Of serious concern has been the government's failure to do anything to address the sustainability of government funding of residential care, specifically through the aged-care funding instrument.

Over the last two budgets the government has delivered an almost $2 billion cut to funding for residential care to 2020.

The government has attempted to justify these cuts on the basis of higher than expected growth in aged-care funding instrument expenditure, particularly in the care of older Australians with complex healthcare needs, which it states cannot be explained by an increase in the frailty of residents.

Unfortunately, in doing this the government has refused to release details around the projected growth or its full modelling on its proposed measures and cuts, despite requests from the aged-care sector and despite a FOI request from Labor.

The government stated that:

In developing the measure, the Government consulted with the sector to understand the areas of ACFI that could be better aligned with contemporary care practices.

The response from the aged-care sector and from aged-care consumers to these cuts and the lack of genuine action on the predictability of the Aged Care Funding Instrument would suggest that the government has, in fact, failed to consult on these measures—or worse, it did consult but ignored what it heard. Older Australians deserve fair, affordable, quality services to ensure that they can age well—in their homes and in their communities. Without funding transparency and certainty, the aged-care sector simply cannot deliver for our rapidly growing ageing population. The minister stated in May 2016 that she is:

… concerned the current Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI) model is too complex and not always clear about what can be claimed.

Indeed, a recent judgement of the full Federal Court found that the Aged Care Funding Instrument documents are 'riddled with ambiguous, uncertain and inconsistent language', and that they should be reviewed. A University of New South Wales study into the utility of the Aged Care Funding Instrument in care planning found that the current model is not effective in improving care outcomes. A 2014 survey undertaken by the Australian Physiotherapy Association found:

… ACFI is prescriptive, inflexible and allows only limited interventions that are passive and not supported by evidence-based practice.

Most critically, many providers have stated that the current structure of the Aged Care Funding Instrument delivers unintended consequences by encouraging treatment not based on clinical need for care outcomes but on funding outcomes. Leading Aged Services Australia, Aged and Community Services Australia, the Aged Care Guild, United Voice, the ANMF and
a host of aged-care service providers have all called for a proper review of the Aged Care Funding Instrument and its connectedness to care outcomes. The architect of the Living Longer Living Better reforms and the then Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, Mark Butler, said, when introducing these reforms, that critical to ongoing progress in the aged-care sector would be:

… an independent review of the reforms within five years. This ensures that the momentum is maintained in those areas identified by the Productivity Commission as essential reform foundations.

He said that the reforms would be critical because:

We want to know what works and we want to know what does not.

As per the Aged Care (Living Longer Living Better) Act 2013, this review must be completed and reported to the minister by 1 August 2017. On 22 September this year, when the Assistant Minister for Health and Ageing announced the appointment of David Tune to lead the legislative review, he stated that the review will assist the government to make aged care more sustainable and affordable. Despite this commentary, the assistant minister has given no clear commitment that this review will include an evaluation of the aged-care funding and alternative funding models or undertake a proper review of the Aged Care Funding Instrument as part of this process.

The aged-care services sector and older Australians simply cannot afford for this review to spend the next 10 months consulting about the future of aged-care services in Australia and then fail to report on the future funding needs of the sector. The only way we can develop a sustainable, transparent and predictable funding model that provides Australians with the care that they deserve into the future is through a proper review that brings government, consumers and the sector together. This legislation that I am putting up today will put residential aged-care funding front and centre of this review process and will allow an open and transparent discussion about developing a sustainable funding model for the benefit of all Australians into the future.

The way that this government and future governments fund aged care, the changes that they make and the quality of life are really important to every resident in aged care and every future resident. The Turnbull Liberal government's decision to support an open and transparent review about a sustainable funding model for aged care will determine whether people have the best end of life possible. This bill, if passed, will ensure that the review of Labor's Living Longer Living Better reforms includes a review of the Aged Care Funding Instrument that is needed. Labor calls on the Turnbull Liberal government to make the right choice: to back this piece of legislation and to put the care needs of older Australians first and foremost.

The SPEAKER: Is the motion seconded?

Ms Brodtmann: The motion is seconded, and I reserve my right to speak.

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.

Budget Savings (Omnibus) Bill 2016

Returned from Senate

Message received from the Senate return the bill without amendment or request.
COMMITTEES

Membership

The SPEAKER (11:57): I have received a message from the Senate informing the House of the appointment of senators to certain joint committees. As the list of appointments is a lengthy one, I do not propose to read the list to the House. Details will be recorded in the Votes and Proceedings.

BILLS

Primary Industries Levies and Charges Collection Amendment Bill 2016
Registration of Deaths Abroad Amendment Bill 2016
Budget Savings (Omnibus) Bill 2016
Corporations Amendment (Auditor Registration) Bill 2016
Customs Tariff Amendment (Tobacco) Bill 2016
Excise Tariff Amendment (Tobacco) Bill 2016
Statute Update Bill 2016

Assent

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

COMMITTEES

Membership

The SPEAKER (11:57): I have received advice from the chief government whip that members have been nominated to be members of certain committees.

Mr TEHAN (Wannon—Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Cyber Security and Minister for Defence Personnel) (11:57): by leave—I move:

That Members be appointed as members of certain committees in accordance with the following list:

Standing Committee of Privileges and Members’ Interests—Mr Conroy, Mr Fitzgibbon, Mr Giles and Mr Swan.
Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network—Ms Brodtmann, Ms McGowan, Mr B. K. Mitchell, Ms Rowland and Mr J. H. Wilson.
Standing Committee on Procedure—Mr Perrett.

Question agreed to.

MOTIONS

Equal Rights

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (11:58): I move:

That this House:
(1) reaffirms its commitment to the right of all Australians to enjoy equal rights and be treated with equal respect regardless of race, colour, creed or origin;
(2) reaffirms its commitment to maintaining an immigration policy wholly non-discriminatory on grounds of race, colour, creed or origin;
(3) reaffirms its commitment to the process of reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, in the context of redressing their profound social and economic disadvantage;

(4) reaffirms its commitment to maintaining Australia as a culturally diverse, tolerant and open society, united by an overriding commitment to our nation, and its democratic institutions and values; and

(5) denounces racial intolerance in any form as incompatible with the kind of society we are and want to be.

Fifty years ago this week Australia became an early signatory to one of the world's most profound declarations on human rights, the United Nations international convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination. It is a treaty that goes directly to a basic principle of our respect for each other as fellow human beings—respect for each other regardless of race, colour or ethnicity. I am proud that it was the government of my liberal predecessor Harold Holt that signed that treaty in New York on 13 October 1966. I am equally proud that only six months earlier the Holt government had made historic changes to our migration laws, dismantling all laws and regulations allowing discrimination against migrants on the grounds of colour or race. It was in August of the previous year, 1965, that the Labor Party formally removed the maintenance of the White Australia from its platform. On 27 May 1967 Australians voted overwhelmingly to amend the Constitution to enable the Commonwealth to make laws for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, a process that was begun under Sir Robert Menzies' government and was completed under the leadership of Harold Holt.

Ultimately those momentous decisions by the Menzies and Holt liberal governments signalled the death of the White Australia policy and opened up for this country all the new and exciting opportunities awaiting a multicultural Australia. They sought to end discrimination and ensure our first Australians were not treated like visitors in their own country—a wrong which we as a nation are still reconciling. Accordingly, we rise in this parliament today, as John Howard and Kim Beazley did 20 years ago, to speak on this very motion—a 20-year-old unity ticket, perhaps—celebrating and reaffirming the Australian values of fair go and mutual respect for all regardless of how they look, how they worship or where they come from.

Today I rise to reaffirm my commitment to those common values and to the kind of Australian society that I believe in and have always believed in. First and foremost, I see one of the great defining characteristics of our nation Australia is that we are the most successful multicultural society in the world. We are as old as our first Australians, the oldest continuing human culture on earth who cared for this country for more than 40,000 years, and we are as young as the baby in the arms of her migrant mother who could have come from any nation, any faith, any race in the world. In just the last week we welcomed 1667 people as new Australians in 47 citizenship ceremonies around our nation. Australian citizenship represents commitment to Australia and its people, the values we share and our common future. It symbolises and unity as a nation; it represents our sense of belonging to the country where we have been born or where we have decided to make our home. These new citizens have come from 88 different countries. Many have joined our regional communities—such as Port Lincoln and Coober Pedy, Derwent and Moora, Dubbo, Bega and Maitland, La Trobe and Casey, Ipswich and Cook, as well as in the larger metropolitan centres. As I speak now, a ceremony is being held on Thursday Island in the Torres Strait.
Australia is in immigration nation. Today almost half of us have a parent born overseas and more than a quarter of Australians were born overseas themselves. We are much more diverse than the United States, only one of whose 50 states, California, has a comparable overseas born population. Since 1945 more than seven and a half million people have come from all corners of the earth to make their life here. In joining our fold they have added their own identity to the extraordinary project that is modern Australia. Migrants from every continent, from the grandest cities to the smallest villages, from our nearest neighbour to the most far-flung corner of the globe have made Australia their home. Our newest Australians have arrived under a broad range of visas: as skilled migrants nominated by employers; as refugees and humanitarian entrants; as partners, carers, business owners, regional skilled migrants, people of distinguished talent; and as parents. Each one brings a rich personal history that we welcome into our Australian community at the time they formalise their commitment to our country, our values and our rule of law. They are drawn here by the promise of security, prosperity and freedom. Everyone sitting in this chamber and every Australian is a beneficiary of the diversity that is at the heart of our nation.

At the United Nations last month I told story of one of those people, 22-year-old Sudanese Australian Aliir Aliir who grew up in a refugee camp in Kenya after his family fled the bloody civil war in Sudan. For Aliir and 150,000 other men, women and children, Kakuma refugee camp was their home. It provided the bare necessities of meals and shelter, but not much else. Aliir and his friends would improvise with the balloon wrapped with strips of old clothing to use as a football. He was seven when he and his family came to Australia. Tall, fast and agile, he was a natural for Australian rules football. Earlier this year I was delighted when he debuted for the AFL team I support, the Sydney Swans. He is one of the first Sudanese immigrants to play AFL and as such he has become a role model in our multicultural nation. There are thousands of migrant stories like Aliir's. Their stories are our stories; their successes are our successes.

Our achievement in creating a harmonious nation is not an accident; it has been carefully crafted and it must be nurtured. A necessary precondition for harmony is security.

Our achievement in creating a harmonious nation is not an accident. It has been carefully crafted and it must be nurtured. A necessary precondition for harmony is security. Understanding why Australia has been successful will help ensure that we continue to be so: strong borders, vigilant security agents governed by the rule of law, and a steadfast commitment to the shared values of freedom and mutual respect.

Harmony and security are not mutually exclusive—they are mutually reinforcing. Why is it that people of different races, cultures and religions live alongside each other in harmony here, while similarly diverse societies elsewhere are marked by conflict, division and distrust? Australians do not define themselves by reference to race, religion or ethnic background. Our identity is defined by shared political values and an overriding commitment to our nation and its democratic institutions. We are bound together by shared political values of democracy, the rule of law and equality of opportunity—a fair go. That is the glue that holds us together. The glue which hold us together is mutual respect—a deep recognition that each of us is entitled to the same respect, the same dignity and the same opportunities.

Our natural inclination is to welcome newcomers, to be curious about their cultures and to enjoy learning about their beliefs and experience. We are open and tolerant because we are
confident in our culture, our institutions and our laws. In turn, when our newest Australians take the pledge of citizenship, they promise 'loyalty to Australia and its people, whose democratic beliefs I share, whose rights and liberties I respect, and whose laws I will uphold and obey.' This is the precious compact that binds those of us already here with those who wish to join us. It offers rights, but it also confers responsibility, and it works because both sides uphold their end of the bargain.

Central to our democracy is the rule of law. At the same time that our democracy empowers the majority, the rule of law constrains it. The law of the land applies to and protects every Australian, regardless of race, creed, colour, gender or status. Just as the law applies to every citizen and corporation, it applies, most importantly, to the government.

Our proud migrant story has many chapters and is told in the waves of people who have come to our shores from different parts of the world. Many of these migrant communities faced tough times when they first arrived, and acceptance among fellow Australians was hard won. New waves of immigrants have often been resented, sometimes feared, and we have not always been as tolerant or understanding as, in retrospect, we ought to have been. But we have much more of which to be proud than self-reproaching. Compared to other nations and societies, our multicultural experience has been remarkably harmonious and peaceful. With each new addition to our immigration nation it has become clear that our capacity for acceptance and appreciation leads to a strength and richness of cultural diversity.

Australia and the world face the threat of terrorism perpetrated and promoted by extremists who claim to be fighting and killing for Islam. These people blaspheme Islam, and they have been condemned by Muslims and Muslim leaders around the world—most eloquently, perhaps, by our neighbour President Widodo of Indonesia, who reminds us that his country proves that Islam, democracy and moderation are compatible.

The object of these terrorists is to divide Islam by driving a wedge of violence between Muslims, between Sunni and Shia, and to turn Muslims against the West and the West against Muslims. The resolution of this conflict within Islam will ultimately depend on Muslims, but in the meantime these Islamist terrorists have succeeded in raising levels of anxiety about Muslim immigration and about the role of Islam itself within Australia. We should not dismiss these concerns. They are real. But, as leaders, our job is to explain the facts, reassure citizens and ensure that everything we do is calculated to keep Australians safe.

About half a million Muslims now call Australia home, 40 per cent of whom were born here, and those of the Islamic faith make up 2.2 per cent of our total population. Islam is a global religion whose adherents number about a quarter of the world's population. The Muslim communities are thoroughly diverse, and generalisation is more likely to mislead than enlighten. Muslim Australians are an integral part of our Australian family. Australians of all faith and of none work, live, play and learn happily alongside their Muslim neighbours, friends, colleagues and teammates. While there are Muslim Australians, including converts, who support the terrorists and seek to do us harm, they are a tiny minority, whose madness offends and appals Australian Muslims as much as it does the wider Australian community.

The terrorists want the wider Australian community to turn against Australian Muslims. Their message to Australian Muslims is, 'You're not wanted here. You will never be accepted here. You cannot be Australian.' The most effective weapon against the terrorists is an inclusive nation. An inclusive nation is a safer nation. It enables our security agencies to
better protect us. It enables them to secure the support and assistance of the Muslim communities without which they cannot keep us safe, and it gives the lie to the poison spread by the terrorists who seek to divide us.

Australia's migrant story tells us that if we keep learning from each other and opening our doors, our hearts and our minds, harmony will win out. One of the reasons we are so accepting of newcomers is that all but our first Australians are migrants to this land. As I noted at the outset, this year marks 50 years since Harold Holt introduced the Migration Act of 1966 and the changes to the rules and laws that established legal equality between British, European and non-European migrants to Australia. At the time this approach was not universally supported. The battle to drop the White Australia policy was especially hard fought within the Labor movement. Gough Whitlam and Don Dunstan led the charge for a non-discriminatory policy and were held off for years by Arthur Calwell and an older brigade. After all, it was only in 1961 that the national magazine The Bulletin dropped its masthead slogan 'Australia for the White Man'.

It was also in that era, in 1966, that Vincent Lingiari led the walk-off of Gurindji stockmen from the Wave Hill Station in the Northern Territory. They walked off to demand equal pay and conditions for Aboriginal stockmen, but it was more than that. It was a demand for recognition of their right to their land, a demand for political representation and a demand to respect Aboriginal cultures and peoples. It was a cry for the mutual respect upon which the success of our great Australian project is founded.

We are a multicultural nation, and our multicultural character began long before Europeans set foot on this land. Before European settlement, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples spoke hundreds of languages, including more than 600 dialects, and for tens of thousands of years Indigenous cultures lived side by side with the shared purpose of caring for this great continent. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people language is not just a collection of words; language is knowledge, and knowledge is what protects and maintains culture. My government is deeply committed to the preservation of these ancient languages, to the recognition by the wider Australian community of them and to ensuring Indigenous language organisations can teach them to future generations, so that the stories, knowledge and cultures live on.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are as diverse as the broader Australian population. Our First Australians live and work in our biggest cities and in the smallest of remote places. Our First Australians are doctors, teachers, studying at Harvard and Oxford, studying at schools right across Australia, taking on work, buying homes, travelling and supporting their families. Their hopes and aspirations are as diverse as those of all other Australians.

What unites our First Australians is their rich history of the protection of lands and of caring for country. But rather than seeing this as something that belongs only to Indigenous people and not to all Australians, we should see the history and cultures of our First Australians as something that informs and enlightens us all.

For decades, Aboriginal identity was used to control the lives of Indigenous people and diminish their value in our society. It is to the credit of our First Australians that their strength, resilience and determination have enabled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to continue to survive despite the injustices and the trauma.
Kevin Rudd's apology for these past injustices went some way to heal our nation. Our democratic institutions and the Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who have steered them mean that our journey towards reconciliation has taken great leaps forward in the half century that has passed since Wave Hill, but there is still more healing to be done, still relationships that can be built and still many steps we must walk together on the journey of reconciliation. That is why today this House reaffirm our commitment to the process of reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and we rededicate ourselves to redressing the profound social and economic disadvantage of our nation's first people. But it is more than that. We want to ensure that our First Australians are not just surviving but have the opportunity to thrive, to excel and to live the life of their choosing with meaning and purpose in a way that matters to them.

Having more Indigenous voices in this parliament enriches all of us, and I pay tribute to my Liberal colleague Ken Wyatt, the first Indigenous member of the House of Representatives. He has now been joined by Linda Burney, who has made history as the first Indigenous woman elected to the House of Representatives. In the other chamber we have Patrick Dodson and Malarndirri McCarthy, who have joined Jacqui Lambie. Together, they carry forward the hopes of the Australians who brought them here to Canberra.

We recognise that healing takes time, but the commitment our generation has made to improving the relationship is a vitally important one. I look forward to the day that our nation's founding document—our Constitution—recognises and respects our First Australians and thus reflects Australia as it is now, not how it was imagined over a century ago. The responsibility is ours to ensure that we continue to forge a common way, a shared way, with our nation's first people.

Our Australia is one in which we find unity in our diversity. Australians today are truly global citizens connected by family, culture and languages to people across the globe. We are defined not by one race but by many. We are defined not by one culture but by many. We are defined not by one religion but by many. We are defined not by one way of life but by many. What unites us is that we call ourselves 'Australian'. We are a nation defined by shared political values, democracy, the rule of law and a fair go. Surely, if someone, whoever they are, ascribes to the values we hold as important in Australia and sees themselves as Australian with all that means in terms of freedom, rule of law and social cohesion through the acceptance of these fundamental democratic principles, then they deserve our respect and our welcome.

We are citizens of a most remarkable nation. Our people are our greatest assets. We are a nation of immigration, and we are multicultural with a shared destiny. This is our home, and we have no other. Unity in diversity and harmony at home in the midst of a turbulent world—we have much of which to be proud, to cherish and to defend. It is our duty—the 45th Parliament's duty—to stand up today for the timeless values of this motion, which together we commend to the House.

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (12:21): I thank the Prime Minister for his words and for agreeing to my request to introduce this motion. Often in this place we disagree on matters of principle and questions of policy in everything from Medicare to how we keep manufacturing jobs. That is as it should be. Ours is a system built upon the contest of ideas. But this is a matter where we genuinely have a shared interest: the national
interest. Attacks on minorities are always weaker when we in this parliament set a better example and show the way.

In this place we should always stand up for our values and our national identity in its most generous fullest expression not on the basis of history of faith alone, because our collective and individual identities are the sum of a long list of attributes: our views and ideas, gender, faith, ethnicity, family, sexuality, disability, education and community. But when we take all of these attributes and many more as a whole we do not use one feature to exclude others. We do not use one feature to entirely describe ourselves. And in this parliament we must make that choice.

As leaders we have a responsibility to unite not divide, to reject the falsehood of a strong man or a strong woman imposing simple 'us versus them' solutions, which only leads to bleaker outcomes, to reject the false choice between faith or nation, between a person's heritage or their hopes for a future. Instead, with this motion today, we say to all Australians: no one part of you defines all of you, and it should not define your destiny.

Importantly, this motion rededicates this House to the pursuit of reconciliation alongside respect for migration. As the great Gough Whitlam said, when he introduced the Racial Discrimination Act into the House of Representatives in 1975, 'The main victims of social depravation and restricted opportunity have been the oldest Australians and the newest,' and as long as the gap in life expectancy, health, education, employment and justice stands between Indigenous Australia and the rest of Australia then there is unfinished business for all of us to resolve.

Constitutional recognition is certainly a very important part of this but I must speak for a broader effort, not just making peace with the past but ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a full and equal share in Australia's future. This must begin, as all great enterprises do, with a sense that it can be done, a belief that we can strike racism from the pages of our Constitution and the hearts of our people, a faith that a place in our national birth certificate will be matched by economic and social progress, the hope that the historical justice in the document which forms the basis of our laws will be paired with real justice in the courts of this land.

Much of this motion, the text identical to that authored by Kim Beazley and John Howard 20 years ago, is as timely now as it was then. But there is one word whose meaning, the way we understand it, I believe, has changed in that 20 years: the word 'tolerance'. The word tolerance does not do justice to the society we treasure. We tolerate traffic jams. We tolerate flight delays. We tolerate headaches. We tolerate brussels sprouts. But we embrace diversity. The Bible does not tell us to tolerate thy neighbour. Diversity is not a minor inconvenience to be endured. It is not an artifice of political correctness. It is the collective power of our nation, of all of us.

We know that today's immigrants and refugees are tomorrow's community leaders, business leaders, doctors, nurses and teachers. We know that inclusion, openness and cohesion are universal values to build upon. We know multiculturalism is not a passing fashion. It is at the very heart of our national identity, a national identity which is proudly complex and all the richer and stronger because it is diverse.
Of the 226 members of this place, all but five of us are exclusively migrants or the descendants of migrants. We swore a common oath, on different texts, from different faiths. I stand in this place as Labor but I also stand in this place as a father, a husband, a son. I am a proud Victorian and a proud Australian. Some of my mother's ancestors came here at the firm suggestion of the British justice system, others as underqualified and, subsequently, unsuccessful goldminers. My father was a Geordie from the north-east of England, a seafarer who came ashore here in the 1960s. Australia, for him—as it has been for so many—was the home of the second chance.

But the fact that the first of my ancestors got here in 1831 off a convict ship does not make my citizenship better than someone who has just arrived. Our obligation, in this place, runs deeper than a few nice sentiments on holy days or at the beginning of a cultural new year. We need to do more than mouth words of respect. We must thoroughly—publicly—reject racism wherever it occurs or by whoever says it. There is no place in Australia for extremism, no matter the party, no matter the agenda, no matter the importance of the individual vote.

As leaders we cannot choose to pass by on the other side of the road. We are, indeed, our brothers' and our sisters' keepers. We have to call out prejudice whenever we see it in this parliament, in the workplace, on the sporting field and in the media. The way we do this matters. The tone we take matters. Hateful words appealing to the very worst aspects of our national character may prompt strong emotions in us, but we must guard against the temptation to respond with uncontrolled anger breeding resentment and division or with an aggressive contempt that only hardens attitudes. We must be calm and clinical, rationally and relentlessly tackling baseless falsehood with fact, because when people are informed, when we can appeal to their essential decency with the truth, that is how we bring people together.

The facts are these: in 2016, in Australia, we are not being swamped by anyone; migrants are not filling our dole queues or taking our jobs or clogging up our highways or doing all three at the same time. Migration is not a cost or a burden. It is a powerful force for our continuing economic growth and future prosperity. Migration boosts productivity, participation and population. It enhances and complements the skills of our workforce. It adds new knowledge to our national understanding.

In their first year of arrival migrants contribute a net economic benefit of around $880 million. Ten years later the same group will contribute around $2 billion to our national economy. And as for the idea that migrants are bludging on welfare, within six months of their arrival migrants have a workforce participation rate of nearly 80 per cent compared to a national average of 65 per cent. Sometimes this means taking on jobs that other Australians are simply not prepared to do—working late nights, early mornings and long weekends, stacking shelves, driving taxis, cleaning offices, working the back shifts of our factories, setting out in the predawn, knowing that their sacrifice will give their children the chance for a better more rewarding life, children who even now are winning prizes in our schools and excelling in our universities.

For every generation there are obstacles, barriers, irrational slights and indignities in the way. It was only 60 years ago that my own mum was turned away from working in a supermarket for no other reason than that she was a Catholic. It is a story familiar to the Greeks, Italians and eastern Europeans of the 1950s and 1960s, the Vietnamese boat people of the 1970s and the new wave of arrivals from Africa and the Middle East. It is never easy to
leave behind the land of your birth, the home of your ancestors. Inevitably, the people who
make this journey are resilient, courageous self-starters. That is why so many migrants set the
trepreneurial example in this country. Fifteen out of every 100 people born in Australia are
self employed, but of Australians born in Asia, it is 17 in every 100; born in Europe, 23 in
every 100, and from the Middle East, 25 in every 100. These Australians are taking risks,
launching start-ups and opening businesses from law firms, restaurants and newsagents to
corner shops, market gardens and childcare centres, and diversifying our economy as well as
our society. Just as migration adds to our skillset, it helps shift our national mindset. Increased
migration from Asia has given Australia greater confidence in Asia—the confidence to seek
security in our region, not from our region.

Let us tell it how it is. Coded statements about preserving community harmony are not an
argument against migration; they are a reminder that Australians-by-birth have a
responsibility and an opportunity to embrace Australians-by-choice. Fearmongering about
terrorism is not an argument against migration. Countering violent extremism depends upon
building cohesion. This is the problem with the bizarre unity ticket between Daesh and other
extreme Muslim fundamentalists, and the extreme Right. Both argue that it is not possible to
hold Western liberal democratic values and be Muslim. Both say that somehow you cannot be
a good Muslim and a good citizen. This shows no understanding of Australia or of the
remarkable contribution our Muslim community makes. People need to realise that when they
are set up with this false choice or allow it to go unchallenged, they are doing the work of
extremists.

Complaining about traffic on the roads or crowded trains is not an argument against
permanent migration; it is proof of the need for improved infrastructure processes, better
planning and stronger leadership. Economic transition is not an argument against permanent
migration; it is proof that we need a government serious about creating and upholding decent
jobs. One of the most effective things that the government could do to counter the fallacy that
migrants are taking Australian jobs is clean up exploitation and corruption in 457 and
temporary work visas, because the unfair power structures arising in our system, which
exploit new migrants to undercut Australian wages, are undermining faith in open markets
and international labour.

We live in a time when people are being forgotten by change, when people feel afraid of
change, and when they feel unrepresented in decision-making. This can lead us to a low road
of blaming others, demonising minorities and lashing out; or we can take the high road by
skilling our people, investing in education, rewarding hard work with decent wages, including
more Australians in opportunity. The unfinished business of Australia is to summon our
principles, our values, to share prosperity with all who help to build it; to choose inclusion
over exclusion, understanding over ignorance, hope over fear; to embrace the stranger in our
midst as our neighbour; to make ordinary citizens our partner in politics; and to build a
country where everyone has a seat at the table, an Australia where everyone is welcome and
everyone is equal under our Southern Cross.

Debate adjourned.
BILLS

Treasury Laws Amendment (Income Tax Relief) Bill 2016

Report from Federation Chamber

Bill returned from Federation Chamber with an unresolved question; certified copy of bill and schedule of the unresolved question presented.

Ordered that this bill be considered immediately.

Unresolved question—
That the bill be now read a second time.
Question agreed to, Mr Wilkie dissenting.
Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Dr GILLESPIE (Lyne—Assistant Minister for Rural Health) (12:35): by leave—I move:
That the bill be now read a third time.
Question agreed to, Mr Wilkie dissenting.
Bill read a third time.

Migration Amendment (Character Cancellation Consequential Provisions) Bill 2016

Second Reading

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

Mr NEUMANN (Blair) (12:38): I rise to support the Migration Amendment (Character Cancellation Consequential Provisions) Bill 2016. This bill makes consequential amendments to the Migration Amendment (Character and General Visa Cancellation) Act 2014 to ensure that character related provisions are applied consistently throughout that legislation. It also clarifies the minister's rights and responsibilities when exercising ministerial discretion to cancel visas on character grounds.

Labor supported the Migration Amendment (Character and General Visa Cancellation) Bill when it was enacted in the last parliament. The bill before the house today was originally introduced in the last parliament and was referred to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee, which reported on 15 March 2016.

Noting the outcome in the recommendations of the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee, Labor will support this bill today. The bill makes amendments to the substantive amendments made to the act in 2014. The changes came about through the review into the character and general visa cancellation framework, in 2013. With Labor's support in the last parliament, the framework was made by legislation to provide for mandatory cancellation of visas for persons who have been serving a prison sentence and have been found to have a substantial criminal record, or found guilty of a sexually based offence involving a child. It broadens the power to refuse or cancel visas with additional grounds in the character test. It provides that a person does not pass the character test if they are deemed a risk, rather than a significant risk, to the Australian community. It allows the minister to set
aside decisions by a delegate for a tribunal and cancel a visa if it is in the national interest. And it enables the minister to require heads of state or territory agencies to disclose personal information.

I wanted to specifically note comments made, during the Senate inquiry, by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection in relation to the previous bill, which I think are important to note in the House today, and which provide context for these amendments before the chamber:

… the protection of the Australian community and is particularly important in the offshore visa context. In considering whether a non-citizen should be granted a visa to come to Australia, there is an expectation that the non-citizen will not cause or threaten harm to either individuals or the Australian community. Where there is information that suggests that a visa applicant presents more than a minimal or remote risk of causing harm to an individual or the broader Australian community, it is entirely appropriate that the non-citizen’s visa application be considered for refusal under subsection 501(1) of the Act.

I think that statement ultimately reflects the views and expectations of the broader community, and certainly of the Australian Labor Party.

In addition to the minor technical amendments, the bill will ensure the minister's existing power to override a decision of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal or a delegate and cancel a person's visa. It applies to all visa cancellations on character grounds. It will include a reference to section 501BA, ministerial discretion to override a decision by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal or delegate, in the sections of the Migration Act relating to authorised detention. This means that a non-citizen who is subject to these decisions will be handled in a consistent manner with those who have been subject to other character test cancellation decisions. The bill inserts a cross reference in sections 195 and 196 to clarify that these sections do not apply to decisions made by the minister under section 501BA consistent with other character test cancellation decisions.

The bill clarifies two key points that are worth noting: that all pending or outstanding visa applications are taken to have been refused following a decision by the minister under section 501BA consistent with other character test cancellation decisions; and, that the provision in paragraph 503(1)(b) of the Migration Act relating to the rights of those who had their visas cancelled in character test decisions to enter or to be in Australia also applies to decisions under section 501BA.

Removal powers will not be able to be utilised while a non-citizen still has appeal rights available to them. I think it is important to note that. It is in keeping with the original intention of the bill. The bill ensures that the government has explicit removal powers for people who have had their visas cancelled under the mandatory cancellation provisions and provides for consistency with all over visa cancellations due to the character test.

The character concern will be broadened and will include those instances of non-citizens who have been convicted of, or charged with or indicted for people smuggling, human trafficking, genocide or child sex offences and to non-citizens subject to Interpol notice or adverse security assessments. To ensure consistency with other character decisions, all decisions made under sections 501BA and 501CA will be reviewable by the Federal Court rather than the Federal Circuit Court, and I think that is important to note—a higher court. The bill provides consistency with other character test cancellation decisions as it enables
non-disclosure of confidential information provided to the department as a part of section 501CA or 501BA—a decision to cancel a visa.

The government is supported by Labor in relation to this bill, but I echo the warning made by my predecessor, the shadow minister for immigration and border protection in the last parliament, the member for Corio, that Labor will keep a close eye on how the minister exercises his ministerial discretion. In that way we hope he does it fairly. We support the legislation.

Mr DUTTON (Dickson—Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) (12:44): I want to thank the members for their contributions to the debate on the Migration Amendment (Character Cancellation Consequential Provisions) Bill 2016. I would like to start by emphasising to the House that this bill is a technical bill. It will ensure that the character and cancellation provisions of the Migration Act operate effectively and as intended following amendments made in December 2014 by the Migration Amendment (Character and General Visa Cancellation) Act 2014. It is a bill that does not go beyond the intention of the substantive amendments made by the character act passed by parliament in 2014.

In relation to the substantive amendments made by the 2014 act, the key amendment made by the act was the introduction of mandatory visa cancellation for noncitizens in jail serving a full-time custodial sentence of imprisonment and where that sentence is for at least 12 months, or indeed that they have been guilty of a sexually based offence involving a child. The purpose of these mandatory cancellation amendments was to quickly and effectively capture noncitizens who pose a risk to the Australia community by cancelling their visas and considering their case while they are still serving a term of imprisonment. To date, the vast majority of noncitizens who have had their visa cancelled under the mandatory cancellation power are repeat offenders with multiple criminal convictions in Australia or have committed serious or violent offences. The amendments made by this bill will ensure that the mandatory cancellation related powers introduced by the 2014 act are given their full effect and operate coherently with the existing character cancellation powers in the Migration Act.

These are important consequential amendments required to ensure that noncitizens who pose a risk to the community are dealt with effectively, efficiently and comprehensively. The government has undertaken a considerable amount of work with agencies across the Commonwealth and indeed across the states and territories in relation to individual matters to identify those people who have been in breach of the standard that would be expected by Australians and in many cases we have moved to cancel visas of people who have failed to achieve the character test. It is the case—my judgement, and I think the judgement of many agencies involved in relation to a number of these matters—that we have made the Australian community a safer place, that we have, by cancelling these visas, sent a very clear message to people who would seek to perpetrate crimes against Australians and, in particular, the most vulnerable Australians, including children, that that behaviour is not acceptable and that this government will not tolerate the presence of those people in our society who are here as our guests and who are here on visas and are expected to abide by the Australian law. For those reasons, I commend the bill to the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Goodenough): The question is that the bill be read a second time.

Question agreed to, Mr Wilkie dissenting.
Bill read a second time.

**Third Reading**

Mr DUTTON (Dickson—Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) (12:48): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to, Mr Wilkie dissenting.

Bill read a third time.

**MOTIONS**

**Health Care**

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (12:49): I seek leave to move the following motion:

That the House:

(1) notes that despite the Prime Minister claiming he had heard a "very clear lesson" about his attacks on Medicare, 100 days since the election not one cut to Medicare has been reversed; and

(2) therefore, calls on the Prime Minister to:

(a) guarantee to keep Medicare in public hands as a universal health insurance scheme for all Australians;

(b) guarantee to protect bulk billing so that every Australian can see their doctor when they need to and not only when they can afford to;

(c) reverse his harmful cuts to Medicare by unfreezing the indexation of the Medicare Benefits Schedule;

(d) reverse his cuts to pathology that will mean Australians with cancer will pay more for blood tests;

(e) reverse his cuts to breast screening, MRIs, x-rays and other diagnostic imaging which will mean Australians will pay more for vital scans;

(f) abandon his plans to make all Australians, even pensioners, pay more for vital medicines; and

(g) develop a long-term agreement to properly fund our public hospitals so Australians don't languish in our emergency departments or on long waiting lists for important surgery.

Leave not granted.

Mr SHORTEN: I move:

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the Member for Maribyrnong from moving the following motion forthwith—That the House:

(1) notes that despite the Prime Minister claiming he had heard a "very clear lesson" about his attacks on Medicare, 100 days since the election not one cut to Medicare has been reversed; and

(2) therefore, calls on the Prime Minister to:

(a) guarantee to keep Medicare in public hands as a universal health insurance scheme for all Australians;

(b) guarantee to protect bulk billing so that every Australian can see their doctor when they need to and not only when they can afford to;

(c) reverse his harmful cuts to Medicare by unfreezing the indexation of the Medicare Benefits Schedule;

(d) reverse his cuts to pathology that will mean Australians with cancer will pay more for blood tests;
(e) reverse his cuts to breast screening, MRIs, x-rays and other diagnostic imaging which will mean Australians will pay more for vital scans;

(f) abandon his plans to make all Australians, even pensioners, pay more for vital medicines; and

(g) develop a long-term agreement to properly fund our public hospitals so Australians don't languish in our emergency departments or on long waiting lists for important surgery.

Earlier today, I said that there would be times when we disagree, and Medicare is a fundamental fault line between the government and the opposition. Today marks 100 days since the election—100 days since voters in Lindsay, Herbert, Bass, Cowan and 12 other former coalition seats voted to save Medicare. And as we all know, that means it has been about 99½ days since the Prime Minister's post-election speech in the early hours of Sunday morning after the election—also technically known as a tantrum. What a performance that was! Churchill at least wanted to fight them on the beaches, Martin Luther King had a dream, Gough Whitlam told us 'It's time,' and Malcolm said: 'Call the police; we was robbed!'

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will refer to members by their correct titles.

Mr SHORTEN: In those early hours of Sunday morning, Australians heard from a Prime Minister in denial: lashing out and blaming everyone but himself. He forgot to acknowledge any of the members who had followed him over the cliff into electoral defeat. But by Tuesday he had changed his tune. Suddenly he emerged, weaving a tale of faux contrition. The Liberal Party, he said—never himself—had a problem with Medicare. Australians did not trust the Liberals with their health care. He said:

We have to do more to reaffirm the faith of the Australian people in our commitment to health and to Medicare.

He went on:

We will work harder, much harder …

And:

… I would like Australians to believe that commitment to Medicare is completely bipartisan.

What has happened since then to breathe any life into that faux contrition? What has he done about Medicare and the policies they took to the election? Absolutely nothing. The Prime Minister has admitted that he has a problem with Medicare, but he has shown no interest in fixing it: not one change of policy and not a single dollar of cuts undone. He has backflipped on the backpacker tax and he has backflipped on his ironclad commitment on superannuation, but when it comes to cutting Medicare he knows which side he is on. What else would you expect, in fact, from a Liberal Party that are ideologically opposed to universal health care? They have always championed a two-tier American-style healthcare system.

This is a government which, for the previous three years, has done everything it can to push the price of health care back onto Australian families. Every parent knows the feeling when your child has a cough that sounds like it is getting worse, a temperature that is climbing or a fever that simply will not break. In that moment, you would give up everything: you would sell the shirt off your back and the roof over your head. But because of Medicare we do not have to do this. The idea at the core of Medicare is that every Australian can get the care that they need when they need it. Australians take pride in Medicare and what it means. Medicare speaks to our distinctive Australian character—our egalitarian tradition of the fair
go. But the Liberals have spent the last three years trying to hollow out Medicare: taxing it, cutting it and eating away at the foundations—seeking to tear down Medicare down brick by brick, piece by piece.

The government's record on Medicare speaks for itself. Because of the Turnbull government cutting bulk-billing, 14½ million Australian's will have to pay more to see a GP. The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners recently found that one in three GPs are already revising their business models because they cannot stay viable under the Medicare freeze. Out-of-pocket health costs have increased by 19 per cent under this government. For a typical family with two children with no health scares, these Liberal cuts will mean an extra $400 a year in doctors bills.

Cutting funding for children's dental: a massive cost-of-living hit to working-class families. Cuts of billions from our hospitals are overcrowding emergency rooms and increasing waiting times for beds, knee operations and hip replacements. They are increasing the price of medicines so even pensioners will pay more every time they need a prescription. Cost already deters one in 12 Australians from seeing a specialist, yet this government is imposing new up-front fees and charges for scans, blood tests, X-rays and diagnostic imaging. Vulnerable Australians in the fight for their lives deserve a government alongside them in that fight. Instead, they are being forced to pay $100 extra for a mammogram, $300 for a mum being diagnosed with breast cancer and over $1,000 for an Australian to deal with melanoma. One hundred days after the election—the faux contrition—nothing has changed.

This motion asks the Prime Minister to put his money where his mouth is. To those coalition members currently for Gilmore, Capricornia, Robertson, Leichhardt, Dawson, Dunkley and La Trobe: you cannot come to this parliament and vote in defence of cuts to Medicare and think you can go home to your electorate without those electorates hearing about it. This is a test for every government member of parliament. You cannot complain about Labor's campaign on Medicare if you will not vote to reverse the cuts; anything else you will be caught out on.

We do not want any more press conferences from the government or longwinded lectures. We want to see them guarantee to keep Medicare in public hands as a universal health insurance scheme—what is wrong with that?; guarantee to protect bulk-billing so every Australian family can get in to see their doctor when they need to—nothing wrong with that; reverse the harmful cuts to Medicare by unfreezing the MBS indexation; reverse the cuts for vital pathology and diagnostic imaging tests; abandon the plans to increase the cost of prescription medicines; and develop a long-term agreement to properly fund our public hospitals.

This is a lesson that the government needs to learn. If it is not affordable, it is not accessible. If it is not available to everyone, it is just not Medicare. Sadly, the Liberals have always looked at Medicare as a cost to cut. They know its price, they just do not understand its value. Medicare is not just a brand name, branch office or multinational company. It is not a conglomerate where you strip out the assets for a corporate raider. In the Labor Party, we do not believe in outsourcing the responsibility we owe to our fellow Australians. We cannot imagine that caring for one another is something that should drive private profits. We know that Medicare is not a hedge fund—it is a national institution. It is a community standard. It is the Australia that we tell our children to believe in, the nation that we want to see in the
mirror. It is the great egalitarian idea that universal health care is the fundamental basis of the fair go all-round. Labor will fight for the great Australian idea that universal health care stands for the notion of the fair go all-round. It is the bedrock of fairness.

This motion is a test for the government. They can vote to save Medicare or they can lock in behind their plans to undermine it, step by step, piece by piece, brick by brick. It is time for the Liberals and the Nationals on the back bench to tell Australians where they stand. It is that simple. Today, members of the government can vote for bulk-billing or against it. Today, government members can vote for affordable medicine or against it. Today, government backbenchers can vote for children's dental or against it. They can stand up for the Australians who need a mammogram or a blood test, or they can vote against it. It is as simple as that. This motion is not about the conclusion of the last election; it is about an issue which Labor will pursue every day, every week and every month to the next election. Either the government members of parliament can vote to save Medicare, to defend it, or they can vote against it. Australians will be watching them and Australians will mark them down. We will talk in all of their electorates about the hypocritical position of government members, who, in their electorates, say they love Medicare, but who, in the House, vote to hurt it. (Time expired)

The SPEAKER: Is the motion seconded?

Ms CATHERINE KING (Ballarat) (13:01): I second the motion. There have been 100 days since this government was elected, and we know what the big lie of the election campaign was. Malcolm Turnbull has not learnt a single thing when it comes to Medicare.

The SPEAKER: The member for Ballarat will refer to members—

Ms CATHERINE KING: The member for Wentworth has learnt nothing. I move:

That the question be now put.

Question agreed to.

The SPEAKER: The question now is that the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition be agreed to.

The House divided. [13:06]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .................... 70
Noes .................... 73
Majority ................. 3

AYES

Albanese, AN  Aly, A
Bird, SL       Bowen, CE
Brodmann, G   Burke, AS
Burney, LJ    Butler, MC
Butler, TM    Chalmers, JE
Champion, ND  Chesters, LM
Clare, JD     Claydon, SC
Collins, JM   Conroy, PM
Danby, M      Dick, MD
Dreyfus, MA   Elliot, MJ
Ellis, KM     Feeney, D
AYES

Fitzgibbon, JA
Georganas, S
Gosling, LJ
Hart, RA
Hill, IC
Husic, EN
Katter, RC
Kelly, MJ
Khalil, P
King, MMH
Leigh, AK
McBride, EM
Mitchell, BK
Neumann, SK
Oloughlin, C
Perrett, GD (teller)
Rishworth, AL
Ryan, JC (teller)
Shorten, WR
Stanley, AM
Swanson, MJ
Thistlethwaite, MJ
Watts, TG
Wilson, JH

Freelander, MR
Giles, AJ
Hammond, TJ
Hayes, CP
Husar, E
Jones, SP
Keay, JT
Keogh, MJ
King, CF
Lamb, S
Macklin, JL
McGowan, C
Mitchell, RG
O’Connor, BPJ
Owens, JA
Plibersek, TJ
Rowland, MA
Sharkie, RCC
Snowdon, WE
Swan, WM
Templeman, SR
Vamvakou, M
Wilkie, AD
Zappia, A

NOES

Abbott, AJ
Andrews, KJ
Banks, J
Broad, AJ
Buchholz, S
Ciobo, SM
Coulton, M
Drum, DK
Entsch, WG
Falinski, J
Flint, NJ
Gee, AR
Goodenough, IR
Hastie, AW
Henderson, SM
Howarth, LR
Irons, SJ
Keenan, M
Laming, A
Lee, JS
Littleproud, D
McCormack, MF
Morrison, SJ
O’Brien, LS
O’Dowd, KD
Pasin, A

Alexander, JG
Andrews, KL
Bishop, JI
Broadbent, RE
Christensen, GR (teller)
Coleman, DB
Crewther, CJ
Dutton, PC
Evans, TM
Fletcher, PW
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Hartsuyker, L
Hawke, AG
Hogan, KJ
Hunt, GA
Joyce, BT
Kelly, C
Landry, ML
Ley, SP
Marino, NB
McVeigh, JJ
Morton, B
O’Brien, T
O’Dwyer, KM
Pitt, KJ

CHAMBER
Question negatived.

**BUSINESS**

**Rearrangement**

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Defence Industry) (13:17): I move:

That business intervening before order of the day No. 3, government business, be postponed until a later hour this day.

Question agreed to.

**Rearrangement**

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Defence Industry) (13:17): by leave—Out of the generosity of my heart, given the Labor Party's appalling behaviour in the last hour, I still move:

That standing order 43 be suspended until the conclusion of the speech on the Address in Reply by the Member for Paterson.

Question agreed to.

**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 (13:19): Before I call the honourable member for Paterson, I remind the House that this is the honourable member's first speech. I ask that the House extend the usual courtesies.

Ms SWANSON (Paterson) (13:19): Today I hold this miners lamp as a symbol of my heritage, my beliefs and my aspirations in this place. The miners lamp was invented in 1815 by Cornish chemist Sir Humphry Davy, who refused a patent, saying his sole objective was to
serve the cause of humanity. The Davy lamp lit the way for underground miners, making their incredibly dangerous work at least some small degree safer. This particular lamp was given to me in 1985 by British Alcan Lynemouth Limited at the end of a six-week stay in north-east England that changed my life.

As a 14-year-old girl from Heddon Greta I was awarded a scholarship by Cessnock City Council and Alcan, which ran the local Kurri Kurri aluminium smelter, to travel across the world to Longhirst, where I experienced firsthand the history and culture of northern England. I attended school there and made friends, but times were tough. Margaret Thatcher had been at war with the miners and there was great hardship for families, whose struggle was real and at times bloody. That time cemented in me a sense of justice and loyalty for working people who would not be taken for granted. The Geordies reminded me so much of my family.

I am the product of two of the most decent and generous people I know. Arthur Stephen Partridge and Doris Joy Partridge, nee Beavis, known as Ben and Joy, have been married for 65 years. It is their hard work, love and guidance that has spirited me to this place. I am the daughter of a coalminer and a woman who, despite towering intellect, stayed at home to raise her three daughters: Adele, Lynne and me. My parents were babies of the Great Depression—mum, the eldest of six; dad, the second of five. Times were tough and my grandmother's health meant that dad, at the tender age of 10, was sent to live with his grandparents, who were sharefarmers at Wallalong. It was there, on horseback, that my dad met my mother. Her parents worked a dairy farm.

My maternal grandfather, Allan Beavis, had won a bursary as a young man, but the family could not afford the luxury of allowing him to go off and study, so he went to work as a delivery boy. Like so many men of his generation, he was later forced to leave the farm and take up work at BHP, when the hearths were open and the work was hard and hot. When the family moved to the Newcastle suburb of Lambton they took a Jersey house cow with them so that they would never be without milk. It was this grandfather, who died when I was just 10, who first ignited the political fire in my belly. I would sit with him and listen intently to parliament on the radio—or the wireless, as he liked to call it. He believed that to be a parliamentarian was an honourable thing but that it was beholden on all politicians to make intelligent decisions. He had a fair dash of cynicism too, but it was his sense of equity and justice, his respect for the political process, that I remember most.

I am from a political family, not so much as members of a party or elected representatives but as people whose lived experiences instilled in them strong beliefs and shaped strong opinions. These opinions were—and still are, frankly—shared willingly and loudly around the dinner table and pepper nearly every Christmas.

At the University of Newcastle I studied communications and was lucky enough to get a start in local TV and radio before going to work as a staffer for Joel Fitzgibbon, then a relative newcomer to parliament. But he too was of sound political stock. This time was exciting, educational and inspirational. It crystallised in me a desire to enter politics, but I recognised the value of broad work and life experience and left Joel's office to pursue it. Both Joel and I believed I would be back, and I am incredibly honoured to be back here in the position as member for Paterson. Joel is still my mentor. I have taken up politics, and he has taken up my lifelong sport of golf. In fact, golf and politics have much in common: etiquette, rules, practice, patients, skill, knowing when to take a risk and when to play the percentages,
but most importantly persistence. We both knew the other would eventually see the light. I am delighted that our seats sit side by side in the magnificent, hardworking Hunter region.

My electorate of Paterson in the New South Wales lower Hunter Valley is rich in resources and rich in history. Our first peoples are the Worimi on the coast, the Wonnarua further inland and the Awabakal to the south. Indeed, I was delighted to have Worimi man Justin Ridgeway perform the welcome to country and smoking ceremony to officially open my electorate office in Raymond Terrace. I appreciated Justin's welcome to his traditional lands and his efforts, in his words, to 'ward off the evil spirits'. As the smoke wafted over me I was truly moved by the symbolism and steed by the gaping need for us to embrace our Indigenous culture. Here in this place we have an obligation to all people, including our first, and I recognise the traditional owners of this land, the Ngunawal and Ngambri peoples. The cleansing was deeply symbolic, flushing out the old and giving way to the new. It is a new beginning and full of hope—for me personally but more broadly for the people of our electorate.

Paterson people are decent and hardworking. They look after each other. The electorate stretches from Neath to Nelson Bay, taking in the centres of Kurri Kurri, Maitland, Raymond Terrace and Port Stephens. The old mining town of Kurri Kurri is my place of birth. Its name comes from the Awabakal word meaning 'the very first', as it was the first planned town in Australia and is now home to some incredible murals. Take a trip if you have ever got the time. The city of Maitland is an agricultural heartland. The old-timers used to say that the rich, black soil of Maitland would grow babies, and it seems it does: Maitland is now one of the fastest growing residential areas in the state. The historic town of Raymond Terrace, the geographical centre of my electorate, is where my office is located and where the mighty Hunter River meets the Williams. There are the fishing and leisure spots and retirement havens of Nelson Bay and the Tilligerry and Tomaree peninsulas. Every single time I drive to the bay I get that excited feeling I first had as a small girl going there on holiday and, like many, I dream of a retirement there—but not before the work is done.

We are blessed with beautiful natural resources, close proximity to the bigger centres of Newcastle and Sydney, and an expanding airport, with excellent health, education and sporting facilities and a working RAAF base that will soon be the home of the joint strike fighters. While coal is still a vital source of employment, we are a region in transition. Just as nearby Newcastle has blossomed beyond steel, the Hunter will transition from coal to newer, cleaner industrial bases. Already on the horizon are renewable energies coming from the work of the CSIRO; automated vehicles, robotics and leading environmental ideas from the University of Newcastle; and the world-renowned health and research breakthroughs through the work of the Hunter Medical Research Institute.

But it is not all rosy. A much less enviable feature of the region is our high youth unemployment. In July, youth unemployment in my region was running at 15.3 per cent, but it has been as high as 21 per cent. That is double what it was three years ago. What has happened to our youth workforce? What has happened to the opportunities for our young people? Well, there has been a downturn in mining and in manufacturing, and we have lost thousands of apprenticeships. The Abbott-Turnbull government has cut off vocational education and training and partnership programs that helped young people into work. Our young people are missing out. Every young person deserves the right to get out of bed with a
purpose: to fulfil their potential. This is not just an idealised romantic notion. We need people, especially our young, to be participating, to be working and to be continuing and growing our skill base. This requires excellence in education, skills based training, real experience and the genuine opportunity to work. I will work with young people in my electorate, with employers, with education and service providers and here with you all in this place to ensure we make the most of every single opportunity for every single young person that we have.

Alongside our tangible transition from mining is our less tangible transition to the digital age. Good internet access is no longer a luxury but a necessity of modern living—for work, education, government services, health, business, family and, dare I say it, even to find love. But, sadly, the Hunter's internet access leaves a lot to be desired. Love has gone lacking, I am sure. We are on the wrong side of what has been dubbed the 'digital divide'. While cities enjoy good internet and affordability, rural and regional areas rate very poorly in terms of digital inclusion. This is a national index that measures the quality and affordability of internet access and the ability to participate in the digital world. This year, aside from the remote Aboriginal communities that were not surveyed, the Hunter scored the lowest digital inclusion index in the country. I still cannot get over that. We have the triple whammy: low incomes, high unemployment and an ageing population. All of these affect our digital ability.

However, the buck stops with the NBN.

Malcolm Turnbull's second-rate National Broadband Network infrastructure, and rollout, have been nothing short of disastrous. For many it's the digital Dark Age.

My electorate office, like so many in regional and rural areas, is inundated with complaints—from businesses and residents who cannot connect to the internet in a useful way, or who cannot connect at all.

There is no real acknowledgement of the problems, and, importantly, of the cost. It is appalling that where you live affects the quality of your digital experience and your life. The internet is now the workplace, the market place, the railway line, and the Friday night dance. It is vital to our lives. This is a message that has to get through and I will keep banging the drum—talk about relying on old technology.

Of course, I do not do my job alone. Like everyone in this place, there are a legion of people who made it possible for me to be elected, and a solid team who support me each and every day.

First, I acknowledge and thank the secretaries and branch members of the Labor Party in the Paterson electorate. And I particularly thank those who could make it down to Canberra today, and especially Robert Aitchison for organising the trip and driving the bus. I really do appreciate your support.

I thank my campaign team Darren Rodrigo, Ned Barsi, Emily Baldwin, Alex Smith, Mick Curley, Brent Nolan, Loretta Baker, Gena Parker, Jim and Lois Morrison, John Leao, Barbara Heaton, Ian Hunt, Bill Kerridge, Jay Suvaal, Dave Dobson, and Alan, Glenys and Darrin Grey.

I thank the hardworking and committed unions: the CFMEU; the AWU; the SDA; the MUA and their indomitable Vets; the RTBU; the HSU; the Meatworkers Union; the Maitland Community Unions; and the Hunter Workers and Trades Hall. Without their contribution,
their commitment, their doggedness and their drive, Labor would not solidly hold the seat of Paterson.

I thank, especially, our Leader Bill Shorten, who shared an eventful day with me during the campaign on the roadside at Testers Hollow, offered constant words of wisdom and support throughout the campaign, encouraged me during my first contribution in caucus, and generously travelled to Raymond Terrace to officially open my electorate office. We've shared a lot in the short time we have known each other.

Bill, I'm proud and honoured to be part of your team and pleased to take my place with such a talented group of people in the 45th Parliament, among my new friends here in Sector 12, especially with my new mate Milton Dick, the Member for Oxley.

I thank our Deputy Leader Tanya Plibersek, for her warm welcome to Parliament and for making me feel at home.

I thank my Party colleagues, in particular Stephen Conroy, Ed Husic, Gai Brodtmann, Sharon Bird, Anthony Albanese and Stephen Jones, for their support during the campaign and their ongoing visits and friendship. I thank Chris Bowen—who hosted my very first fundraising dinner. I discovered that night that Chris doesn't eat sweets and that he enjoys running—two behaviours I should probably emulate. Chris will potentially shape me, and I hope to shape some of his thinking too!

I thank the assistant general secretary of New South Wales Labor, Pat Garcia, for his excellent campaigning and organisational ability. I thank my Hunter colleagues Sharon Claydon, Pat Conroy, Kate Washington, Jenny Aitchison, Tim Crakanthorp, Clayton Barr, Sonia Hornery, Jodie Harrison and Yasmin Catley and, of course, my friend and mentor, the member for Hunter, Joel Fitzgibbon.

I thank also for their support the former member for Port Stephens, Bob Martin, and, of course, the former member for Paterson, Bob Horne, who was my high school science teacher way back when, and remains a friend and a fellow gardening enthusiast. And I acknowledge the former member for Paterson, Bob Baldwin, for his work for our community over many years.

I thank my electorate staff—David Ewings, Josephine Hillard, Giacomo Arnott, Alysson Watson, who helped craft this speech, and Kim Pagan, who watches over all of us.

I consider that my first great achievement in office was to pull together such a 'crack' team, who do their utmost to support my work and help our constituents.

My friend Belinda Blain is here today with her husband Michael; we have known each other since we were in Year 3. They both helped me on the campaign. Election day was their 24th wedding anniversary and today is Michael's 46th birthday. Talk about true friendship and commitment! Belinda is a talented teacher. In her first appointment at Narrabri, she talked about a girl who was outspoken, passionate and political, and who reminded her of me at the same age.

After my preselection, Belinda said, 'Have you met Kaila Murnain?' That outspoken, passionate and political girl was taught by my girlfriend and she is now the General Secretary of New South Wales Labor. I had not just met Kaila, but had been guided by her during my entry into politics. Kaila, that I can now be compared to you, a generous and intelligent woman who puts the cause before her own ambition, is truly an honour.
I also thank from the bottom of my heart, the loves of my life: my incredibly supportive, selfless and generous husband Nick, with whom I have laughed at life and had the occasional tear over the last 20 years. We have created our beautiful daughters Lara and Adelaide, who are here today and who are also growing into outspoken, passionate and political young women.

My fellow members, you may think your lives are very busy, but I have to say no-one is as busy as a 12½ year old with a mare about to foal and several other horses needing to be fed, watered and ridden every day—and through the winter it is freezing—and a 17 year old who tomorrow will be inducted as a prefect at her school. She will start year 12 and brand new P plates, too! Well done, Lara.

Thanks for squeezing me into your busy lives, my darlings, and keeping your father on track while I'm in Canberra.

Finally, I come back to where I started. I thank my mum and dad, Ben and Joy, for simply being who you are.

My sister Adele is here today with her husband Kevin; their love and support is second to none. Even though there is 18 years between us, we could not be closer. My other sister Lynne cannot be here but I thank her husband Kevin for making the trip. Thanks, too, to my dear friend Sue O'Brien, who has known and cared for me for my entire life. She is here.

Mum is now a rock to us all. Dad is bravely facing the late and ravaging stages of mesothelioma and being cared for by my sister Lynne. He was an underground miner, and exposure to asbestos has all but destroyed his lungs. Having witnessed his rapid decline in the past six months makes me steadfast in my belief in good regulation and good governance. We thought asbestos was safe. We did not know the whole story. Where we can, we should always attempt to right the wrong.

It is with dad's failing health in the forefront of my mind that I raised the issue of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, known as PFOS, PFOA and, more recently, PFAS. Arising as a legacy of firefighting foam, PFAS is found to have contaminated land and water on and around defence bases and other sites in Australia and at sites throughout the world. PFAS is described as an emerging contaminant, the fuller impact of which is really yet to be known. The United Nations Stockholm Convention Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee has just recently recognised its toxicity to humans. In Australia we now have regulations against its use, but in Williamtown in my electorate, in Oakey in Queensland and potentially at another 16 sites across Australia the damage is already done. In Williamtown the contamination of land and water on and surrounding the base has been there since the 1970s. PFAS has been found in soil, in groundwater, in seafood, in cattle, in cow's milk, in backyards, in chickens and their eggs, in home-grown vegetables and fruit, and in the blood of people who have been exposed to it over years while living their semirural and what they thought were idyllic lifestyles on small acreages around the Williamtown base.

Fishers were forced to stop fishing. Banks decided to stop lending. Valuers will not set foot on contaminated land. Property values have plummeted. People are worried sick and they are stuck. Although PFAS is no longer in use, it is still leaching off the base. The pollution has not even been stopped. The speed of Defence's response in our community has been glacial, to say the best.
This government must stand by the Williamtown community, who, through no fault of their own, have found themselves in an impossible situation. Their properties are no longer fit for purpose—they are devalued and potentially worthless. Their soil and water is contaminated, their health potentially compromised, their lives destroyed, their anxieties heightened, and their trust and faith in all of us low. The PFAS contamination must be stopped, land and soil remediated, and people who want out must be able to go. Governments cannot be allowed to poison our environment and our people. Governments cannot be allowed to walk away. It is time for this government to put things right.

I am fighting for justice and proper recompense for my community. This issue is fresh and real in my mind and my heart. We have made mistakes with tobacco, asbestos and coal dust in the past. We sat idly by thinking everything would be okay. We cannot afford to do that with PFAS. My father’s illness is a stark reminder that illness and death and government inaction affect real people who live and love and die. They have families who live with them, who love them, who watch and care for them as they die, as my family is doing with my father now. I will not sit idly by.

Talkback radio taught me a lot of things: to be a good talker and a good listener, and to go in to bat for people in need. It gave me a chance to talk to many and varied people, from the elderly man who had not spoken to anyone all week; to the young boy who hoped one day to be Prime Minister; to the great mind that is Barry Jones. What do you ask a Pick a Box champion and great Labor man? I asked him, ‘What is the meaning of life?’ He was stumped. He said, ‘Well, Meryl, the meaning of life, apart from reproducing, is to make a contribution—to help us evolve through education and experience, to make the world a better place for those coming after us.’

In my mind, politics is one way of doing that. At this time we are called to make difficult decisions, akin to the reformist decisions made by the former great Labor prime ministers Hawke and Keating, just to mention two. That era was truly transformative, particularly to this young woman studying economics.

We need to lead now as we led then. I am pleased to belong to a party that wants to lead the way but, more importantly, to take people with it. It is my firm belief that Australians are essentially decent and fair people. They are not stupid and they do not like being taken for granted. When you present a challenging idea people will come around if your case is good enough and you explain it well enough. And so is the case with our budget and economy. Government is not business. The Turnbull government talks a lot about debt and deficit, and while I do believe we need fiscal rigour, we also need investment. I agree wholeheartedly with the comment by Reserve Bank governor, Dr Philip Lowe, who, in his first appearance before the House Standing Committee on Economics, said that another option for government is to use low interest rates to increase spending. He said: My own view is that many of our cities could do with better transportation infrastructure. Sydney is amongst those.

I would go further and say that our regions need it as much as anywhere and that good infrastructure is needed between our cities and our regions. We must all be connected by infrastructure that is both tangible and intangible—trains and terabytes.

Leadership is not always about agreement, and sometimes I think that as politicians we are too worried about saying the things we think the public want to hear rather than saying the
things that need to be said. From time to time we have to grasp the nettle. We can take people on a journey if we show leadership, if we support research and development and champion the ideas that will take us forward, contribute to our betterment and help us evolve. This is what we are here to do. This is good government.

And so in closing I return to my lamp. I hope to light the way for others so that their journey in the dark is a little safer and perhaps even a little less lonely. I hope to be a practical and useful member of this place and to shed light on the issues that I believe need illumination. And I hope that the light that shines within me will contribute to the eternal light on the hill, that collective ideal that together we are stronger. We are part of a great place and, together, with courage, insight and intelligence, with hard work and decency, we can serve the cause of humanity.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I thank the honourable member. The debate is interrupted in accordance with the resolution agreed to this day. The debate may be resumed at a later hour.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Diggeress Cup

Ms RYAN (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (13:44): I rise today to share with the House a report from a trip to Sydney by the Australian federal parliamentary netball team on the weekend. Our colleagues from this place and the other place—including the member for Newcastle, who is in the room now; the member for Boothby, who was here a little while ago; and Senators McAllister, McKenzie and Hanson-Young—represented this parliament in a three-way test between New South Wales, New Zealand and the Australian federal parliament. We did manage to defeat the New South Wales parliament, but lowered our colours, once again, to New Zealand, who returned across the ditch with the Diggeress Cup. However, we did join our New South Wales and New Zealand colleagues at the first Constellation Cup, where Australia gave New Zealand a routing on the netball court in the real game.

I also want to commend the Australian netball association on their program called Confident Girls, which seeks to support young girls to be confident girls through sport. I welcome New Zealand, who is intending to join us in that program.

Canning Electorate: Waroona Agricultural Show and Karragullen Expo

Mr HASTIE (Canning) (13:46): On Saturday, I had the pleasure of attending the 86th Waroona Agricultural Show and 33rd Karragullen Expo in Canning. Despite the weather, I was very pleased to see the local community engaged and supportive of the day's festivities. My congratulations go to the various winners of the hall exhibits at Waroona. I was able to present the prizes. I was particularly impressed with the work of Liz Hogan of Wedding Cake Boutique in Mandurah. For her efforts she took home the G&R Sutton Trophy for Outstanding Exhibit in Decorated Cakes. There was a wide and impressive array of goods and produce on display. I would also like to congratulate Desmond Muir for taking out the Best New Horticultural Innovation Award at the Karragullen Expo for his AiroFresh technology.

I commend the Waroona Agricultural Society for their work, in particular President Maree Ellis, Vice-President Eric Walmsley and Secretary Alison Birch. I also commend the Hills Orchard Improvement Group for their work at the Karragullen Expo, in particular President
Bruno Del Simone and spokesperson Brett Del Simone. Between them they executed two very successful events.

The Waroona area suffered greatly from the bushfires in January this year, so it was inspiring to see the community come together in solidarity after experiencing such adversity. I am proud to be part of the thriving electorate of Canning that is working to pass on the best of its traditions to future generations. I look forward to the shows next year.

**Rio de Janeiro Paralympic Games**

**Mr HILL (Bruce) (13:47):** I rise to acknowledge and pay my respects to a fabulous young man from my electorate of Bruce: Mr Tim Disken. In September Tim competed at the Rio Paralympic Games, along with 170 athletes from all states and territories who represented Australia in 15 sports. Mr Disken, in his first outing, returned with not one, not two but three medals, which is an outstanding achievement. He won a gold, a silver and a bronze in swimming.

When Tim returned from Rio I had the pleasure of meeting and speaking to him about his success. Tim is a long-term resident of the suburb of Glen Waverley in my electorate. He was the school captain, some years ago, at the Glenallen School, one of the most well-renowned special schools in the state of Victoria.

The Paralympic team should be proud of their achievements in Rio, which placed Australia fifth in the world—that is, five places better than the Australian Olympic team. I think Tim's personal motto is one which we could all reflect on and consider adopting in this place: 'go hard or go home'.

When I spoke to Tim I asked what he thought his future held. He is enjoying a few weeks relaxation in Victoria but then he will return to Canberra to the Australian Institute of Sport to focus on the World Games and the Commonwealth Games and to plan his future Olympic career. He is a role model to all who seek to achieve in the Paralympics and I think he has great things in store for him in the future.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Coulton):** I remind honourable members that they must be in their allocated seat to receive the call.

**Corangamite Electorate: Ford Workplace Relations**

**Ms HENDERSON (Corangamite) (13:49):** I rise to firstly pay tribute to Ford workers and suppliers and their families who have contributed so much to the Geelong community. After manufacturing almost half a million vehicles over 91 years in Geelong, last Friday marked the end of Ford manufacturing cars in Australia—a very emotional day in our community. Locally Ford will continue to have a bright future at its North Geelong Research and Development Centre and at the Lara proving ground, designing and testing cars for Ford's global markets.

At a time when every single job matters in Geelong, Viva Energy, which produces 50 per cent of Victoria's fuel, has effectively been shut down by an illegal blockade by the AWU and the AMWU. These unions are defying an order of the Victorian Supreme Court by continuing their illegal picket line—an action which has nothing to do with safety but everything to do with stopping non-union contract labour. This is absolutely outrageous, bullying, unlawful
conduct. In the middle of a $100 million turnaround maintenance program, it is costing Viva $3 million a day, $20 million in total, and threatening jobs. What have we heard from the member for Corio and the Leader of the Opposition? Absolutely nothing. I condemn this behaviour. The Leader of the Opposition must speak out against this disgraceful behaviour. To the unions I say, 'Do not hurt our economy and threaten these jobs.'

Newcastle Electorate: Sporting Achievements

Ms CLAYDON (Newcastle) (13:51): I follow in the footsteps of my colleagues who have also had important sporting announcements today. I would firstly like to do a big shout out to the Australian parliamentary netball team. Yesterday was a terrific example of all levels of parliament coming together across the Tasman Sea for what was a tremendous and fiercely competitive weekend of sport between the New Zealand and Australian parliaments.

I would also like to acknowledge the mighty Carrington Pirates Rugby League Football Club on their tremendous success this last season. As their patron and No. 1 ticket holder in Newcastle, I could not be more proud of the incredibly gutsy effort from the entire Pirates team this year, culminating in being crowned the 2016 minor and major premiers in the Newcastle-Hunter rugby league competition. They are the very essence of what a good Rugby League team should be. They are a strong community based team surrounded by a fantastic team of volunteers that enable their sport to happen every weekend.

There is nothing better than a Sunday afternoon at the footy, cheering the Carrington Pirates on from the sidelines of the Connolly oval in Carrington, catching up with friends, family and fans. It has been a terrific season and the grand final was just the icing on the cake. I am especially pleased to see the emergence of the Carrington Pirates Ladies League Tag Team and I look forward to cheering them on in 2017.

Page Electorate: Palmers Island Public School

Mr HOGAN (Page) (13:52): In an electorate comprised of many regional and rural areas, local schools play a very important role in their communities. This year, 2016 is a very special year for Palmers Island Public School families, staff and especially students who recently celebrated the 150th anniversary of the school. This significant anniversary was commemorated with a march from the old school, site located on the Palmers Island riverbank, to the school's current location.

An opening ceremony was led by school captain Max Hutchinson and leader Reece Warburton. The school choir and drumming group also performed. The ceremony concluded with the ringing of the centenary bell and cutting of the cake by the oldest living past student, Mr Jack Bell, and the youngest current student, Jacob Swift. Community members enjoyed looking at old pictures, memorabilia and watching short documentary films created by staff and students.

This day was so successful due to the hardworking volunteers who contributed their time and efforts. I would like to acknowledge Shelley Swift, Kerry Woods, Margie and Marcus Johnson, Graeme and Belinda Skelton, Gail Campbell, Carol Woods, Susan Searles, Kristy Groth, Kath Hardaker, Andrew Bennett, Adrian Wiseman, Lynne Wilson, June Alexander, Wendy and Maria from the Yamba Historical Society, Alan Lawrence, Alan and Stuart Sonter, Garbie Croft, Mark and Naomi Connock, Jackie Hinshaw, Peter Campbell, Kendall O'Brien, David Tees (Time expired)
Indi Electorate: Schools

Ms McGOWAN (Indi) (13:54): Colleagues, I would like to welcome to this wonderful place students from Sacred Heart secondary college in Yarrawonga and FCJ college in Benalla—welcome—and their principals Joanne Rock and Lew Nagle. I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the young people, particularly in rural Victoria, who take a leadership role within our schools. They make such a difference to the calibre of our communities. They participate in the student representative council, in sport, in arts, in theatre and in community work, and I know these particular students have such a compassion for social justice. They care about marriage equality. They care about refugees. They care about the poor people in our communities.

I want to take the opportunity today to do a shout-out on behalf of all of us members of parliament to acknowledge the leadership that young people play in our schools. We really appreciate it. I particularly want to say to the year 12s, getting underway to do their final exams, who have played leadership role as well as studying, 'Thank you for your work.' We really do appreciate it and we know what a difference it has made to the whole calibre, the community and the culture of our schools. Young people step up and take on those leadership roles. Thank you very much everybody.

Queensland Government

Mr HOWARTH (Petrie) (13:55): Last week it was revealed in Queensland that the Palaszczuk government, the state Labor government, is planning to sell state owned assets. This is coming from a Labor Premier who, at the 2015 state election, launched her campaign in front of massive signs that said, 'Stop the asset sell-off.' Annastacia Palaszczuk went on to say she would 'never sell or lease assets'. Yet here we are, less than two years later, and it has been revealed that they plan to sell lots of land assets right throughout Queensland, including in my electorate of Petrie.

The Queensland state Labor government has racked up some $80 billion in debt, the highest debt of any state in the country, along with other premiers before her, particularly Labor premiers. And selling vacant or under-utilised land may help with that. But the issue I want to remind people in the Petrie electorate is that the Palaszczuk government is breaking its biggest promise. Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk is now doing in government exactly what she criticised in opposition. She has misled Queenslanders—just as Bill Shorten misled the Australian people with his 'Mediscare' campaign with those opposite.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Petrie will refer to members by their correct titles.

Mr HOWARTH: It all comes down to the fact that Labor has no plan, they have no integrity and they have no respect for taxpayers or taxpayers' money.

Australian Football League: Western Bulldogs

Mr WATTS (Gellibrand) (13:57): On 28 September 1954 the then member for Gellibrand asked the Prime Minister, Mr Menzies:

In view of the importance of fitness in sustaining the national morale of our youth, and in view also of the outstanding importance of the national code of football to the maintenance of fitness and morale, will the Prime Minister consider inviting to Canberra, Australia’s champion Australian rules football team—Footscray?
Sixty-two years later, I rise to repeat the invitation to the Prime Minister to invite the champion Western Bulldogs to Canberra.

I know the Prime Minister is a fan of the Sydney Swans, I know from 3AW that he honours the flag day and night, but I ask him not to let personal loyalties interfere with this decision. The Dogs did not just beat the Prime Minister's Sydney Swans, they also beat the foreign minister's West Coast Eagles. They also beat the member for Grayndler's Hawthorn Hawks. They also beat the member for Warringah's Greater Western Sydney Giants. So there might be a bit of incentive there.

Circumstances beyond the Dogs' control prevented them from beating the Leader of the Opposition's Collingwood Magpies or the Speaker's Carlton Blues, but that is something we can sheet home to the Dogs. I know the Prime Minister could learn a thing or two from super coach Luke Beveridge about uniting a team after a change of captaincy and forging them into a match-winning unit, something they can learn.

Footscray is more than a club in Melbourne's west, it is a community and we have been celebrating for the better part of two weeks, since the last game. So go on, Prime Minister, do as we say in Footscray: be more bulldog, invite the champion Western Bulldogs to parliament and learn a thing or two about leadership.

**Forrestfield Airport Rail Link**

Mr IRONS (Swan) (13:59): The coalition has invested $490 million in the Forrestfield-Airport Link, which will connect not only my constituents but also all residents of Perth to the airport and to the Perth CBD. The link will have three new stations—Forrestfield station, Airport Central and the Belmont underground—and will allow commuters to travel to the CBD in only 20 minutes from the Forrestfield station.

As Perth Airport has cemented its position as the fourth busiest airport in Australia, the Forrestfield-Airport Link has become a priority of the great state of Western Australia. On Friday of last week Infrastructure Australia released its cost-benefit analysis of the project. Infrastructure Australia is committed to prioritising and progressing nationally significant infrastructure.

The report found the benefit of the project, standing at $2.3 billion, far outweighed its $1.7 billion cost. I am proud to be part of a coalition government that recognises important infrastructure projects within Western Australia.

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

**CONDOLENCES**

**Peres, Mr Shimon**

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:00): On September 28, Shimon Peres, former President and Prime Minister of Israel, died. We mourn his passing but we honour and we celebrate his long and eventful life. The passion of Shimon Peres for the state of Israel, which he helped to found, was matched only by his commitment to pursuing peace for Israel with its neighbours. The man whose chosen surname is derived from an ancient Hebrew word for 'eagle' would become known over seven decades of statesmanship as a 'dove' of peace. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts in support of the Oslo
accords. To this day, his Peres Center for Peace seeks to link Israelis and Palestinians in programs that promote coexistence and reconciliation.

Shimon Peres's deep personal commitment to his nation began when the state of Israel was but a dream for the Jewish diaspora. Born Shimon Persky on 2 August 1923 in Poland, he was the son of Jewish parents Yitzhak and Sara. At the age of 11, Shimon and his family moved to Tel Aviv in British-mandated Palestine. He formed his first political leanings in a kibbutz, joined the Zionist movement to establish the nation-state of Israel, and served in Israel's pre-independence military organisation, the Haganah. Following Israel's independence in 1948, he worked alongside Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion. At the age of just 29, Shimon was appointed Director-General of the Ministry of Defense.

In 1959, he was elected to the Knesset and he served there until 2007, working in multiple governments as foreign minister, finance minister and defence minister. He served twice as prime minister: once in the early 1980s and again, briefly, after Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's assassination in 1995. Shimon Peres served as Israel's ninth president from 2007 to 2014, retiring just days before his 91st birthday, and he remained a powerful advocate for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. 'The Palestinians' Shimon said, 'are our closest neighbours; I believe they may become our closest friends.' His dream was to see both Israelis and Palestinians live in peace and security, to build, to educate their citizens and to prosper.

My wife, Lucy, recently visited Israel with a group of businesswomen to inspect high-tech innovation centres and to talk to innovators and universities, which are key assets in the economic success story of modern Israel and vital interests throughout Shimon Peres's long life. Thus group had the privilege of visiting Shimon Peres at the Peres Center for Peace. Mr Peres told Lucy the secret of perpetual youth was to ensure that your list of dreams always remained longer than your list of achievements. In that sense, this very old man, after such a life of extraordinary achievement and such an eventful one, nonetheless died forever young.

Unfortunately, Shimon Peres did not visit Australia but he spoke emotionally of the sacrifices made by Australians who fell in World War I in the Middle East, and he would recall warmly the friendliness and informality of the Australian troops stationed in Israel during World War II. But perhaps his affection for Australia was more personal still. His father, Yitzhak Persky, was saved from Nazi execution by a fellow prisoner of war, Australian Methodist minister Rex Dakers. After escaping from the Nazis, his father was recaptured. Padre Dakers convinced the Nazi soldiers that Persky and his co-conspirator had not received a proper trial and to shoot the men would be considered a war crime. The Padre boldly warned that, if they were shot, the Nazis would have to shoot him as well. Yitzhak Persky lived because of Rex Dakers' moral courage. When Shimon Peres's son, Chemi, visited Melbourne last year, he visited the Dakers family—a moment that Shimon called the closing of a circle.

I extend Australia's sympathy and condolences to his children, Yoni, Zvia and Chemi and their families, and I take this opportunity to acknowledge his marriage of 66 years to their mother, Sonya Gelman, who passed away a few years ago. I also extend our nation's condolences to the government and the people of Israel and the many Australians in our Jewish community who enjoyed a close personal friendship with Shimon Peres. We understand and we share your loss. Shimon Peres once said:
The duty of leaders is to pursue freedom ceaselessly, even in the face of hostility, in the face of doubt and disappointment. Just imagine what could be.

His list of dreams, longer than his list of achievements. He echoed there, and he often invoked, David's words in the 34th psalm, verse 14:

Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

It is not enough to want peace or to yearn for it; we must, like Shimon Peres did and David urged, pursue it with the relentless determination of the hunter.

Israel's prosperity, forged by the intellect and innovation of its people, has proved Shimon Peres was right to believe in the greatest opportunities for the nation he helped to found, and he was right to dream of even greater possibilities in a peaceful future to come.

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:07): Today we pay our respects to the last of Israel's founding generation—a youthful prodigy, an elder statesman, an icon, a magnetic orator, a deep thinker, a servant of peace. I had the privilege of meeting with him on a number of occasions, including with Chloe, when we were in Israel in 2012. He was a very charismatic man but also generous with his time, his advice and his attention. Shimon Peres lived the story of his people, a migrant story, leaving Poland to join the diaspora, pursuing a new life in Palestine; his father scratching out a future for the family in unforgiving soil. His grandfather, who gifted young Shimon a love of reading, stayed in Poland and was burned alive in a synagogue when the Nazis captured his village.

The teenage Shimon wept for his lost loved ones, studied hard, tilled the fields by day and guarded the kibbutz with a rifle by night. His story, the Jewish story, is a story of indignities endured and atrocities overcome, a humanity stronger than the jackboot, a faith more powerful than hatred, a people who, from the ashes of Shoah, built a new nation in their ancient homeland. From the first days of modern Israel to its 7th decade, Shimon Peres served his people and spoke for his nation. The child of the kibbutz drove the transformation of the desert. He armed his nation against existential threat. He helped lead Israel's embrace of science, technology and research. He fought for a country secure in its independence, confident of its place in the region and safe in the world. But, for all his success, the breadth of his achievements and the long shadow of his legacy, one noble goal eluded him—peace. As he once said of Israel's wars:

… we won them all, but we did not win the greatest victory that we aspired to: release from the need to win victories.

With the passing of Shimon Peres, the quest for a secure and lasting peace in the Middle East passes to all those whom he mentored and inspired. Let us vow to do what we can to assist the cause of peace, to support the right of all who call this region home to live in peace with one another. Let that be Shimon Peres's final legacy and his greatest. Olev-hasholem. May he rest in peace.

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Defence Industry) (14:09): I move:

That the House take note of the statement.

Debate adjourned.
MINISTERIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Mr Turnbull (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:10): I inform the House that the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport will be absent from question time today as he is representing the government at the World Congress on Intelligent Transport Systems in Melbourne and the Minister for Urban Infrastructure will answer questions on his behalf.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Medicare

Mr Shorten (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:10): My question is to the Prime Minister. Immediately after the election, the Prime Minister promised that he had learned his lesson on Medicare, but today in the parliament the Prime Minister voted against Labor’s motion to keep Medicare in public hands, reverse the freeze on Medicare rebates and abandon his cuts that will drive up the costs of blood tests, MRIs and X-rays. Doesn’t this show that after 100 days the Prime Minister still has not learned anything about Medicare?

Mr Turnbull (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:10): What this shows is that the Leader of the Opposition has not woken up to the fact that his lies about Medicare were exposed in the election. Frightening old people, sending text messages purporting to be from Medicare—so proud of that is the Labor Party—

The Speaker: The Prime Minister will not use unparliamentary terms. The Prime Minister has the call.

Mr Turnbull: Mr Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to remind the Leader of the Opposition of the gross deceit he perpetrated on the Australian people. He set out in the last week of the election to perpetrate a massive falsehood. His party sent millions of text messages claiming that the government was going to sell Medicare, and those messages appeared to come from Medicare itself. That is what they did. If that had been done in a commercial matter, if that had been done by a business, the people responsible would be facing criminal charges today—and the opposition know it. They took advantage of what appears to be a loophole in the law, which this parliament will close, to drive through this massive falsehood and deceive so many vulnerable Australians.

We are investing record levels of funding into Medicare, and it grows every year. We are investing more than $22 billion into Medicare this year—$1 billion more than last year. It will increase to nearly $26 billion by 2019-20. Under our government, bulk-billing rates are the highest they have ever been. GP bulk-billing is over 85 per cent compared to an average of 79 per cent under Labor. Across Australia last financial year there were over 17 million more bulk-billed GP attendances compared to Labor’s last full year in office. So, more Australians than ever before are seeing their doctor without having to pay anything for it. We are delivering the largest ever price reduction of medicine for consumers across the PBS. More than 2,000 brands of medicine treating common conditions dropped in price for millions of Australians on 1 October, some by as much as 50 per cent or more. The Labor Party has done nothing about Medicare, except frighten vulnerable Australians with falsehoods. We defend it. We sustain it. We ensure it serves Australia.

Ms Macklin interjecting—

Ms Butler interjecting—
Ms Chesters interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The members for Jagajaga, Griffith and Bendigo will cease interjecting. I remind the member for Jagajaga, in particular, of my warnings to her during the last week. I call the member for Corangamite.

Workplace Relations

Ms HENDERSON (Corangamite) (14:14): My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister update the House on action being taken by the government to protect Australia's emergency services volunteers and, in doing so, deliver on our election commitments?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:14): I thank the honourable member for her question. I remember well the visit my wife and I made to Wye River, where we saw the extraordinary work done by the volunteers of the Country Fire Authority to protect their community, where—under the leadership of the captain of their brigade—they done the planning, they had done the community outreach and they had set the measures in place that ensured that, when the inferno came, no lives were lost.

Those are the volunteers that stand between Victorians and the worst that nature can throw at them. We defend them. The Leader of the Opposition and his party are tied up with another militant union that is seeking to undermine the independence of the volunteers, to disrespect them, to remove their autonomy, to undermine their interdependence and, in doing so, to undermine their very ability to recruit. Who do they think stands between them and their home this summer? Who will it be? It will be the volunteer firefighters of Victoria. The volunteers are that great, selfless Australian tradition of courage and sacrifice. We stand for them; Labor abandoned them.

Ms Butler interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Griffith is warned.

Mr TURNBULL: We said at the election that we would stand with the volunteers. We said we would amend the Fair Work Act to ensure against those changes to their enterprise bargaining agreement—

Mr Brendan O'Connor interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Gorton is warned.

The member for Griffith then left the chamber.

Mr TURNBULL: that the Andrews government's own minister resigned. A Labor minister resigned in protest; the board had to be sacked. Sixty thousand volunteers were an uproar, with their ability to recruit undermined and their morale undermined. What sort of recklessness is this? You have to ask yourself: how beholden is the modern Labor Party to militant unions that they are prepared to take on 60,000 volunteers? I tell you, the Labor Party of Hawke, Wran and Keating would have never done that. But what we see now is a Labor Party that is captured by militant trade unions that will stop at nothing to secure their industrial purposes.
What about when the Labor Party talks about equality and fairness? What about the Warrnambool Fire Station, where the paid firefighters—the union members—refused to walk through the same door as the volunteers? They refused to walk through the same door is a volunteers; what is the message they are sending? We are defending the firefighters as they defend us.

**Medicare**

Ms CATHERINE KING (Ballarat) (14:18): My question is to the Prime Minister. It is now 100 days since the election, after which the Prime Minister said he had learnt a very clear lesson about his attacks on Medicare. So why has the Prime Minister failed to abandon the freeze on Medicare rebates, which will mean Australians will pay more every time they go to see a doctor?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:18): It is interesting to see how the Labor Party’s indignation boils down to the indexation freeze, a freeze which Labor imposed. Their complaint today, after the build up early in the House, is that the freeze has been continued. That is not what they told millions of older Australians during the election. That is not what was in the text messages or the robocalls that were frightening older Australians. The honourable member plays a violin! She regards, as do her colleagues, having pulled up off such a brilliant deceit as something of mirth. They are so proud; they are laughing with joy. How many people did they deceive?

The SPEAKER: The member for Ballarat will resume her seat. There is no possible point of order. I will refer her to the practice.

Ms Catherine King interjecting—

The SPEAKER: I refer you to the practice, then we can have a chat later. The Prime Minister has the call.

Mr TURNBULL: The difference between us and Labor on this issue is that we are getting on with the job of delivering better health services to all Australians. From 1 October, one in three brands of medicine on the PBS are cheaper for consumers by as much as $20 per script, per medicine. We have listed new medicines for melanoma, cancer and cystic fibrosis and a drug that treats and cures hepatitis C. Many of these medicines would have cost Australians tens—if not hundreds—of thousands of dollars a year, but we have been able to list them so that they only cost around $38 or just over $6 for a concession script.

Ms Catherine King interjecting—

Mr TURNBULL: So uninterested is the member for Ballarat at this good news for her constituents and for people suffering from melanoma, people suffering from hepatitis C and people suffering from dire diseases, the drugs for which they could not afford and are now able to afford. She is so unconcerned about it that she laughs and talks over the top of this news. She has no interest in anything but the politics of this issue, the politics of this monstrous deceit that they perpetrated on the Australian people.

Mr Burke: On a point of order and on parliamentary conduct, there are references in practice to asserting that members of parliament have made particular comments and verballing members of parliament to have made particular comments. The Prime Minister is doing that to the member and impugning the motives of members of parliament as well.
The SPEAKER: There are other forms of the House for the member for Ballarat at the end of question time, as the manager of opposition business knows.

Mr TURNBULL: We are the only party, the only coalition and the only parties in this parliament with a plan that will pay for Medicare, so Australians will continue to receive the outstanding health care they do now and into the future. We will continue to improve that, because we are investing in the drugs that save lives and we are able to do that because of the way in which we manage the public finances of Australia.

Economy

Mr GEE (Calare) (14:22): My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer update the House on how the government is progressing the national economic plan we proposed at the July election? And how will the government's plan support the successful transition of Australia's economy?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (14:22): I thank the member for Calare for his question. Australians, at the last election, voted for jobs and growth. They voted for a national economic plan to drive jobs and growth and that is what they have been getting, and they have been getting it over the past three years. And they are continuing to get an increase in the numbers of jobs and an increase in economic growth, which is there to lift living standards and to ensure that Australians can plan for their future with confidence. And they will continue to get that because that plan is being implemented by us—unlike those opposite who, for the first 100 days, were going, if they were elected, to try and work out what they were going to do. They said it was going to take 100 days to come up with an economic plan. Well, from day one we have gone about implementing that plan.

We have secured some $11 billion in budget improvement measures just in the first few sitting weeks. In addition to that, we have initiated a five-yearly inquiry into Australia's productivity performance. This is important because productivity improvements are critical to lifting the living standards and earnings of the country. Those opposite think the way to raise revenue is to increase taxes. On this side, we know that the way to support the government's budget is to ensure that Australians earn more, that companies earn more and that Australians can get ahead, and you do that by lifting the productivity performance of the country.

In addition to that, we have moved on the financial systems inquiry which is making our financial and banking system stronger, to improve our economic resilience. So it is no surprise that, in just the first 100 days, not one ratings agency but two ratings agencies have affirmed Australia's AAA rating over the course of the last 100 days.

In addition, we have moved to ensure that we are cracking down on foreign investment applications that do not meet the standard—those who have sought to abuse the rules in foreign investment. We have been ordering the divestments, which now total some $96 million of additional properties that were bought under false pretences.

On top of that, we have introduced into this House tax cuts that are designed to do two things: to support Australians who are going to work every day and would be facing higher rates of personal income tax. Those on the average full-time ordinary earnings would have gone into the second highest tax bracket and, because of the measures introduced by this side of the House, they will not move into that zone.
We have also introduced into this House an enterprise tax plan that is designed to increase investment in our economy. Those opposite used to support lower tax measures to drive investment, to drive jobs and to drive growth. The only thing they stand for now is higher taxes—higher taxes on the Australian economy—and higher deficits. The plan they took to the election was a—  

**Automotive Industry: Victoria**

**Mr SHORTEN** (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:25): My question is to the Prime Minister. On Friday, more than 600 people lost their jobs in the Victorian automotive industry. I note the Prime Minister had nothing to say about these jobs, even though his predecessor, the member for Warringah, did tweet his sympathies. Why did the Prime Minister spent last week fighting for the jobs of bank CEOs and not of thousands of automotive manufacturing workers? And, Prime Minister, what is the plan to help these automotive workers find new jobs?  

**Mr TURNBULL** (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:26): Friday was a very sad day for the workers of Ford and the communities of Geelong and Broadmeadows; they have been the home of auto manufacturing in Victoria for many years. It is important for honourable members to remember, particularly those opposite, that Ford's decision to stop local production was made more than three years ago under the Gillard Labor government. It was made despite Ford accessing $300 million of taxpayer funding under the Automotive Transformation Scheme between 2011 and 2015.  

My government is keenly focused on helping workers who have lost their jobs into new jobs and supporting firms in the supply chain to diversify their operations and access new export opportunities. We have established a $155 million growth fund to deliver on these objectives and work closely with Australian manufacturers as we do.  

We are backing local manufacturing, and we are beginning to see a world-class advanced manufacturing sector emerge. The honourable members opposite may have visited—as I have, with the member for Corangamite—Carbon Revolution in Geelong. That is the leader in its field in making carbon wheel rims—the leader in its field; the global best. That is an example of advanced manufacturing in Australia. Trajan Scientific in Ringwood—to give another Victorian example—is another. And it is important to remember, when we reflect on the politics of this, that the future of manufacturing in Australia must be advanced manufacturing.  

Let us take this comparison: how many Australian ships—naval vessels—did the Labor Party commission during its six years? None—not one! Only the coalition has a comprehensive plan for naval shipbuilding and the advanced manufacturing jobs that come with it: 54 vessels. Our commitments—long overdue commitments in an area of responsibility neglected by Labor—will deliver thousands of advanced manufacturing jobs and deliver unprecedented spillover benefits in technology right across the economy. So we are transitioning our economy. We are moving on it. We are providing new opportunities, whereas the Labor Party— *(Time expired)*

**Automotive Industry**

**Ms SHARKIE** (Mayo) (14:29): My question is to the Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science. Minister, the demise of Australia's automotive industry is a tragedy that is
causing a tsunami of job losses. The Automotive Transformation Scheme should assist in the transformation of the industry but remains underspent by $1.24 billion. Not all automotive and aftermarket-product providers can remain in the industry and we need to retool and diversify to survive. Minister, will the government change the scheme to allow automotive and aftermarket-product providers to access funding for diversification into non-automotive products, and will the minister confirm no funding cuts to the scheme before 2020, thereby saving tens of thousands of jobs?

Mr HUNT (Flinders—Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science) (14:30): I thank the member for her question. In fact, I met last week with representatives of all three automotive manufacturers in Australia. As the Prime Minister said, this was a very difficult week not just for the workers at Ford but I know that in South Australia there was of course the ending of the line for the Holden Cruze. The fundamental point here is that we are taking steps through a $155 million growth fund to deal with precisely the points the member raises. That fund includes $15 million to assist workers directly with their transitions and it includes a $90 million next generation automotive and other industrial advance manufacturing program, precisely the sort of work that the Prime Minister outlined and which the member is seeking. So that work is already occurring.

We recently announced a series of grants right across Victoria and South Australia for new manufacturing jobs to provide these very opportunities. We are working through the $155 million growth fund on providing opportunities for the individual workers, on assisting the regions and on assisting the sector of advanced manufacturing. I would note, for example, that in South Australia we were able to support Ellex Medical in Salisbury with $2½ million under the Next Generation Manufacturing Investment Program. It is investing in advanced equipment and systems—part of medical device manufacturing. You build on that with the $90 billion that is associated with the naval defence program—the 54 ships that the Prime Minister has outlined. These are providing real opportunities—enormous opportunities.

As difficult as last week was, one of the important things that came out from my discussions and from having visited the Ford plant at the Ford proving grounds in the area near Geelong is that there are 1,600 jobs at Ford and another 400-plus contractors that will be continuing. The future of the automotive industry in Australia is about advanced design. We are one of a small number of global providers—

The SPEAKER: The member for Mayo on a point of order?

Ms Sharkie: Mr Speaker, I was asking about the $1.24 billion for the Automotive Transformation Scheme, and asking the minister if he will—

The SPEAKER: Is the member for Mayo making a point of order?

Ms Sharkie: Yes, on relevance. I also asked him about whether he will ensure that there are no funding cuts to the scheme before 2020.

The SPEAKER: The member for Mayo has made her point of order.

Mr HUNT: My point is very clear. We have set out a $155 million growth fund. We are delivering that growth fund. We got ahead of the game. When the decision was made under the previous Labor government to close manufacturing in Australia, we did not sit idly by; we acted. We put in place a program for workers’ jobs, for new sectors and for the region, and that is making a real difference. (Time expired)
DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I inform the House that we have present in the gallery this afternoon the honourable Bruce Billson, a former minister and the former member for Dunkley, and also the honourable Alannah MacTiernan, former member for Perth. On behalf of the House, I extend to them a very warm welcome.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Renewable Energy

Ms FLINT (Boothby) (14:34): My question is to the Minister for the Environment and Energy. Will the minister update the House on developments following the extraordinary meeting of the COAG energy ministers on Friday? Is the minister aware of any challenges facing Australia's energy security?

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong—Minister for the Environment and Energy) (14:34): I thank the member for Boothby for her question and acknowledge that her constituents from Mitcham to Blackwood and from Dover Gardens to Somerton Park have experienced the hard economic and community costs that came with the SA blackout on 28 September. It was against this backdrop that the COAG Energy Council meeting was called and ministers came together to find more common ground. We were briefed on the developments in battery storage, on the hardening of infrastructure and on the need for more interconnection between states. We of course had a briefing from the market operator on what happened in South Australia and we had a robust discussion about the aggressive state based renewable targets and the implications that they have.

There was a big breakthrough at the meeting on two key points: firstly, there was an express agreement by the ministers that their primary responsibility is energy security, reliability and affordability; and, secondly, there was an agreement by ministers that there would be an independent review that would be chaired by the Chief Scientist, Alan Finkel, which would look at energy security and provide recommendations to ministers about policy and legislative and governance reforms that may be needed.

But I am asked, 'Are there any challenges to this approach?' The greatest challenge comes from those opposite, with their reckless pursuit of an ideological approach to renewable energy targets without thinking through the implications for energy security. The Leader of the Opposition has a renewable energy target of 50 per cent by 2030. We are told that will require 10,000 turbines. Where are they going to be built? In Maribyrnong, I presume!

Mr Watts interjecting—

Mr Conroy interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The members for Gellibrand and Shortland are warned. I was not at all confident that they would hear the warning unless I interrupted the minister. The minister has the call.

Mr FRYDENBERG: Bloomberg New Energy Finance tell us that Labor's 50 per cent renewable energy target by 2030 will cost at least $48 billion. If you had a $48 billion program, you would expect that you would have a bit of detail to show. So I went to the Labor Party's policies from the last election, and what did I find on page 11? I will quote: 'In
government Labor will announce the proposed design details for their RET by 1 October 2017.' We have to wait till next year to even see the detail. But not everybody in the parliament or elsewhere is too happy with Labor. Tony Maher, the National President of the CFMEU, has said he is very concerned about the impact on the cost and jobs of that particular policy. The party that gave us cash for clunkers, green loans, the carbon tax and, of course, the citizens assembly can now not be trusted with the renewable energy target. (Time expired)

Renewable Energy

Mr BUTLER (Port Adelaide) (14:37): My question is to the Prime Minister. During the election, at a campaign rally in Adelaide the Prime Minister praised South Australia as a leader in clean energy generation. Why did the Prime Minister champion renewable energy in South Australia before the election only to use an extreme weather event to play politics after the election? Isn't this just another example of the Prime Minister following his party instead of leading it?

Mr Pyne interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the House will cease interjecting. The Prime Minister has the call.

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:38): I do thank the honourable member for his question because in asking it he puts his finger on the very central problem that Labor faces with this issue: that they treat renewable energy as an ideological issue rather than a technological issue. The bottom line is simply this: that there are many sources of electricity. There is intermittent renewable. There is hydro. We have many forms of fossil fuel generation. All of them have different characteristics.

What we have to do is take away the ideology and the political claptrap with which the Labor Party surrounds all of their policies and focus on these objectives. What we need to do is ensure that we keep the lights on—something the honourable member's Labor colleagues in South Australia demonstrably failed to do. We have to keep the lights on. We have to ensure that there is energy security. We have to ensure that households and businesses can afford to pay for it—and his Labor colleagues in South Australia have created the most expensive wholesale electricity in Australia. That is very helpful, isn't it, I ask the honourable member—terribly helpful if you want to revive your manufacturing base. Come to South Australia and pay more for your electricity than anywhere else! What an extraordinary proposition.

So you have got to do have energy security and energy affordability, and we have to meet our emission reduction targets as set out in the Paris treaty. So we have to do all three and we have to make sure we achieve them all together. The minister who has just answered the last question set out the importance of doing that and the way he is showing the leadership that the Labor Party in government constantly failed to do and fails to do at the state level in ensuring that we get the measures, the plans that give us security, affordability and emission reduction.

This is a time when we must stop putting ideology into something that is essentially an engineering issue. How do we achieve those three goals? There is a way to do it. We are leading the way.

Mr Perrett interjecting—

Ms Rishworth interjecting—
Mr VASTA (Bonner) (14:41): My question is to the Minister for Defence Industry. Will the minister update the House on how the Joint Strike Fighter program provides opportunities to grow Australia's defence industry as part of our national economic plan that we proposed at the July election?

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Defence Industry) (14:41): I thank the member for Bonner for his question and I ask that the member withdraw the statement he just made across the chamber to me which I find very offensive.

The SPEAKER: The minister will resume his seat. Did the member for McEwen make an unparliamentary remark?

Mr Rob Mitchell interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Sorry; I didn't understand that.

Mr Rob Mitchell: No. That was the easy bit.

The SPEAKER: Okay. The Leader of the House has the call.

Mr PYNE: The Labor Party has sunk very low, unfortunately, when they make someone like the member for McEwen the Deputy Speaker of the parliament. In any event, let's return to the member for Bonner's question, which is about the Joint Strike Fighter program. The Joint Strike Fighter program is already delivering great opportunities for the Australian defence industry. It has already ensured $800 million worth of contracts for Australian businesses, and we expect that that will rise to between $2 billion and $2½ billion by 2023.

Australia is a partner in the Joint Strike Fighter program thank to the foresight of the previous Howard government. It is not just a customer in the Joint Strike Fighter program, and that means that Australian businesses get to benefit materially from supplying this program—businesses like Ferra Engineering in the member for Bonner's electorate, which are the providers for the weapons adapters, which is the mechanism which attaches the rockets on the Joint Strike Fighter to the plane itself. Ferra Engineering is the sole provider of these weapons adapters around the world, which means it will supply all 3,000 Joint Strike Fighters with this particular product. This is leading to jobs, growth and investment not just in Ferra Engineering but, of course, all around Australia in the 30-plus businesses that are suppliers for the Joint Strike Fighter program.

The maintenance and sustainment of the Joint Strike Fighter program is another opportunity for Australia to benefit materially and economically. We have already won the rights to be the regional hub for Asia for the maintenance and sustainment of the frames and engines for the Joint Strike Fighter, and last week I went to Washington to press our case for Australia to be the regional hub for the Joint Strike Fighter maintenance and sustainment of componentry—things like avionics, landing gear and so on. This is worth tremendous revenue to Australia. I met with Ash Carter, the Secretary of Defense; the Frank Kendall, the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics; and Lieutenant General Chris Bogdan, who is the decision-maker in this particular program. I feel very helpful that
we will be able to be the regional hub for the maintenance and sustainment of the Joint Strike Fighter.

This is the government delivering on its election commitments. We are getting on with the job of our national economic plan. Unlike the Labor Party, who are mired in ideology and politics, we on this side of the House are getting on with the job—in this case in defence industry, providing jobs, growth, investment and infrastructure.

**Renewable Energy**

**Mr SHORTEN** (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:44): My question is to the Prime Minister. What is the government's policy to support the development of renewable energy projects after 2020?

**Mr TURNBULL** (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:45): I thank the honourable member for his question. The honourable member should be well aware that our commitment to the Paris treaty requires substantial reductions in emissions up to 2030. We are already meeting and beating our Kyoto targets. The renewable energy target is set at 2020. All of these renewable energy targets, and indeed the whole climate policy, will be addressed and reviewed in the course of next year, and that has been the case for some time. I will invite the minister to add further to this answer, but I just want to remind the honourable member of this very important point: renewable energy is a means to an end. The national objective, the national commitment, that we have is to meet the Paris targets. The manner in which we meet that will be partly by renewable energy targets and partly by other measures, such as the Emissions Reduction Fund. I invite the minister to add further to this answer.

Honourable members interjecting

**The SPEAKER:** The minister will wait for a second. The Leader of the House will cease interjecting, and the member for Shortland will leave under 94(a). I tried to do that as efficiently as possible. I now call the minister.

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

**Mr FRYDENBERG** (Kooyong—Minister for the Environment and Energy) (14:46): The Leader of the House makes a very good point: we are not going to introduce a carbon tax. The Labor Party took another tax to the last election. Do you know who said that? The member for Hunter. The member for Hunter went on the Bolt program and was asked the question:

Can I go back to what you already alluded to? You said you can call it a tax.

And the member for Hunter said:

You can call it a tax if you like—

**The SPEAKER:** The minister will resume his seat. The Manager of Opposition Business on a point of order.

**Mr Burke:** The point of order is on direct relevance. You do not get a question as specific in policy terms as what has been put here. In fairness to the minister, it was directed to the Prime Minister at the time, but there was no preamble. There is no politics in it. It is a straight question about their policy beyond 2020.

**The SPEAKER:** The Manager of Opposition Business can resume his seat. As the Manager of Opposition Business well knows, even when there are two answers within the one
question, the minister is entitled to a preamble. But the minister must now move to the substance of the question.

Mr FRYDENBERG: It is uncomfortable for the opposition to know that Australia has met its Kyoto targets and is on track to meet our 2020 targets by 78 million tonnes. We have a 2030 target of 26 to 28 per cent, which is among the highest in the G20 on a per capita basis. We have a whole suite of policies, of which the 23 1/2 per cent renewable energy target is one. We have an Emissions Reduction Fund, which has reduced emissions at a cost of abatement of just $12.10 per tonne. That is much better than the punitive carbon tax. We have ARENA, the Clean Energy Finance Corporation and the renewable energy target. We have a suite of policies, and we have introduced the Paris agreement into the parliament for ratification. Those opposite have given us the ‘cash for clunkers’. They have given us the green loans. They have given us the pink batts. They have given us the carbon tax. (Time expired)

Exports

Mr CREWTHER (Dunkley) (14:49): My question is to the Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment. Will the minister update the House on how the government is creating export opportunities, especially in services, for Australian businesses such as franchises, and driving economic growth as part of our national economic plan that we proposed at the July election?

Mr CIOBO (Moncrieff—Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment) (14:49): I thank the member for Dunkley for his question. At the last election Australians had a clear choice between the national economic plan of this government and the lack of a plan of the Australian Labor Party. This government had a clear plan that was built on providing additional export opportunities for Australian businesses. We saw that those opportunities were not only confined to goods but also related to services. It is this government's clear-eyed vision around the transitioning Australian economy that is underpinning the policy we have taken forward—policy that will be crucial to ensuring jobs in the future, ensuring economic growth and ensuring that Australians have a higher standard of living tomorrow than they ever did under the previous Labor government.

A key part of our plan to provide additional export opportunities, which I know the member for Dunkley is passionate about, is the focus that we have on opportunities for services. The services sector represents some 70 per cent of Australia's GDP. Significantly, it employs around four out of five Australians. Yet it accounts for approximately only 20 per cent of our total exports. Herein lies the magnificent opportunity that the Turnbull coalition government is capitalising upon. We have made sure that Australia in the future is well placed to take advantage of growth throughout our region.

Currently, the Asian middle class represents around 600 million people, but it is rising. It is going to be three billion people, and the coalition government has put in place the framework to ensure that we can meet the demands, needs and investment opportunities for those three billion people in Asia's middle class. If you look at the last 12 months, for example, we see that the value of services exports has surpassed the value of metal ore exports, including iron ore, for the first time for quite some time. In fact, it has been some six years. In 2015, the value of our services exports grew by an impressive 10 per cent and the share of our services exports in our total exports has increased by over one-third in the past four years. This is a consequence of the free trade agreements that we have put in place with the North Asian powerhouse economies, that this coalition government is able to finalise.
But it also represents incredible opportunity. For example, the Australian Council for
Private Education and Training said, 'Our guaranteed market access for Australian education
providers under CHAFTA is paving the way for future job growth in this burgeoning sector.'
We also see extra advantages flowing to others. It is an opportunity for the future. (Time
expired)

Banking and Financial Services

Mr BOWEN (McMahon) (14:52): My question is to the Treasurer. What discussions has
the Treasurer had with the CEOs of the four major banks about a royal commission into the
financial services industry? When did the Treasurer first discuss the idea of a banking tribunal
with these CEOs?

Mr Pyne interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the House will cease interjecting.

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (14:53): I thank the member for his question. He
would not be surprised to learn that it is actually the job of the Treasurer to work with the
banking and financial sector all the time. Because, on this side of the House, we actually
know that having a strong banking and financial system is one of the most important assets
that our economy has. And we have been working with the sector since were elected.

The financial systems inquiry that was initiated by this government under former Prime
Minister Tony Abbott and the former Treasurer was opposed by those opposite, who did not
think there was a need to do anything at all in the financial systems area. But when they find
themselves in opposition what they do is throw the switch to cheap populism. What we have
from those opposite is not a plan to do anything constructive to actually improve the strength
and resilience of our banking and financial system, which was the key reason why our
economy survived the global financial crisis some eight years ago. Those opposite went on a
spending binge. What the previous government had done under Treasurer Costello and Prime
Minister Howard was to ensure that our banking and financial system was strong when the
storm hit.

What this government is doing is exactly the same thing. What we are doing is working
with the sector to ensure that we can ensure that the banking and financial system is as strong
as it can possibly be, because it is an uncertain and volatile world. I have just returned from
the IMF meetings and there is not an economy in the G20 or otherwise that would not want to
be Australia at the moment and would not want to have the strong financial and banking
system that ensures we can have the resilience to ensure that we underpin jobs and growth in
this country.

Those opposite think that you can walk around and undermine and play reckless havoc
with the banking and financial system. But we on this side of the House know that with
careful work—from the financial systems inquiry; to the increased resources for ASIC; to the
increased powers to ensure that malfeasance in this sector is dealt with, for everything from
increased penalties for BBSW rate manipulation and things of this nature, to see they are dealt
with; or moving towards a more level playing field when it comes to tribunals, to ensure that
people with legitimate grievances can have their cases heard. These are the things we on this
side of the House are doing. On that side of the House did nothing for six years and they come
into opposition and play politics with people's real grievances.
The only thing those on that side are seeking when it comes to the banking and financial system is to improve the stocks of the Leader of the Opposition. It is a very cynical and cruel thing for those opposite to manipulate and use the legitimate grievances of Australians to promote their own political interests. *(Time expired)*

**National Security**

Mr HOWARTH (Petrie) (14:56): My question is to be Minister for Immigration and Border Protection. Will the minister please inform the House of the importance of Australia's strong and consistent border protection policies?

Mr DUTTON (Dickson—Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) (14:56): I thank the member most sincerely for his question. He is very passionate about making sure that we can keep our borders secure so that we can keep our communities as safe as possible. I am very proud that it is now been over 800 days since we have had a successful people smuggling venture to our country. The irony is that on Labor's watch when they were in government there were 800 boats, with 50,000 people and 1,200 people tragically drowned at sea. They had an $11 billion blowout and they completely lost control of our borders. Australians voted for this government because they knew that we could get this situation back under control, and back under control it is.

But people who believe that the threat has disappeared or gone away need to look no further than Indonesia, where 14,000 people are prepared to hop on boats tomorrow. You need to look no further than what is happening in Europe and on the Mediterranean right now to understand that people smugglers have not gone away at all.

The Labor Party is as divided today as they were in the Rudd and Gillard years and as divided as they were during the election campaign, when the Leader of the Opposition tried to pretend to the Australian public that somehow Labor had got their act together on border protection. But they have not. The new shadow minister, the member for Oxley, has come up with a new holding line, but you will not find it on his website, because this train wreck interview was removed from his website. It was an interview with Laura Jayes from Sky News and I will just read a little bit to the House, because this new holding line is a pretty impressive one. Laura Jayes said, 'The coalition government has had to deal with a case load of 30,000 people that came under Labor. I think it is a fact that is indisputable. It has been found, according to the immigration minister, that 10,000 of those are economic refugees, so they have temporary protection visas at the moment.' Bearing in mind, there are three things that have worked here in keeping the people smugglers at bay. One is turning back boats, where it is safe to do so. Second is regional processing centres. Third is temporary protection visas, and Labor proposed to abandon temporary protection visas.

Mr Neumann goes on to say, 'What we would do is of course have these people assessed—'. And then Laura Jayes interrupts this nonsense and says, 'But why do you need to reassess them if the department has already assess them as economic refugees?' Mr Neumann says, 'I would be briefed by the department straight away. We want to end temporary protection visas.' Laura Jayes says, 'So the 10,000—and I know you have not been briefed—you would give them permanent status in Australia?' Mr Neumann, the shadow minister, says, 'I would be asking the department for a briefing in relation to it. As a policy we are opposed to temporary protection visas.' Laura Jayes goes on to say, 'If they are assessed as economic refugees what would you do with them then? Permanent arrangements?' Mr Neumann says
very decisively, 'I would be asking the department for a briefing.' Now, he goes on with that nonsense line for three or four further occasions. It demonstrates that Labor remains bitterly divided on border protection policy. (Time expired)

Attorney-General

Mr DREYFUS (Isaacs—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (15:00): My question is to the Minister representing the Attorney-General. The explanatory statement to the legal services direction in relation to the Solicitor-General tabled by the Attorney-General in the Senate on 4 May 2016 states: 'The Attorney-General has consulted the Solicitor-General.' Did the Attorney-General provide the Solicitor-General with a copy of the legal services direction before he tabled it in the Senate?

Mr KEENAN (Stirling—Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Counter-Terrorism) (15:00): I thank the opposition spokesman for that question. All the issues he just raised have been well ventilated in the media before now, but I would like to inform the House that the Attorney-General has changed guidance note No. 11 to clarify the procedure for briefing and seeking options from the Solicitor-General. This change is purely administrative. It does not restrict the independence of the Solicitor-General and is consistent with the law and historical practice.

Infrastructure

Mr CHRISTENSEN (Dawson—Chief Nationals Whip) (15:01): My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources. Will the Deputy Prime Minister update the House on the rollout of the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund? How will this fund benefit the nation, including my constituents in Dawson?

Mr JOYCE (New England—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources) (15:01): I would like to thank the member for Dawson for his question and note his clear advocacy for the economic development of Central and North Queensland. I know that he is very interested in how we are going on the $3 million that we put on the table for Urannah Dam, to get the study started there, and the $1.9 million we have put on the table for the Burdekin Haughton channel capacity upgrade feasibility study. I know he is very interested to make sure that we continue to progress our $2½ billion program on building dams, not only in his electorate but in electorates in so many areas of Queensland. But unfortunately we have had to deal with Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk, who is not progressing any of these dams—none of them. In fact, she is spending a lot more time arguing with one of her colleagues, Ms Trad, about who is going to be the next premier of Queensland than about actually advancing the issues for Queensland.

Although we have put $19.8 million on the table for 14 studies, not one of them has been started. And not only have we put money on the table for the studies but we put $130 million on the table to start Rookwood Weir so we can get further jobs to that area, an extra $1 billion a year in income for the people of Central Queensland. But there has been neither sight nor sound of what Queensland intends to do. The Queensland Labor Party has basically gone to sleep on us. They are spending a lot of time talking about tree-clearing legislation. They are certainly doing that. Ms Trad has a lot to say about tree-clearing legislation but nothing to say about economic development for the people of North Queensland. Even though the federal
government has funded 100 per cent of the $19.8 million for these 14 studies, we are not going anywhere with them.

The Labor Party in Queensland just seems to be fascinated with the internal politics and also the power of the Greens—the same power of the Greens that has had disastrous effects on the economic development of so many areas. We only have to look at what happened recently in South Australia with the power debacle. Of course, people have a lot to say about Greens policies when they are stuck in a lift—the 19 people who were stuck in lifts, the industry that has said quite clearly that, under a party that is infused with the power of the Greens rather than the power of the people, they are going to leave South Australia. It needed a wake-up call, but we had to wait for a severe thunderstorm before the Labor Party started realising the consequences of their action.

But it is very good for the Australian people to see what power looks like under Labor. Power under Labor is a blackout. Power under Labor is absolute chaos. But we will make sure that we deliver back to the people the vital infrastructure we have seen in such things as dams.  

(Time expired)

**Attorney-General**

**Mr DREYFUS** (Isaacs—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (15:04): My question is to the Minister representing the Attorney-General. I note that his previous answer dealt with the guidance note, not the legal services direction which I asked about. I ask again: did the Attorney-General provide the Solicitor-General with a copy of the legal services direction before he tabled it in the Senate on 4 May 2016?

**Mr KEENAN** (Stirling—Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Counter-Terrorism) (15:05): As I said in my earlier answer, the Attorney-General has been discussing this issue in public for many days and has answered all of these questions. As to the specifics of what the shadow Attorney-General has asked me, I will seek advice and return to the House.

**Afghanistan**

**Mr HASTIE** (Canning) (15:05): My question is to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Will the minister update the House on the government's contribution to security, peace building and development efforts in Afghanistan?

**Ms JULIE BISHOP** (Curtin—Minister for Foreign Affairs) (15:06): I thank the member for Canning for his question. I note his service in our SAS as a troop commander, I note his tours of Afghanistan and I thank him for his continuing interest in Australia's commitment to Afghanistan, for we are resolute in our determination to see Afghanistan transition to a stable, secure and economically sustainable nation. In fact, in 2001, when Australia first became involved in Afghanistan, it was a haven for terrorist organisations like al-Qaeda, and we are determined to ensure that it will not be so again. That is why we have committed to ensuring that the Afghan army and the Afghan police have the capacity to combat terrorism, to provide security to the nation and to seek to defeat the Taliban-led antigovernment insurgency that is taking place.

In 2015, the international community handed back the lead on security matters to the Afghan security forces. While there have been many gains, there is still much more to be done. That is why Australia continues to maintain a deployment of about 270 military
personnel in Kandahar and Kabul. It is why Australia has pledged the equivalent of US$100 million per year to support capacity building in the Afghan security forces, particularly the national army and the police.

We are also promoting stability and economic sustainability through our aid program. Last week at the Brussels conference on Afghanistan the Australian government confirmed that our annual aid funding directly to Afghanistan of $80 million a year will be extended to 2020. That pledge was welcomed.

Since 2001, there have been many social and economic gains. For example, school enrolments have increased from about one million to over nine million students; an additional 27 million people are estimated to now receive basic health services; and around 10,000 kilometres of roads, particularly in rural and regional areas, have now been rehabilitated, which has given employment opportunities to thousands of Afghans.

Our aid program in particular is focusing on specific areas, including ensuring that women can escape violence and can access justice. We are also focusing on girls in schools—giving girls the opportunity to have an education. We are also ensuring that farmers can get greater productivity and access to markets. Australia is committed to the transition to peace for Afghanistan.

**Attorney-General**

Mr DREYFUS (Isaacs—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (15:09): My question is to the Minister representing the Attorney-General. Did the Attorney-General provide the Solicitor-General with a copy of the Australian Citizenship Amendment (Allegiance to Australia) Bill, as presented to parliament, before he advised the intelligence committee 'that the government had received advice from the Solicitor-General that, in his opinion, there is a good prospect that a majority of the High Court would reject a constitutional challenge'?

Mr KEENAN (Stirling—Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Counter-Terrorism) (15:09): The shadow Attorney-General is again showing his impressive grasp of retail politics. He is very—

Mr Dreyfus: What's the answer?

Ms Kate Ellis interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Isaacs is warned. The member for Adelaide will cease interjecting. The minister is entitled to answer the question.

Mr KEENAN: As I said in answer to the shadow Attorney-General's earlier question, I am happy to seek the advice of the first law officer and return to the parliament at the earliest available opportunity.

**Mental Health**

Mr LEESER (Berowra) (15:10): My question is to the Minister for Health and Aged Care. As the minister would be aware, today is World Mental Health Day, marking the start of National Mental Health Week. Will the minister update the House on measures the government is implementing to assist Australians living with mental health challenges?

Ms LEY (Farrer—Minister for Sport and Minister for Health and Aged Care) (15:11): I thank the member for Berowra for his question and for his contribution in his first speech, explaining something that we should all have in mind on this World Mental Health Day—that
is, mental ill-health does not happen to someone else; it is not about a group of patients; it is about all of us, wherever we are in society or wherever we are in the community. I really want to thank the member for Berowra for highlighting that so eloquently.

I am pleased to take this opportunity to update the House on the Turnbull government's real, determined commitment to improve the circumstances of those with mental ill-health. Backed by a promise of an additional $192 million during the election campaign—something that is a personal passion of the Prime Minister, as many of us know—it is all about addressing people who suffer from mental ill-health and telling them that they are not alone, that the services and supports are there and that the stigma is being reduced. Most importantly, the prescription from the National Mental Health Commission was all about introducing a stepped-care model of care so that you do not receive one-size-fits-all care. Depending on where you are in the steps and your particular circumstances, you get either a low-intensity package of care or a wraparound, stronger support that means, particularly if you are being discharged from an acute mental health facility, you will not be discharged into a vacuum but into supports that exist in the community. The Fifth National Mental Health Plan that I raised with state ministers last Friday is all about that. It is all about joining up the support and the services.

In addition, we are introducing a digital mental health gateway, which is about innovative ways of providing support, particularly to young people. About 75 per cent of those suffering from mental ill-health are under 25, which is why we are providing so many resources to headspace, including adding an additional 10 headspace sites, as part of our election commitment. I thank the member for Sturt for his earlier involvement in the headspace model. It is so important to get it right at the early intervention level so that years of anxiety and depression do not follow.

We do not know what we do not know about suicide and suicide prevention. The Prime Minister and I have announced two trial sites to learn more—one in Townsville, focused on veterans' mental health, particularly those with post-traumatic stress, and one in the Kimberley, where I am heading with the Minister for Indigenous Affairs and the Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care, Ken Wyatt, at the end of this parliamentary sitting to address the scourge of suicide rates in Indigenous communities.

There is so much more to say, but in National Mental Health Week and on World Mental Health Day I think the key message for those listening is: look after yourselves, realise that the supports are out there and remember that you are not alone.

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

**CONDOLENCES**

Peres, Mr Shimon

**Mr TURNBULL** (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (15:14): Mr Speaker, can I take the opportunity to correct an aspect of my tribute to the late Prime Minister and President of Israel, Shimon Peres. On the advice I had received, I said it was unfortunate he had not had the opportunity to visit Australia. I have since been advised by a mutual friend in our Australian-Jewish community that Mr Peres did in fact visit Australia in years past, and I am very pleased to learn that he did.
DOCUMENTS

Presentation

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Defence Industry) (15:14): Documents are tabled in accordance with the lists circulated to honourable members earlier today. Full details of the documents will be recorded in the Votes and Proceedings.

AUDITOR-GENERAL’S REPORTS

Reports Nos 17 to 19 of 2016-17

The SPEAKER (15:14): I present the Auditor-General's Audit reports Nos. 17 to 19 for 2016-17. Details of the reports will be recorded in the Votes and Proceedings.

Ordered that the reports be made parliamentary papers.

DOCUMENTS

Commonwealth Ombudsman

Presentation


Ordered that the report be made a parliamentary paper.

BUSINESS

Days and Hours of Meeting

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Defence Industry) (15:15): by leave—I move:

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the following from occurring:

(1) on Tuesday, 11 October 2016 the Federation Chamber to meet from 12.30 pm to 1.30 pm, in addition to its scheduled hours of meeting;

(2) on Thursday, 13 October the adjournment debate in the Federation Chamber to commence at 1 pm and continue for 30 minutes;

(3) on Monday, 17 October the hours scheduled for private members' business in the Federation Chamber from 4.45 pm to 7.30 pm to be allocated to government business;

(4) on Tuesday, 18 October the Federation Chamber to meet from 12.30 pm to 1.30 pm, in addition to its scheduled hours of meeting;

(5) on Wednesday, 19 October the meeting of the Federation Chamber to continue until 1.30 pm and then suspend until 4 pm;

(6) on Thursday, 20 October the adjournment debate in the Federation Chamber to commence at 1 pm and continue for 30 minutes; and

(7) any variation to this arrangement to be made only by a motion moved by a Minister.

Question agreed to.
BILLS

Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2016-2017
Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2016-2017
Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Bill (No. 1) 2016-2017

Reference to Federation Chamber
Ms Marino (Forrest—Chief Government Whip) (15:15): I declare that, unless otherwise ordered at the adjournment of the House for this sitting, the following bills stand referred to the Federation Chamber for further consideration: Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2016-2017, Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2016-2017 and Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Bill (No. 1) 2016-2017.

COMMITTEES

Membership

The Speaker (15:16): I have received advice from the Chief Government Whip and the Chief Opposition Whip that they have nominated members to be members of certain committees.

Mr Pyne (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Defence Industry) (15:16): by leave—I move:

That Members be discharged and appointed as members of certain committees in accordance with the following list:

Joint Standing Committee on the Parliamentary Library—Mr Broadbent, Mr Ramsey, Mr van Manen and Mr Zimmerman be appointed members;
Standing Committee on Procedure—Mr Perrett be discharged and Mr Dick be appointed a member; and
Publications Committee—Ms M. M. H. King and Ms Stanley be appointed members.

Question agreed to.

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 (15:17): Before I call the honourable member, I remind the House that this is the honourable member's first speech. I ask the House to extend the usual courtesies to him.

Mr Kogh (Burt) (15:18): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to start by acknowledging and paying my respects to the Aboriginal custodians and first people of the land on which we gather here in our nation's parliament—the Ngunawal people—and to their...
elders, both past and present. I would also like to acknowledge the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation in south-west Australia—the custodians and first people of the area that includes the federal division of Burt—and pay my respects to their elders, both past and present. Burt includes several significant sites for Noongar people, including Gargangara, north of Armadale; Goolamrup, now known as the suburb of Kelmscott; and Dyarlgaroo, the Canning River.

I have the pleasure and honour of being able to say that I am the first ever representative of the division of Burt to sit in the House of Representatives. Indeed, it is tremendous honour to be able to come to our nation's capital to represent the area in which I grew up, the home of my family for three generations: the beautiful south-eastern suburbs of Perth. Not only is Burt a new seat, but it is also unique for being named not after one person but after three members of the same family: Archibald Burt, Western Australia's first Chief Justice; Septimus Burt, a colonial Attorney-General; and Sir Francis Burt, WA Chief Justice and later Governor.

Burt includes my family's home town of Kelmscott, settled in 1830 and only the fourth European settlement in what is now Western Australia. As anyone who has campaigned with me knows, I would be quite happy to go on and on and on about the history of the areas of Burt, but I will save you all from that now. Burt takes in much of the cities of Armadale and Gosnells, as well as part of the city of Canning. Its reaches include Armadale, Brookdale, Camillo, Canning Vale, Champion Lakes, Forrestdale, Gosnells, Harrisdale, Haynes, Hilbert, Huntingdale, Langford, Mount Nasura, Piara Waters, Seville Grove, Southern River, Thornlie and Wongong. And in relation to Thornlie, I would like to acknowledge the students of Thornlie Christian College, who I met with earlier today, and some of whom join us now in the gallery.

Burt is home to a number of mining FIFO workers and to many people working for or running small businesses involved in the construction industry, as well as growing numbers in retail and hospitality. Burt is also home to one of only two Olympic-standard international rowing courses in the country, at Champion Lakes—a fantastic joint state and federal Labor initiative. Like the outer suburbs of many Australian cities, the suburbs of Burt have been overlooked for infrastructure and community investment for many years by Liberal state and federal governments, and suffer high unemployment. This is why I have campaigned so hard for the duplication of Armadale Road and for a new Armadale Road bridge; for MetroNet and the extension of the Thornlie rail line through Canning Vale to Cockburn Central; for replacing the Denny Avenue level crossing in Kelmscott; for a 24/7 police station in Armadale; for better funding for community services; for investment in our schools; for securing and creating jobs; and for protecting Medicare. But our problems should not define us, and I would also like to see the natural beauty of our south-eastern suburbs and hills capitalised on for local jobs and amenity. We should be the Swan Valley of the south. I hope, by my election, that I can work to stop us being ignored and to deliver on what our community so badly needs.

Of course, as a new seat, Burt has been carved out of existing seats, taking one suburb from Swan in the north and roughly a third coming from each of Tangney in the west, Hasluck in the east and Canning in the south. As such, I would like to record in this place my respects for the late Don Randall and my condolences to his family. I would also like to acknowledge Don's predecessor and one of my early mentors, the late Jane Gerick. I learnt a great deal
from Jane and was blessed to have her brother Alan volunteer on my campaigns. And no mention of Canning would be complete without also acknowledging the former state member for Armadale, my long-time friend, an inspiration to true believers across Western Australia, the former member for Perth, Alannah MacTiernan, who also joins us in the gallery today.

Canning is of particular significance to me, having been not only the federal seat in which I grew up but also the seat I ran for in the by-election in September 2015. While most remember the Canning by-election as bringing an end to the Abbott prime ministership, a large part of that election was actually fought on the government's broken promises, such as its cuts to the Gonski funding model for school education. My mum's mother, Rita, had been prevented by her parents from studying beyond junior certificate. She always disagreed with this, and so she was very strong in her view that her children—all daughters—should be given every opportunity to pursue further study. Her strong view of the importance of education has permeated through our entire family and may explain why my mum and two of my siblings are now teachers.

My mum's father, Peter, grew up in the WA wheat belt town of Bolgart, where his father farmed and where our family still farms sheep and grains. My great grandfather, Luke Travers, was the local secretary of the Wheat and Wool Growers Union for some 13 years and ran as Labor's alas unsuccessful candidate in the state seat of Irwin-Moore in 1949. My grandfather was also the first lawyer in the Armadale-Gosnells area—on occasion taking payment in boxes of fruit from local orchardists. He also supported new migrants to the area, including from Poland following the Second World War and refugees from Vietnam. It is this generosity and recognition of ourselves in others that I believe finds expression in our national anthem when it says we have 'boundless plains to share'—especially with those that need our help most. Multiculturalism is where everyone is invited to continue to celebrate their cultures underpinned by a respect for traditional Australian values, and a broader culture of freedom and respect. It has given us our unique Australian culture and diversity, for which was are all better off.

Losing my grandparents over the course of the campaign, Peter on Anzac Day and Rita in the early morning after the election, was terribly sad. Pete made sure during the by-election that everyone in their nursing home knew who I was. I know that they will be proud watching all this from heaven. I owe them a great deal.

As social workers, my parents worked in prisons, hospitals, policy and child protection. Mum and Dad were always involved in our community, whether it was the parents' and friends' association, school board, playgroup, toy library, a community child care centre or the babysitting club. There was always a busy bee to join, a kids sports event to drive to or a committee meeting to attend.

I am very proud to have been able to follow my grandfather's and mother's footsteps into a career in the law, servicing our local families and businesses with their real world problems and concerns. I started out as a clerk and later as the bookkeeper before graduating law school. Not only did I learn a great deal about people and the law but also about running a small family business.

Subsequently, I worked as a federal prosecutor at the Office of the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions, specialising in commercial crime, such as insider trading and market manipulation as well as breaches of directors' duties. In this role, I worked closely
with ASIC as well as the Australian Crime Commission and, on occasion, the AFP and Customs. Most recently, I have worked as a commercial litigator at an international law firm, specialising in corporate crime and investigations, financial services regulation, anti-bribery and corruption and infrastructure access. Now maybe my excitement at being appointed to the House Standing Committee on Economics and the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services might make a bit more sense!

My interest in the legal profession did not stop at the practice of the law; it also extended to the support of practitioners and law reform—in particular in my work with the young lawyers committees of both the Law Society of Western Australia and of the Law Council of Australia, providing training to our newest lawyers, improving collegiality and supporting the mental health of lawyers. I am also proud that, during my term as President of the Law Society and as a director of the Law Council of Australia, I have been part of both organisations adopting the diversity and equality charter, as well as continuing to press for better funding for access to justice and closing the Indigenous justice gap. These are two issues about which I am particularly passionate and I hope to be able to improve through my time in the parliament. Because not only is justice delayed justice denied, but justice that is unaffordable is no justice at all.

The more people are unable to afford to access our justice system, to correct injustices and obtain legal remedies, the more nefarious members of our society can take advantage of others, infringe their rights and undermine their financial security, by operating with effective impunity because those they wrong cannot bring justice to bear.

Similarly, the strength of a nation can be judged by the way it treats its prisoners and the greatness of a nation judged by the way it treats its most vulnerable. Alas, as graphically demonstrated recently, when it comes to Indigenous incarceration we are neither a strong nation nor a great one. This is something that we can and must do something about, because I have come here—and I am sure we all have—to ensure that Australia is indeed a great and strong nation.

Through the Law Society I was also involved in the Law Access pro bono referral scheme and in establishing that scheme as a standalone service, serving as its inaugural chairperson. I am happy to see that this is service receiving increasing support from the legal profession.

In addition, I am a strong believer in human rights and also the Australian concept of a fair go. In my view, so long as the parliament retains its sovereign legitimacy by always and regularly being democratically elected, it is the parliament that must act as the bulwark against the tyranny of the majority. It should not abdicate that power and responsibility to the potential for the majority to inflict tyranny on minorities. As a matter of principle, therefore, this House and the parliament should vote and decide on the introduction of marriage equality in this country.

Working as a local lawyer, I became involved with Starick Services, which ran two local refuges for women and children fleeing domestic violence as well as a number of outreach and counselling services. I joined the board of Starick and eventually became its chairperson. More recently, through serving on the management committee of StreetLaw Centre WA—a specialist community legal centre servicing the homeless and those at risk of homelessness—I have had to grapple with the frontline effects of the government's badly managed and drastic cuts to community legal centre funding. Large cuts without transparency or communication of
the scope of funding until the very last minute undermine the capacity of our community organisations to provide their desperately needed services. It is my firsthand experience and exposure to this, as well as seeing the impacts of such cuts and uncertainty on service staff and on the people that rely on these community services, that has in part lead me to this place.

During the election campaign I met a young single mother living in Thornlie. One of the issues she raised with me was her experience of trying to make ends meet, in particular paying for child care for her children while she worked part time and studied engineering. She had left her husband after a long period of escalating domestic violence and was putting in an extraordinary effort because she knew that this was how to give her and her children a better life. Unfortunately, because of the cost of child care, she has had to abandon her engineering studies and is now undertaking a different course externally online, as this gives her the flexibility to be able to study from home and also look after her children without the need for expensive child care. While the new course is not engineering, it will give her a better opportunity at a career, increased income and provide a better life for her family.

I relay this story because it demonstrates that we must ensure that child care is affordable, accessible and not a barrier to work or study, otherwise we could end up locking people and their families into poverty and preventing them from being able to get ahead, with ongoing negative consequences for them and their children. Of course, we must ensure that the cost does not leave tertiary education as a privilege for only a wealthy few.

We must also ensure that we have adequate, available and fully supported domestic violence services and adequately funded legal assistance and community education. We should also support victims of domestic violence by ensuring provision of personal leave as a safety net as they access help in protecting themselves and their families, which can often be an overwhelming experience and, unfortunately, often far too complex.

My life's experiences are why I believe that all of us here should consider the position from behind John Rawls's 'veil of ignorance' as we undertake our work. It means understanding the difference between treating everyone equally and treating people equitably. For instance, during my time at Mazenod College, as well as learning much about Catholic social justice from the oblates of Mary Immaculate, I got to see it in practice, including when I visited a number of their missions in Indonesia. Over there I got to see true poverty combined with great generosity and community spirit, as well as some great community-building and enhancing projects.

We should help people not just because it seems like the right thing to do. We help people because, in recognising ourselves in every other human, we see that not everybody has the same background, upbringing, wealth or health and, therefore, to treat everyone equally—to treat them all the same—will result in inequity. But if we provide more assistance to those who need it, so that people, no matter their background, do then have a real and actual equality of opportunity, then we are acting equitably.

I also believe that our common wealth should be for our common good. This is not to say that we should not operate within a liberal capitalist economic structure but rather that we need to recognise that the good of society, where people are better off as a community, is a higher priority than an academically pure market. A practical example of this is the WA domestic gas reservation policy and a national interest test on gas developments nationally, as is increasing investment in renewable energy—not only as an environmental policy but as a
driver of jobs in research and development, manufacturing, construction and installation, as well as in the industries that can grow from a low-cost energy environment into the future.

We need to ensure that the gap between the rich and the poor is reducing, not increasing. This does not mean to say our standards of living should stagnate or fall but rather that the standards of living of the worst off in our society should—indeed, must—rise faster than those who are already the most well-off. This requires government to facilitate growth, not for growth's sake but for what it means for improving lives, and it requires us to do more to economically empower those least empowered.

Indeed, where the good of society as a whole is compromised by the operation of the market, this should be regarded as market failure, thereby necessitating the intervention of the state to ensure not only that our economy operates for the betterment of our society as a whole but that no individual or group is left behind, because any system in which social relationships are determined entirely by economic factors is contrary to the nature of the human person.

We cannot rely on trickle-down economics or big tax cuts for business. This simply does not work. It does mean having an effective and efficient transfer payment system but also requires that we build better, more resilient communities.

We must also seize upon our present unique opportunity of record low interest rates and low inflation to address the growing unemployment hidden by the headline figures and the capacity constraints impeding economic growth by investing in the physical infrastructure and education that our nation desperately needs to improve its prosperity for future generations, no matter their beliefs, background, geography, demography or disadvantage. If we do not, then we are certain to move inexorably towards the destabilised and dangerous position that Disraeli described as 'two nations': that of the privileged and that of the poor.

Indeed, new threats to workers and living standards continue to emerge. As a parliament we must always keep abreast of the consequences of technological advancement. We are presently seeing a reorganisation of our workforce through its Uberification. While it provides agility and convenience for some, it can also come at a cost to secure employment and workplace safety as well as undermining the minimum wage, which has kept our people, communities and economy strong. To this we must remain ever vigilant.

Critical to this is the continued work of the Australian labour movement. I cut my labour movement teeth at the CDPP Perth office as their union delegate for the CPSU. I was also part of the national negotiating team for our enterprise agreement. From my experiences over this time, under both Liberal and Labor governments, I enhanced my understanding of the Public Service generally and the great work that our unions do in representing their members.

I am concerned by the number of people who feel disenfranchised and disengaged with Australian political life today. This has been reflected in ever-decreasing voter turnout as well as expressions, through the ballot box and other forums, of sentiments akin to those expressed recently by Brexitters and Tea Partiers. I do not condemn them, though I may have strong disagreement with them. We must, in my view, acknowledge what gives rise to their fears and concerns and speak to these, through the values and compassion I have spoken about here today, or risk fracturing our society more when we should be bringing it together. By not only speaking to but acting consistently with the values I have outlined, as well as clearly articulating and explaining their imperative and rationale, we can as a nation come back
together with a greater belief in our parliamentary democracy and what we can achieve together. To be clear, I do not mean that we pander to or compromise on what I believe to be the fundamental promise of the Australian fair go for everyone who wishes to join us. I mean that we must actively engage in reminding each other why we cherish it, and act consistently with it.

I must, of course, congratulate our leader, Bill Shorten, and his deputy, Tanya Plibersek, for the tremendous campaign they led. While we had fallen just short, the voice of the Australian people was heard loudly, and I know that Bill's great work, as well as the Labor team around him, has placed us in a commanding position for the next election, whenever that may come.

There are far too many people to mention by name that deserve my thanks for assisting in both the Canning by-election and the Burt campaigns—people that believed that 'Yes, we Canning' and in 'Building a Better Burt'. I am humbled to see so many, even, of them here today. I will record here, though, my debt of thanks to the members of our local branches in Armadale, Kelmscott, Gosnells, Thornlie and Southern River; the national secretariat and the crew at WA head office, as well as party members across WA and the nation; the local federal and state MPs and their teams, as well as many former MPs for the area; the many members of the Shadow Ministry and federal parliamentary Labor teams past and present; the mighty Australian Workers Union, Scooter, Pricey and Mike; the TWU, SDA, CPSU, CEPU and the CFMEU; the Beers in Burt crew; the gang, YBC, NDA and YLC—some of you are here today; I am sure most of you are somewhat bewildered that, for all of my talking it up, this day has actually finally arrived. To my former colleagues at HSF: a candidate could not have asked for a more supportive and accommodative workplace. Thanks to family and friends; our fabulous committed, reliable and dedicated local Young Labor and Young Labor Unity field volunteers; and, of course, my campaign team, both formal and informal, in particular Harry Burrows, who runs field like a boss, and Matt Dixon, who I really could go on and on about, but it is safe to say he became an extended member of our family—and I must thank Rebeka for letting us have you for so long.

Mum and Dad, Helen and Colin, are here today. You gave so much. Also, happy birthday for yesterday, Mum. Many will tell you that there is no better way to convert the voter than direct interaction with the candidate. These people have not seen my parents at a train station early in the morning, sporting their red Keogh's Mum and Keogh's Dad beanies, with mum telling everyone that they have to vote for her son standing over at the other end of the platform. I am the eldest of five children. Vincent, John, Jacqui and Luke, are a campaign team in themselves, and all are in the gallery today. Thank you all for all of your help whenever you were called upon. I am acutely aware that my achievements would not have been possible without the love and support, at every turn, of my parents. They provided that which no government can: the unconditional love and support of parents. Mum and dad have sacrificed a lot to always put our family and us kids first, and I think the proof is in the pudding. I cannot comment on me, but I think the rest of us turned out pretty all right.

Annabel, the love of my life, my best mate, my partner of 11 years, has put up with a lot being married to me, a lot of which has been putting up with not having me, either as a litigation widow while I was at work preparing cases and attending various Law Society and other organisation committee meetings or events, or being married to a candidate in two
elections within a year. To top it all off, while I was out doorknocking, Annabel was out arranging a pram, a cot and everything else that our first child, due any time from the election day, needed. Thank you, my love, for all of your support, counsel and ideas; for keeping me grounded, allowing me to follow this dream; and for all that is yet to come. I know that my doing this means sacrifices for you in our family, and I could not do it without you.

I have been told that an advantage of having kids upon being elected is that they grow up not knowing anything different. So, young Nicholas, while I know that, like many WA FIFO dads, I will be away a lot, when you are around I will work to make sure that what you come to regard as being normal is not in any way a disadvantage. If I get my time here right, I hope that, when I get to spend more time together with you, you will be proud of your dad.

In conclusion, let me say that I am honoured and privileged to be here as the representative of the people of Burt and as a member of the Labor Party. I will, of course, strive valiantly, with enthusiasm and devotion, in my work in the arena—in the chamber, on committees and on the ground—to build a better Burt and a better Australia.

Debate adjourned.

**BILLS**

**Migration Amendment (Family Violence and Other Measures) Bill 2016**

**Second Reading**

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

**Mr NEUMANN** (Blair) (15:42): I rise to support the Migration Amendment (Family Violence and Other Measures) Bill 2016. Labor is going to support the passage of this bill through the House today but I note that during the last parliament this bill was referred to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee. The committee was due to report back in May 2016; however, dissolution of parliament prevented that happening. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the report is about to be or has been delivered this afternoon.

The bill before the chamber amends the Migration Act to introduce an assessable sponsorship framework for family sponsored visas. It enables the sharing of personal information about sponsors with family visa applicants and allows the refusal of a sponsorship application or the cancellation or the barring of a family sponsor where it is found that person has a history of family violence or another serious offence. Under the current system family visa applicants make an application and their sponsorship is assessed as part of the criteria for the grant of the visa. Arrangements vary across family visas but under current settings for most visas there is little focus on the character of the sponsor or the responsibility they assume as part of the sponsorship.

Labor recognises that in some instances sponsors would not always have a longstanding or ongoing knowledge of the sponsoring family member prior to their visa being sponsored. This bill allows the sharing of police checks and will help family visa applicants better understand the background of their sponsor and equip them, especially those with minors, with the information they need before agreeing to be sponsored. It is expected this clause will offer some warning or protection to vulnerable family members seeking a visa to live in Australia.
Currently, all visas in the family stream have a sponsorship requirement as part of the criteria for the granting of the visa. However, claims of family violence in the program and the lack of sponsorship enforcement mechanisms mean that changes are needed to improve program integrity and to provide more suitable visa options for victims of family violence. The bill will provide the minister or delegate with the power to refuse a sponsorship application or cancel an existing sponsorship approval, where there is inappropriate use of the family visa program or the sponsor has a history of family violence or similar arising from a police check or other relevant immigration programs—for example, previous visa cancellations.

The bill makes no change to the existing violence provisions of the Migration Act which allow certain people applying for permanent residence in Australia to continue with their application after the breakdown of their married or de facto relationship, if they or a member of their family unit have experienced family violence by their partner.

The improvements introduced with this bill will address these shortcomings by extending the sponsorship framework that currently applies to the temporary work sponsored visa program to the family sponsored visa program as well. Amongst other things, the framework requires the assessment and approval of sponsors—we agree with that. It imposes statutory obligations on sponsors, which is a good idea as well. It provides for civil penalties and administrative sanctions for breach of sponsorship obligations and it facilitates the sharing of information, which is important for the integrity of the system and for the prevention of family violence.

The new visa framework will require consequential regulations, and we look forward to those so that it is given full effect.

I note the submissions made by stakeholders to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee and thank them for their views and their submissions. I note there were concerns raised about privacy, the vulnerability of victims of family violence, impacts on visa processing times and the potential for increased costs. However, Labor also acknowledges the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women Australia who have offered their 'broad support' for the bill and agrees that 'the proposed changes to the visa program, regarding family violence, are both necessary and overdue.'

Labor recognises concerns by some that these amendments do not go far enough to protect vulnerable family members, but we believe these amendments are a step in the right direction. Family violence is a very serious issue and one Labor is committed to tackling head on. We took a series of measures to the last election which were aimed at ending the scourge of family violence in our community. We believe eliminating family violence must be a national priority and, while Australia has made good progress, there is more that can and must be done.

That is why we would ask the government to consider further measures to protect people on temporary visas who are facing family and domestic violence by creating a new type of temporary visa. The temporary visas would remove impediments to women leaving their partners and would carry work rights so that women leaving violent relationships can seek to support themselves. This is an important bipartisan area and we commend the government for the legislation before the chamber today. I note that the minister is here and I suggest that he
listens to that and takes it on board. We need greater protections for women facing family and domestic violence.

While Labor can offer our support for this bill, I echo the words of so many people who say we must do much more. I commend the legislation to the chamber and ask the government to take a stronger approach on issues of family violence and the protection of women and children in this space.

Ms BUTLER (Griffith) (15:48): I rise to support the bill but also to call on the government to do more in relation to family and domestic violence because women in new migrant communities can be particularly vulnerable in relation to family violence. The reasons for that vulnerability include: attitudes towards violence, a lack of expertise and cultural knowledge on the part of mainstream community workers, English language proficiency, trust by victims towards mainstream services, specialist and culturally sensitive women's health and domestic violence services and victims' awareness about existing services.

For those reasons we took to the election a policy of committing $3.8 million over four years toward developing pilot programs that assist new migrants in gaining access to family and domestic violence services. We also took to the election a policy of creating a new form of visa. The reason we did that is that, as I said, this is a particularly vulnerable population. Those on a secondary visa are particularly vulnerable amongst that population because they rely on staying with their spouse. Seventy per cent of all secondary 457 visa holders are women. It is not just the visa conditions that make it hard for women to leave when they are facing violent relationships. A lack of economic independence can be a significant impediment, and those temporary visa holders do not have access at the moment to the family violence provisions in the migration act.

As I say, the ALRC has identified this as a problem, as did the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence. That is why I join the shadow minister in calling on the government to support our policy which we took to the election to create a new temporary visa for victims of family violence who are secondary holders of a temporary visa.

The new form of visa must carry work rights. If you are the spouse of a 457 visa holder and you are facing violence at home, and your stay in Australia is contingent on staying in that relationship. Even if you could leave, you would not be able to support yourself and your children. The problem for that person is particularly obvious. So, while I rise to support the bill, I also call on the government to do more for women on visas and to do more for women from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Mr DUTTON (Dickson—Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) (15:50): I thank members for contributing to the debate on the Migration Amendment (Family Violence and Other Measures) Bill 2016. The bill amends the Migration Act 1958 to strengthen provisions to reduce family violence within visa programs and the Australian community. It builds on work the government has already undertaken to provide information, in the form of predeparture pack to support visa applicants coming to Australia, which clearly states that family violence is unacceptable in Australia.

A key element of this bill is that it puts in place a framework that will require a person seeking to sponsor an applicant for a family stream visa to be assessed and approved before a
visa application can be made. In addition the bill requires responses to agree that the results of their character checks may be shared with the person they are sponsoring so that that person can make an informed decision about whether to proceed with their application or not, especially in circumstances where there are children involved in the application.

The amendments are an important part of the government's initiative to ensure that women and their families are safe from violence. The amendments supported and deliver on important elements of the second action plan in the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022. I commend the bill to the House.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Mr DUTTON (Dickson—Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) (15:52): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

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 DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Pitt) (15:53): Before I call the honourable member for Longman, 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.

Ms LAMB (Longman) (15:53): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I begin my first speech by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today, the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people, and I pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging. I also acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands of the Longman electorate, the Gubbi Gubbi people. I would particularly like to take pay tribute to one elder in our community, Dr Eve Fesl. Dr Eve was the first Indigenous Australian to graduate with a PhD from an Australian university. She is an extraordinary woman and her commitment to her people, her land and her community inspires everyone she meets.

I am truly humbled to stand here today in our nation's parliament as the member for Longman. At the outset, I want to acknowledge the members who have represented our community before my election: Mal Brough, Jon Sullivan and Wyatt Roy. Wyatt should be acknowledged for demonstrating that age is no barrier to contributing to public life. While it is fair to say that I do not share the same values or aspirations as all of my predecessors, I
have started to understand the personal sacrifices that members make to serve their community, so I thank them for their service.

Longman owes its name to Irene Longman, the first woman elected to the Queensland parliament, in 1929. I am proud to stand here today as part of a new group of inspiring female Labor parliamentarians. It is especially noteworthy that the 45th parliament includes among these women the first Indigenous woman elected to the House of Representatives, the member for Barton, and the first female parliamentarian with Islamic faith, the member for Cowan.

Yet while we celebrate, we cannot be complacent. I am conscious that as I speak of progress it has taken 20 years for Longman to have its first female representative. Women are still significantly underrepresented in our institutions of power and, unfortunately, overrepresented in lower paid industries. Yes, we may have come a long way since women fought for and won the right to vote, but there is still so much yet to achieve.

I believe that my election to this House demonstrates more about our society and our country than about me as a person. It demonstrates that an investment in social services, such as health, welfare and education, often empowers those who are in most need of help. It has taught me that governments can play a positive role in changing the lives of everyday Australians.

When governments treat people with compassion, when we work hard and treat others with fairness, together we can effect change. I have stood by these values my entire life and they will guide my time as a member of parliament. It is an Australian virtue that when someone is down, when they are going through a tough time, we rally around them and pick them up. I know this because, like many Australians, I have not travelled the easiest of roads. It is fair to say that I once probably would have fitted the description of one of Joe Hockey's supposed leaners, although I did drive a car.

My family story starts in the member for Kennedy's backyard, in the mining town of Mount Isa. Following the Second World War, my father and grandmother came to Queensland from Scotland looking for a better life. While it was not exactly the Scottish Highlands, my grandmother and her new husband worked hard and sent my father to boarding school. Early in my childhood, my grandmother instilled in me a love of learning. I spent many weekends in her kitchen measuring ingredients and learning to cook. She taught me how to play cards and she taught me about the origins of the music that she always had playing in the background. On reflection, I realise now that my grandmother knew the importance of learning, with education being the key to my future wellbeing. She used such simple lessons to illustrate this point, lessons that have shaped who I am today.

In modern times, education remains the key to a future filled with opportunity and every chance of success. Quality education today remains the key for our children, their children and their children's children. We all learn throughout our lives, but our early years involve some of the most formative lessons. This is why children, regardless of their postcodes or catchment areas, must have access to quality education. The process of learning and acquiring new skills throughout our lives is transformative, and no-one should be denied this experience. It was this love of learning that inspired me to be a teacher aide at Dakabin State School. There is nothing more satisfying in this world than to share the infectious love of learning with our children, who have now grown into wonderful adults.
Long before my days as a teacher aide my father raised me and my family in Mackay. My father, when he was a sugar cane tester, and my stepmother Maureen worked in a number of sugar mills in North Queensland, including Pleystowe and Plane Creek Mill. My dad, as so many Australians do, worked really hard to provide for us. But, while we are lucky country, sometimes you cannot help but have ill health. For years I watched my father suffer the debilitating disease of arthritis. Every day I remember seeing him head to work in pain. I would put his shoes on and take them off every day just to give his hands a break. Then, in the 1980s, dad was injured whilst working at the Plane Creek Mill, so the family picked up and moved to Bundaberg to buy a small family business. Dad continued working and providing for his family. Eventually, though, after dad's pain became too demanding, he stopped working. The circumstances that followed that time were incredibly difficult for our family.

On this side of the House, we know a healthcare system that forces someone to choose between poverty and working while in chronic pain is not care, it is inhumane. We understand this. We also understand the importance of Medicare. We created it, and we will always fight any threat to its existence. Access to quality health care should never be contingent on a person's income. It is a right; it is not a luxury.

Following my school days in Bundaberg, I headed to Brisbane where I soon understood what it was like to become a parent. In 1990 I gave birth to my eldest son, Chris. I was a teenage mum. My feelings at that time were somewhat comparable to what I experienced the first time I walked into this place—I was incredibly nervous, I was more than a little overwhelmed and I had a great sense of responsibility on my shoulders. I remember coming home from hospital. I put Chris on the bed and I thought to myself, 'What now?' His future was dependent on me, and I am really proud to say that we got through those tough times. Today my husband, Rolly, and I have four wonderful young men we call our sons: Chris, Kyle, Jack and George, all of whom are here today in the gallery.

I previously referred to the sacrifices that parliamentarians make to serve their community and this most definitely extends to my friends and family. These relationships keep us grounded and sustain us through the hardest of times. Yet these are the people who will be most impacted by my time in parliament. To my good friends Troy and Anne, Mark and Mel, and Lenore and Andrew: thank you for keeping me grounded and for being there when I needed you most.

From the outset I realised my possible election to this House would impact on my family. In writing a letter to each of my children I explained I was likely to miss some football games, not be there as often to help them so much with homework and frequently repeat the same questions, most relating to technology. As my staff know well, technology and I have a very difficult relationship. What I also told my boys was that parliament provided me with an opportunity to help create a better future for them and for others like them. Boys, I want you to know this purpose. The possibility of shaping your futures and the future of others is what drives me. I will always honour those commitments I made to you, although you might indulge me if I make a few minor changes.

Chris, please keep sending me text messages. I love them, but equally consider that sending late-night messages to ask if I am still awake causes stress and anxiety, so more detail will go a long way. Kyle, our agreement to reserve 30 minutes of uninterrupted time, seven days a week from 6 am to 6.30 am is heartwarming; however, I would appreciate you telling me in
advance if you do not need to talk. I really love you, but I would really love an extra 30 minutes of sleep if you do not need to talk. George, yes, I promise that Nutri-Grain will continue to be on the weekly shopping list. I will also make sure it is placed somewhere where you can visibly see it because I just cannot help you look for it at 5 am when I am in Canberra. Jack, my temperature gauge and my compass when I am uncertain about things, you never ask for anything but that is special in and of itself. Please never stop challenging my views and never stop reminding me of the grey in what is often my very black-and-white world.

Those of us who are parents understand the innate instinct to fight against unfair treatment of our children. Today, while I stand here incredibly proud to be a member of parliament, I carry a sense of disillusionment that our laws treat the love of one son as inferior to that of his brothers. Discrimination against vulnerable minorities should never be a point of national debate; its mere existence should be the cause for immediate action. For me this matter is deeply personal, but the issue affects many Australians, so I will take this opportunity to read into the public record that, regardless of the outcome, the holding of a plebiscite is deeply offensive to LGBTI Australians and it is deeply insulting to those who love them. I will always be a person who stands against discrimination in all its permutations. In doing so, I stand in solidarity with my son and the LGBTI community.

I am sure many members in this place claim that their electorate is the most beautiful and unique of all 150 electorates, but that is because they have not been to Longman yet. Aspirational people and young families are now calling Longman home, just like I did nearly 30 years ago. They are coming to live and work. They are coming to grow their small businesses, to study, to raise their families and, of course, to retire.

From the pristine Pumicestone Passage and the beaches of Bribie to the bush of Belthorpe and the parklands of Burpengary we are really lucky to call Longman home. Nestled in the Moreton Bay region, we are a community of communities, each town with individual characteristics and different aspirations. Like any region, we face challenges that cannot be resolved in the short term. We have a problem with youth unemployment, which is why the delivery of the university project in Petrie is so important to the future of Longman youth. Even more concerning is that we own the unwanted statistic of having one of the highest suicide rates in the country. We must act immediately to confront this problem because this is not just a saddening statistic; these numbers represent people's lives. Both government and community have a responsibility to act.

I do not underestimate the challenge of tackling mental health issues, but with unity of purpose and our strong sense of community we must confront this issue. Together we must work in partnership with community groups, like those in my electorate such as Caboolture Community Action and RiSE, a community organisation focused on helping victims of family violence, to reach out to those in distress when they are in need and to work cooperatively and with commitment on preventative measures. Inaction is not an option.

The delivery of key government services and infrastructure is an important issue to many Longman locals and the communities we all live in. As a growing and expanding region we deserve our fair share of infrastructure, such as a 21st century NBN. That is the type of innovation Longman needs.
Labor understands and knows that cutting essential services for people, robbing them of their dignity to live and work, is not what leads to prosperity. What leads to prosperity—or, at least, its realistic pursuit—is secure employment, the stable delivery of key government services and infrastructure that enables Australians to build a future for themselves and their families. As the electorate of Longman is so well aware, unemployment and insecure employment are significant issues. The right for all employees to be treated fairly in the workplace is of profound importance. Too many hardworking people had their rights at work attacked in 2007. And then, again, in 2012, in my home state of Queensland, thousands of hardworking public servants lost their jobs at the hands of a conservative government.

Even today we see businesses—like Carlton & United Breweries—trying to undermine the dignity of workers in a shameful way. While many businesses and conservative governments continue to attack the workplace rights of Australians, there will always be a place for the union movement. This leads to fairness in the workplace. The need to enshrine and protect workplace rights is what led me from being a teacher aide and union delegate to a national coordinator of the Big Steps campaign.

Unions remain just as relevant today as they were when they fought for annual leave, when they fought for eight-hour working days, for superannuation and for penalty rates—although, on that last matter, the fight is not over yet. Without the union movement, many of our basic workplace rights to which workers are entitled would not exist. Too many see these rights as a privilege or an inconvenience, and they are not.

I particularly want to thank my union, United Voice, and the branch leadership, especially Gary Bullock Sharron Caddie, for its support and friendship. Our union represents thousands of the lowest paid workers in this country, in industries often dominated by women. We understand, for example, that early childhood educators are not babysitters. They are the educators of the social and economic future of our country. They are educating our children, and I will continue to fight alongside these workers for the professional recognition they deserve. That is why I was really proud that the first function I attended as a newly elected member was at an early childhood service.

It is important to acknowledge that my election to this parliament was a collective effort. We ran a grassroots campaign inspired and empowered by branch members and volunteers. We worked hard, united, and it is fair to say there was nothing left in the tank at the end of each night. It is probably equally fair to say that I may not be on everyone’s Christmas card list this year, but not one of them complained—at least not to my face—and their efforts inspired me to work harder, and often to the detriment of maintaining some basic levels of nutrition. I was too tired to even think about cooking dinner. That evening dinner consisted of one small tin of baked beans—unheated—while I was sitting on the kitchen floor. I cried. I ate cold baked beans. But I remained inspired by you all. So thank you to my campaign team, and I thank each and every one of them.

There are too many to name individually but I would like mention just a few. Aunty Theresa Butler is one of them. I will never forget aunty’s daily message to me: ‘Susan, I will be here early in the morning, before the Liberals, with my five Susan signs.’ To my friend Michael Clifford: thank you for your guidance and support, even before I became a candidate. Thank you also to EMILY’s List, the QCU, the ETU, the Meaties and the many other
members of the Longman campaign team: Mick McKewon—I could not have asked for a better campaign husband—Trevor Lewis and Anja, Paddy Keys-McPherson, Dan Clancy, Eddie Fraser, Shelly Holzheimer and Wendy Ennor, Mark Ryan, Rick and Cheryl Williams, the Gonski family of Hayley Nizic and Paula Nunan, Deb Jury and Saroja, Rene Cooper and Ken Haywood and our adopted friend from Melbourne, Dylan Declan Leach.

To Taylor Bunnag, I thank you for being more than a campaign manager. On more than one occasion you have been my counsellor, my adviser and my confidante. To say thank you simply does not go far enough to express my gratitude for your past and what I know will be future support. And I promise you, Taylor, the next time I call you it will have nothing to do with a polling booth!

I also want to thank our state and federal parliamentarians who lent their support, particularly Murray Watt, Clare Moore and Chris Ketter. And then there is the member for Grayndler, Albo. As parliamentarians from Queensland know, he hails from the wrong side of the border. But, in his defence, he is as passionate as I am about the Rabbitohs so I am willing to look past his home state on this occasion. I also know him to be a man of courage and optimism. These attributes were demonstrated when, despite the need for an eight per cent swing, he predicted that Longman would return to the Labor Party. Fortunately, he turned out to be right. So thank you, Albo.

Finally, to my staff. Not all of you worked on my campaign but we all have previously worked together. We share the same values and the same commitment to fairness. I thank you in advance for the long hours you will work, your patience with my technological ineptitude—apparently you tweet, you do not send twitters; I am learning—and the patience your partners and families will undoubtedly show when I call you on the weekend or send text messages at 5 am.

In closing, I want to reflect upon the current state of political discourse in Australia. To me it has become apparent that public figures, including certain parliamentarians, are using hate and vilification for political gain. These figures would have us believe that diversity is dangerous and that difference is something to fear. The politics of fear have never been more pronounced and we must stand together, united, against those who seek to normalise prejudice.

I am immensely proud to be standing here today. I place on the record that I will advocate relentlessly for the people of Longman, I will stand against prejudice and discrimination, and I hope that in my role as the member for Longman, if nothing else before my time is done here, I can give people in my community hope and optimism for the times ahead. Longman is a proud community. Sometimes we do it tough, yes. Sometimes we need a hand, yes. But as all Queenslanders do, we work hard and we never ever give up.

Debate adjourned.
Cognate debate.

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr SNOWDON (Lingiari) (16:15): At this very first opportunity, I thank the member for Longman for her wonderful speech and also the member for Burt for the preceding one. It gives all of us who have been here any length of time a great deal of confidence to know that the quality of people who have come into this parliament at this last election is so high. I commend the member for Longman for her contribution and say to her, if she continues with that application, sincerity and commitment, she will be here for a long time. I know that she will represent the interests of the people of Longman well. My sister, incidentally, lives in Burpengary, so she is one of her constituents. I am sure she will make sure that I am advised if and when something needs to be said—and I am sure it will not need to be. I commend the member for Burt, similarly, for a magnificent contribution. I am personally struck on this side of the chamber by the very high quality of the first speeches that have been given in this parliament. This is my 10th parliament and 11th election, so I have seen a lot, and I have to say that the first speeches in this parliament have been among the best over almost 30 years. To those people who have made those speeches, on both sides of the chamber, I say, 'Well done.'

I am in continuation in this debate, and, as I recall—not that I have read the Hansard too recently—we were talking about the budget, but I was referring in my contribution to the election of the new Labor government in the Northern Territory. I made some comments about the success of that election campaign. I congratulated the new Chief Minister, Michael Gunner, and his team of ministers and wished them well. I made the observation that one issue around the budget will be of importance to them on a continuing and ongoing basis—that is, the debate about the GST. I will not make any further comments about that discussion, because I do want to say some other things. But it is important to understand that the CLP administration which was recently defeated in the Northern Territory has left an enormous budget black hole for the incoming Labor government. Why are we not surprised?

It is equally important to understand not only that they left a black hole but that they made things very difficult for the current government—the new government—to meet all of its commitments and promises, because of the state of the budget. That is not new, but what is new, in my view, is the scandalous way in which decisions were made by the outgoing government close to the election that they knew would be legacy commitments which the new Labor administration would have to meet. They knew they were going to be done like a dinner, and they were done like a dinner. There are now only two CLP members in the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. The former Chief Minister scurried so quickly you could hardly see him for dust, but they have left enormous problems for the new government.
I say to the federal government, to the Prime Minister and his Treasurer: you would be aware that the Northern Territory gets—I do not know the precise figure—in the vicinity of 75 to 80 per cent of its budget revenue from the Commonwealth, either in special purpose payments, general purpose payments or tied grants. So it is important, when you are contemplating the future funding of the Northern Territory, that you are aware of the scurrilous nature of your brothers in arms in the CLP and how they have left the Northern Territory budget.

I have the great privilege in this parliament of being responsible, on the opposition side, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. In the context of the budget, we have seen successive cuts to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander expenditure: $500 million from the 2014-15 budget onwards, $130 million of which came out of health. This is at a time when we are supposed be trying to address the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health outcomes and those of the rest of the population. You cannot cut your way to good health. During the former, Labor government, when I was the minister responsible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, we developed, in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, as a result of consultations around the country, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan, which scored bipartisan support. The incoming Abbott government reaffirmed their bipartisan support and then developed—in partnership, again, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people—an implementation strategy for that plan. We are now four years on, and not one dollar has been spent on that implementation strategy. It is a plan for 10 years, and we are in the fourth year of the plan and nothing is happening.

I think this should be a source of acute embarrassment for the government, because, if we are to address the drastic needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and, in particular in the Northern Territory, to address issues to do with chronic disease, obesity, diabetes, kidney failure, rheumatic heart disease, cardiovascular disease and so on, then we will need to make sure that these programs are funded properly and that there is an ongoing funding commitment to Aboriginal community controlled health services not only in the Northern Territory but right around the country. They, as I continue to say, deliver some of the best examples of comprehensive primary health care in the nation—if not the world. They are innovators. They understand their communities. They understand what needs to be done to address the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health needs of those communities and the Australian nation as a whole, through NACCHO, the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation. And they have state based organisations.

But here I want to commend. I ask those who may be listening that if you are not aware of the work of Aboriginal community controlled health services around this country try to get to be aware of it, because they do fantastic work for their communities and as a result have an impact on the national health outcomes for all Australians, but particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

I know my time is almost up but I have a lot more to say about these subjects. I do commend the virtue of talking about health in a much more detailed way than we have currently seen from this government. And no more attacks on Medicare thank you! (Time expired)

Mr KEENAN (Stirling—Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Counter-Terrorism) (16:23): It is an unexpected pleasure to be able to speak on the
appropriation bills here today, in lieu of rostered speakers. It gives me an opportunity to say a few positive things about how pleased I am to have been returned at the recent election as the member for Stirling and the sorts of plans we have for the electorate. I see that the next speaker has come in so I will just take one minute. We do have a very strong agenda for my electorate over the next three years, principally around public safety, which is good, because that also corresponds with my own portfolio.

I have been working very diligently with the local council. I am fortunate that I have only one local council in the federal electorate of Stirling, the City of Stirling, which is actually larger than my federal electorate. It makes it easy for me to have a solid relationship with them, having to work with only one local government authority. We have been working very diligently together to make sure that the federal government is doing what we can to assist with community safety in Stirling. As a result of the promises we made in the last election we will be assisting the City of Stirling with the continued rollout of CCTV cameras. They do have an extensive network already. We intend to work with them to make some improvements to that. I was very pleased to be able to join with the mayor and other City of Stirling councillors to make that announcement in the lead-up to the last election. Now that the next member is here, I will give the floor to the member for Griffith, who was due to be speaking next on this bill.

Ms BUTLER (Griffith) (16:24): It is also a bit of a surprise to me to rise to speak, given that there were two coalition speakers scheduled to speak. But nonetheless it is a very great pleasure to rise to speak today. Being elected to this place was a very great honour and being re-elected to the first time was also an honour, so I want to take this opportunity during this debate to say thank you to some people.

To everyone who lives in Balmoral, Bulimba, Camp Hill, Carina Heights, Coorparoo, Dutton Park, East Brisbane, Greenslopes, Highgate Hill, Hawthorne, Kangaroo Point, Morningside, Norman Park, Seven Hills, South Brisbane, and Woolloongabba, and to those who live in the parts of Annerley, Cannon Hill, Carina, Holland Park, Holland Park West, Mount Gravatt East, Murarrie, Tarragindi and West End that are in Griffith, thank you very much for again placing your trust in me to be the southside's representative in our national parliament. I also want to thank the Leader of the Opposition, Bill Shorten, and Chloe Shorten and Labor's leadership team for pitching to the Australian people an alternative government that would put people first, as Labor will always do. Thanks also to all shadow ministers and colleagues who visited Griffith in recent times: the members for Grayndler, Port Adelaide, Sydney, Scullin and Moreton, and Senators Moore and Wong and the now senator, Senator Watt, who at the time he visited during the course of the election campaign was not yet a senator.

I also want to thank the great Labor movement involved broadly. I think the RTBU Queensland and the national office. Thank you to the Queensland CPSU and the CPSU national office. And thank you to the ETU. Simmo, I am so glad you are heading back to work—in fact you are now back at work. We are not letting you off the hook that easily, mate. I am pleased that you are very well on your way to recovery.

Thanks also to United Voice, the Services Union and Together, including the ASU part of Together, the Meatworkers, the AMWU, the AWU, the CFMEU, the MUA, Teachers and the Independent Teachers, the Nurses, the Plumbers Union and the Plumbers Union National
Office, the FSU, the Alliance, the NTEU, and the NUW, the TWU, the firies and the aviation firies. All of them were so supportive because they want to see a Labor government, because they want to see a government that stands up for working people. Also, thank you very much to the QCU and the ACTU.

I also wish to thank Evan Moorhead, Jon Persley, Lucy Collier, George Wright, Paul Erickson, and Ben Coates. Jackie Trad, Di Farmer, Mark Bailey, Joe Kelly and Shayne Sutton are the best local colleagues anyone could ask for. And Annastacia Palaszczuk is inspirational. I also thank Kevin Rudd, who was a great source of advice and someone who deserved the respect and support of this government that the now Prime Minister was regrettably too weak to deliver.

I would also like to thank Carolyn, Jo, Mark, Elly, Clare, Laura, Larry, Vicki and Paul, Jenni, Bernice, Cath, Helix, Nicole, Matt, Kerryn, Richard, Rod, Brendan, Sam, Charis, Samuel, Ray, Linda, Justin, Mary Rose, Fina, Jonathan, Garry, Wendell, Jason, Irene, Valma, Jo, Vivienne, Owen, Kate, Kathleen and the 700 or so other supporters and volunteers who worked on my election campaign. I thank Angus, Lincoln, Emily, Ben, Finn, Lisa, Tom, Charlie, Chad, Sue, and Steph. I also thank my family: Alison, Larry, Brad, Jesse, Bailey, Susan, Linda, Marguerite, Graham, Kate and Pete, and of course Troy and our darling children, April and Isaac.

The course of this recent election campaign was one in which we focused on a range of issues that were really important to the Australian people. In my electorate we focused on issues important to the local area. I particularly wanted to talk about one of the election commitments that was made in my electorate of Griffith. We called again and again on the Turnbull government to commit to funding the cross-river rail project, which is an essential project to reduce congestion in this growing city. In its 2014 budget the coalition government cut federal funding for this project. This critical infrastructure project would add a much needed second rail crossing of the Brisbane River in the city CBD. The existing Merivale Bridge will reach full capacity within five years. The resulting bottleneck will constrain economic growth in Brisbane, which, remember, is of course Australia's third-largest city.

In 2013 the former federal government—the Labor government—committed to funding cross-river rail after the independent Infrastructure Australia rated it ready to proceed, but the incoming coalition government cancelled the investment, along with all Commonwealth investment in public transport that was not already under construction. It is time this Prime Minister took practical action to support public transport and to reduce congestion in our cities, including my city of Brisbane. Infrastructure Australia warned earlier this year that traffic congestion would cost the nation $53 billion a year in lost productivity without government action now. The clock is ticking and it is time this government supported this important Queensland project, because we are already seeing the consequences of congestion on our roads in Brisbane; we are already seeing the consequences of congestion caused by inadequate rail capacity, the pressure that it puts on buses and the domino effect that you see on roads.

It is particularly exacerbated in the inner suburbs in my electorate, where the congestion on roads is something that is in and of itself a problem but also, with the amount of development that this Liberal council is waving through in Brisbane, locals are becoming more and more concerned about the pressure on infrastructure as a consequence of the growing population of
the inner suburbs. We want to see more people living close to services. No-one is against development, but development has to be appropriate for the local area and has to be sustainable, and due regard has to be given to making sure that infrastructure keeps up with the pressures that are created by increasing populations within inner suburbs.

I also want to talk about the importance to my local electorate of community sporting organisations. They are the glue that holds the community together. Just like so many other volunteer organisations, just like our not-for-profits and just like community support services, local sporting organisations are incredibly important. Take for example my local AFL club, the Morningside Panthers, an incredible club that recently had a great deal of premiership success in the QAFL. I am very proud to be a supporter of that club and am very grateful to the club for the support they give me. They are working to build up their own facilities and are also very keen to open up their facilities for more female participation in AFL. So I was very pleased during the course of the election to announce a commitment that, if elected, a Shorten Labor government would be providing financial support for that club.

There is another AFL club in my electorate that is already doing incredibly well when it comes to female participation in AFL. They are a club that recently held the QWAFL Women's League premiership for three years running. They are a feeder club for the Brisbane Lions women's team. They have a great future in both women's and men's AFL. They are the Coorparoo Roos. I was so lucky: on Friday night I went to the Coorparoo Roos to hear about the successes they had had in the junior teams—men's and women's, boys and girls—throughout that year. What was really amazing about that visit was to actually hear about the work volunteers had put in and the club management committee had put in over the course of the year to grow the club. So I am so lucky to have such great sports clubs. Again, we were pleased to make an announcement during the course of the election campaign that, if elected, a Shorten Labor government would make a financial commitment as well.

But of course there is plenty of sports, there are plenty of local community organisations that it is important to support. Another that I would like to mention is the Clem Jones Centre. The Carina Welfare Association has an amazing history. It was established by Clem Jones himself and it has been providing sporting facilities as well as a range of other facilities and community supports for a very long time in Carina. I see that the member for Bonner is here. His constituents would use the centre as well. It has an amazing sports centre, but the differentiation for that sports centre and others is that they are required, under their constitution, to offer the lowest fees in the area for access to the sporting facilities. There is everything from gridiron to swimming to basketball. In fact, the new Brisbane Bullets are going to be based there—absolutely fantastic. I had the opportunity to meet the coach earlier this year, and some of the management. The centre also has swimming facilities, for elderly people, disabled people and very young children. Member for Bonner, I suspect that you have taken your kids there to swim. I have certainly taken mine.

As the development occurs in the local suburbs, as the population increases, it becomes very clear that there is a lot of pressure on infrastructure. It is not just road and public transport infrastructure but also community sporting facilities that come under pressure. The Clem Jones Centre has a really fantastic plan to grow. During the course of the election campaign I was very pleased to make an announcement that, if elected, a Shorten Labor government would support financially the growth of that centre. And I know that the member
for Bonner is a great enthusiast of the club, so he might have a word to the Prime Minister about matching the $2 million commitment that we made in the course of the election campaign—not for the centre itself but for the benefit of the local community—because the Camp Hill Carina Welfare Association is such an important service and facility for people across the local community, including people who are on low incomes, people who are suffering forms of disadvantage. They really rely on that, not just for sports, not just for the health benefits but also for the social benefits of being in touch with friends and colleagues from the local community.

In speaking in relation to the appropriation bills I also want to mention that there was also, during the course of the election, significant argument and debate about Medicare and healthcare funding. The feedback I had in the electorate was that people did not want to see a couple of billion dollars worth of cuts to Medicare funding; they did not want to see a $600 million cut to funding for pathology. People are worried about the idea that if you need to have a scan for a melanoma or to have a breast scan then suddenly you could be paying in the hundreds of dollars or more for those scans. They did not want to see the change to the PBS that would have seen an increase in the price of medicines for everyone, including pensioners. Those were the significant concerns I heard from people in the course of the federal election campaign. They are concerns that I hope this government will take on board, although today's events and the voting against the motion raising those issues do not fill me with confidence in that regard.

I believe that the reason we came so close to winning the election nationally is that people supported Labor's much more community focused and people focused policy of supporting Medicare, of defending Medicare and of believing in and continuing to press for a universal healthcare system where your access to health care is determined by your Medicare card, not by your credit card.

We took to the election very strong policies in relation to superannuation. In the 2016-17 budget, the government has, unfortunately, very much failed on superannuation because of the surprise measure that included retrospectivity back to 2007. It is fair to say this was a really salutary lesson on how not to do superannuation taxation reform in this country, because the surprise proposal went down like a lead balloon, including in my own electorate. Labor, on the other hand, went out well in advance of the election—months in advance of the election—and talked about why we needed to revisit the superannuation taxation concessions. We talked about the fact that those taxation concessions are a very large cost to the federal budget. We also raised very moderate proposals in relation to responding to those concessions and reforming them. Even after the coalition's surprise 2016-17 budget measures on superannuation, the Leader of the Opposition, Bill Shorten, offered the government a compromise proposal that would have been prospective rather than retrospective, giving certainty to the industry and superannuants. We put that offer to the government, but, sadly, the offer was rejected by the government.

We also took to the election very strong policies on reforming negative gearing and the capital gains tax discount. We did that because what is really clear, if you look at the recent history of the Australian economy, is very low inflation and, therefore, very low interest rates as the Reserve Bank has responded to that low inflation. Of course, that has been low inflation in consumer prices. If you looked at asset prices, you would see that house prices have been
growing very sharply and much more quickly than the rate of growth of consumer inflation. So it is quite clear that house prices are fast getting out of the reach of ordinary people. In fact, the price-to-income ratio is the highest it has ever been. The consequence is that it becomes more and more difficult for Australians to buy their first home or a home; it becomes more and more difficult to raise a deposit. The flow-on effect is that, once they can afford to buy a house, they are taking on record levels of private debt. We are seeing that in the private debt figures that are showing up now.

Mr THISTLETHWAITE (Kingsford Smith) (16:40): Of course Labor supports appropriation bills for appropriating moneys for the normal course of government to continue. But these appropriation bills are part of this government’s budget. I would like to make some comments in the wider context of the budget. I think that the budget can be summed up in one sentence: it is a bad budget from a bad government. It will do more harm to Australia’s economy than it will build for prosperity and growth. It is the wrong approach for an economy that is in uncertain and staggering times. The Australian people and businesses know this, and it is reflected in our nation’s key economic indicators at the moment.

There has been economic growth of 0.5 per cent over the June quarter and 3.1 per cent over the year, for the latest national accounts. It is not a stunning result; it is not a bad result. It is somewhere in the middle. But if you look at it in the context of the fact that much of the growth in the last quarter of national accounts came from government spending, it is a poor result.

It is reflected in the approach of businesses to our economy at the moment and in the investments that they are making for the future. Private business sector investment in Australia has been tumbling for some years now. Total new private capital expenditure in the economy fell from 5.4 per cent in the June quarter. Over a year, that figure was 17.4 per cent. Over the last 12 months, business investment has fallen in Australia by 17½ per cent—a damning indictment on this government’s policies and their approach to supporting business throughout the country. New private capital expenditure has now fallen by more than 30 per cent since this government was elected to power.

Real incomes for Australians—and many of those whom we represent are feeling it at the moment—have not grown for many years. In the June 2015-16 period, the Wage Price Index increased by 2.1 per cent. This is widely recognised as a measure similar to the CPI for prices. Unemployment is stubbornly remaining at 5.7 per cent. More importantly, underemployment—that is, people who want to work more but simply cannot get the hours—is at 8.4 per cent. Our economy is like a car that is struggling to start. It is turning over, but it just will not kick over. Instead of the government giving the necessary boost to support that kick over, we have got the government cutting the fuel line. We have cuts to health, cuts to education, cuts to research and development, the halting of the education and innovation drive throughout the country, a company tax cut plan that will do nothing to boost growth and jobs in the economy, a superannuation plan that is in tatters, and cuts to family payments and pensions that leave the most vulnerable in Australia worse off. Cuts to infrastructure funding and changes to the mandate of Infrastructure Australia could not come at a worse time for our nation.

This is a typical Conservative budget from a Conservative government: tax cuts for the wealthy and big business, cuts to health and education investment and cuts to expenditure that
supports the vulnerable. It is trickle-down economics at its worst. We all know, and history has shown us, that this notion of trickle-down economics—you cut taxes for the most wealthy, and that will trickle down to the rest of the economy through increased economic activity—simply does not work. We are finding that out now in Europe and in other parts of the world. Those opposite are going to encourage an outdated, irrelevant and second-rate economy in Australia.

The fiscal position is not getting any better with this budget either. The budget deficit will increase by $26 billion. Net debt will increase by $100 billion since 2013, or 12.8 per cent of GDP, to 18.9 per cent of GDP at the end of this budget period. The company tax cut that this government is offering is all about supporting the well-off in our community. What the government is going to do is change the definition of a small business in the relevant legislation. The threshold for a business to be considered a small business will increase from its current level to a turnover of up to $10 million in 2016-17 and to a turnover of up to $1 billion by 2022. In any Australian's book, a company with a turnover of $1 billion is certainly not a small business. That is what the government is going to do over the course of the next eight years. The tax rate for those businesses will gradually fall as well, from 28.5 per cent to 27.5 per cent initially, and then to 25 per cent by 2027. The government is not changing the definition of a small business; it is giving a tax cut to big business. That is the best way to characterise what the government is doing with this budget.

We have seen the cost of this. When it was initially announced, the Prime Minister, in an interview with David Speers, would not—on close to 40 occasions—answer the question of the cost of this policy to the national budget. We found out later, through leaked documents from Treasury, that the actual cost to the budget is $49 billion over the decade, according to the Parliamentary Budget Office. That is $49 billion coming out of our budget that could go to fund health, education, infrastructure, and research and development—public expenditure that would build the foundation for growth, prosperity and increasing living standards in our nation. The government's own Treasury modelling of this particular proposed tax cut delivers very little in terms of a growth dividend for our nation. The government's modelling indicates that, in terms of GDP growth, this tax cut will add 0.05 per cent per annum to our nation's economic growth. That is 0.05 per cent to GDP every year. It will add a 0.1 per cent advantage to employment over the next 20 years, and wages growth will only increase by 0.1 per cent per annum. There is very little benefit to our nation from this proposal, according both to the government's own Treasury estimates and to the independent Parliamentary Budget Office. It is a big cost to the budget and a big cost to fairness.

The other issue is how it is funded. Where does the government find the money to offer a $49 billion tax cut over the course of the next decade to the biggest businesses in our economy? According to the Treasury, it is certainly not funded by jobs and growth, because that is indicated in the modelling that I have just outlined. This would be funded by taxpayers, through bracket creep and spending cuts. So much for an economic plan! Slugging the most vulnerable through spending cuts and increasing bracket creep on hardworking Australians—that is how they will fund this tax cut. This is why I and my Labor colleagues are opposed to changing the threshold turnover for small businesses to beyond $2 million: there is no economic benefit from it and it will do social detriment.
What this economy needs at the moment is investment in infrastructure. It is opportune that
the former, great minister for infrastructure in this country, and now the shadow minister—
one of the longest serving infrastructure ministers—has walked into the chamber. I have no
doubt that, in a moment, he is going to give those opposite a lesson about how to run a
portfolio when it comes to investing in infrastructure. I thought it was instructive that, a
couple of weeks ago, the new Governor of the Reserve Bank, in a hearing before the
economics committee, made the point that Australia should be taking advantage of low
interest rates throughout the world and investing in infrastructure, either through government
investment in infrastructure or through encouraging the private sector, through planning laws
and the like, to run that investment, taking advantage of historically low interest rates at the
moment.

This government has done the opposite. They have cut investment in infrastructure. They
have meddled with the mandate of Infrastructure Australia. That led Glenn Stevens, the
former Governor of the Reserve Bank, to say to an Economics Society of Australia
conference on 10 June that, in the past year:
Public final spending didn't grow at all. Public investment spending fell by eight per cent …
The key to our nation's economic spending is kicking it over and gathering pace, particularly
as our terms of trade begin to fall. That has stopped declining at the moment; it has not got
back up to the mining boom levels, but it has stopped falling. But this government will not
invest in infrastructure.

When Labor was in government, we took investment in infrastructure to No. 1 in the
world. In terms of the investment that a government was making in building productivity-
enhancing infrastructure, Australia, during the Rudd and Gillard years and with the member
for Grayndler as the minister, was the No. 1 in the world. This government has taken us
backwards. They have meddled with Infrastructure Australia and changed its investment
mandate. They changed the composition of the board and its independence. As a result of that,
we got projects like WestConnex—which affects the member for Grayndler's electorate and
my electorate. You have an interchange that will deposit an additional 30 million cars per
week on local roads, which simply will not be able to cope. The biggest road transport project
in the history of Sydney and the nation goes past the second biggest container port in the
country but does not even connect up to it. This massive road project does not even connect
up to the second biggest container port in the country, where the majority of freight coming
out of it is on trucks—it goes right past it. The interchange is five kilometres further down the
road, at St Peters-Tempe, on the other side of the airport, where you are going to deposit
millions and millions of cars on a daily basis. Local roads simply will not be able to cope, and
the airport simply will not be able to cope. It is nothing less than an unmitigated disaster, and
it is what occurs when a government meddles with the investment mandate of infrastructure.
Australia, that is what you get—lousy projects like the WestConnex.

I want to finish with the issue of superannuation. Australia has a very urgent issue to deal
with, and that is the ageing of our population. Encouraging Australians—particularly those on
low incomes—to save for their retirement is vitally important to the ongoing health of our
nation and our budget. Superannuation and pension changes proposed by this government do
exactly the opposite. The government does not have a policy. Although it outlined something
on budget night, we have seen in the wake of that that it cannot get agreement on this issue
within its own party room. There is still no agreement in the coalition on the details of the
superannuation policy announced on budget night.

Labor has had a consistent approach to superannuation policy going back to 2014, when it
was announced by the Leader of the Opposition in the budget reply speech in that year. That
approach is to reduce the unsustainable tax concessions that exist for people on high incomes
in Australia. A month ago, the Leader of the Opposition even offered to get the government
out of the pickle that they are in at the moment, by proposing a compromise arrangement on
superannuation, to reduce the high income superannuation threshold from $250,000 to
$200,000 a year from 1 July 2017 but not make it retrospective, as was proposed by the
government, because we have a fundamental opposition to retrospective taxation policies, and
to oppose three of their measures. This would have saved the budget $238 million over the
forward estimates and $4.4 billion over the decade. It was dismissed by the government
without reading the details or even looking at it. The government could have come to an
agreement with the opposition on one of the most important policies facing the nation,
superannuation tax concessions, and they dismissed it without even looking at it. That says
everything about the approach of the government and everything about the approach of the
government's budget. It is not a budget that is fair at all. It is a budget that is bad for Austral-
ia, will cut investment in education, will cut investment in health, will cut investment in research
and development, and will prove bad for growth and living standards into the future.

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler) (16:55): I am pleased to take the opportu-
nity to speak on the
Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2016-2017 and cognate legislation because it gives me the
opportunity to speak about the failure of this government when it comes to long-
term investment in the infrastructure which Australia needs for future economic growth and future
jobs creation.

The fact is that when we came to office in 2007 Australia was ranked 20th in the OECD for
infrastructure investment; when we left, Australia was first. In the first two years since the
change of government, there was a 20 per cent decline in public sector infrastructure
investment. That has a short-term impact on jobs, and we see that youth unemployment is
higher today than it was during the global financial crisis. It has an impact on the living
standards of people in the short-term. More importantly, it has a long-term economic impact.
What we will see is a handbrake on future economic growth, as shown by this government's
lack of vision when it comes to infrastructure and nation-building.

Quite extraordinarily, during the last election campaign—during the entirety of the longest
campaign since the Second World War—we saw not a single new major infrastructure
investment announced by this government. Not one. There was Labor out there announcing
support for the Metronet in Perth; announcing support for Cross River Rail in Brisbane;
announcing support for AdelINK, the light rail expansion in Adelaide; announcing support
for the Melbourne Metro; and announcing support for Western Sydney Rail, including a
connection to Badgerys Creek airport so that public transport is open from day one and those
employment lands in Western Sydney are opened up for opportunity. Yet we have seen
nothing from the government—nothing whatsoever.

They had, indeed, 78 small announcements during the election campaign—the sorts of
projects that you normally see in local government or maybe even state government. They
added up to less than a $1 billion. Of the 78 projects, extraordinarily, 76 of them were in
coalition held seats prior to the election—76 out of 78! An extraordinary proposition! We will wait to see what the National Audit Office has to say about the government having their infrastructure policy determined not by Infrastructure Australia but by the electoral map. That is precisely what we see happening, including in the upper Hunter with a $1 million road upgrade for something that is used for a billycart race! I know that billycarts can be good fun, but in the 21st century—when high speed broadband, public transport and efficient roads are the key to economic growth—it says it all about the government that one of their priorities was a billycart road for a billycart race that is held once a year in a community. I am not saying it is not good fun—I am sure it is. I am sure it is worthwhile. But the fact that it came out of the nation-building budget says it all about the government.

Of course, Deputy Speaker Irons, you would know that, because you have in your electorate of Swan the largest road project that has ever been held conducted in Perth—the Gateway WA project. You were there when I turned the first sod on that project. You were there when that project began, and you were there also when, while we were still in government, parts of it were being opened. Yet, during the Senate special election and during the by-election for the electorate of Canning, we saw the government pretend that it was somehow new!

I had a repeat of that last Monday when I was in Redcliffe. The Redcliffe rail line extension was first discussed in 1884 and first promised in the Queensland state parliament in 1895, but it took a federal Labor government in 2010 to commit, with the Bligh government and the Moreton Bay Regional Council, to making that vision a reality. I was able to visit the new stations that have been built as part of that project. Indeed, it is an incredibly exciting project. Of course, the Prime Minister was there. The Prime Minister will never miss an opportunity to be at a ribbon cutting. The problem is that he is never there when a project begins. Under his watch not a single new rail project has begun anywhere in the country.

I quite like the fact that the Prime Minister likes riding on trains. I just want him to fund some or to fund one—that will do; fund one project. Fund AdeLINK, fund the Perth Metronet or fund the Cross River Rail. He does not even have to find new money; he can just put back the money that was cut in the 2014 budget from projects like the Cross River Rail project. At the press conference after the opening of the Redcliffe rail line the Prime Minister was asked, 'What about some funding for Cross River Rail? We know that it will reach capacity within five years and that will have an impact not just on residents of Brisbane but on residents of the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast as well.' The Prime Minister said, 'We are waiting for more information.' Well I have got news for him. It was approved as the No. 1 priority project by Infrastructure Australia in 2012 and was subsequently funded by federal Labor in the 2013 budget.

This is a project that stacks up. This is a project that is vital. This is a project that would be under construction today had Tony Abbott not cut the budget in 2014 because he had, quite frankly, the mad ideological view, as he outlined in *Battlelines*, that public transport was not the responsibility of the Commonwealth. He said that the federal government should 'stick to its knitting' and that we could be engaged in cities without having any public transport. Of course, that saw a distortion of the market into roads. We saw the money change to the East West Link in Melbourne, which had a benefit-cost ratio of 45c for every $1 returned. As I have said to various coalition members over the years, if they are happy to give me $100 I
will give them $45 back next time I see them. If they think that is a good deal, I am up for it. I am absolutely up for that arrangement.

Mr Pitt: I've only got a $50 note on me.

Mr ALBANESE: The member opposite says he has only got $50. Well I will give you $22.50 back next time I see you. That would be a good deal, according to you. That is the economics of those opposite with their funding of the East West Link.

They took money not just off rail projects but off the M80. On the M80 last Sunday they had a sod turn on this new section of investment. The problem is that it was funded in 2013. Had they not cut it in 2014 they could have been there at the opening of the project, not at the sod turning. Infrastructure Australia, which now seems to just adopt things after the government and tick them off as a good little obedient servant of the government rather than actually being proactive, has said that the M80 is on the priority list. It was on the priority list five years ago. That is why it was funded. This is the last bit of the sections.

The Moorebank Intermodal project has been underway for years. It was put in a budget well before the 2013 budget. It has been underway. An Infrastructure Australia board member—Kerry Schott, who is a fine member—is the Chair of the Moorebank Intermodal Company and yet a press release came out today from Minister Fletcher saying that somehow this is new and is now on the infrastructure priority list. It is an absolutely extraordinary position taken by those opposite.

What we saw in the budget was a $1 billion cut in infrastructure and investment over what had been allocated by the coalition government previously. There has been a $1 billion cut, including $853 million cut from the Asset Recycling Fund as well as a $162 million cut. Since then we have seen the backpacker tax debacle that impacts on the tourism sector. Now out of nowhere there has been a $5 increase in the passenger movement charge. It is exactly the same process that led to the backpacker tax debacle—no consultation and no economic analysis of what the impact would be.

This is a government that is simply not competent when it comes to infrastructure. In the WestConnex project we have seen a complete debacle. We see a road tunnel begun without knowing where it is going to pop up. We have seen more than a dozen design and scope changes to the project. This is the sort of thing that is going on in my electorate. I note that the person in charge of planning responsibility in New South Wales, Lucy Turnbull, did not even know that there had been more than 100 heritage homes demolished in one suburb—Haberfield—in my electorate. She was completely oblivious to it.

No wonder they are angry. I got this letter from a constituent in Northcote Street, Haberfield, just over the weekend. It is a copy of a letter to the WestConnex authority complaining about the works that are occurring. The writer said: 'On 7 October my work was disturbed midmorning—as you know from our face-to-face meetings I work from home—by the noise from tree cutting and mulching in the street. I went out to find a WestConnex team destroying the trees on the verge of the street as well as cutting the 100-year-old frangipani in my garden, without any permission being given on my part. I could have given them a lecture on the garden suburb planning principles behind Haberfield's inception and why that is still important in today's environmentally fragile world, but I would have been wasting my breath. This tree destruction work was all without notice, as the WestConnex team leader smugly...
advised me. To add insult to injury, a note was put in our letterboxes later that day stating that our trees were to be cut that day.'

That is this mob's idea of communication. It is what is occurring. Blackmore Park in Leichhardt is under threat. A whole series of decisions are being made without proper planning and without proper consultation with residents. That is why there is such a backlash, in particular against the Baird government but also because of this government's failure, when it comes to infrastructure, to undertake proper planning and make sure that it occurs. The funding came first, and then the planning and the approvals came much later. They have got it the wrong way up, and it stands in stark contrast to what they said they would do prior to the election. They said they would have proper analysis for all projects above $100 million in value.

This government has changed some of its rhetoric on public transport and cities and urban policy, but it has not changed any of the policies, and it certainly is not changing any of the outcomes. That is why this government's infrastructure agenda has been treated with such contempt not just by communities around Australia but also by the business community, which understands that this is a government that has simply failed to deliver.

Mr PERRETT (Moreton—Opposition Whip) (17:10): I rise to speak on the appropriation bills: Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2016-2017, Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2016-2017 and Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Bill (No. 1) 2016-2017. I should say up-front that these appropriation bills are not controversial inasmuch as they provide for the continued functioning of the Turnbull government for the remainder of this financial year. Obviously, the Labor Party will not block supply. We have always been very clear about that. There has only ever been one political party that has blocked supply for political purposes, and I think Australia condemns the Fraser government for so doing. However, I should point out that Labor does not agree with the way the Turnbull government is going about or attempting to go about budget repair. Nevertheless, the Labor Party, under the guidance of Chris Bowen, is working constructively with the government to achieve budget repair that is fair.

I do point out that under the party that claims to be supposedly good with the books we now have tax as a percentage of GDP at 25.8 per cent. Just to put that in context, that is at a similar level to that which Labor had during the global financial crisis. We are now in the fourth year of the Liberal and National parties' government and of them handling the books, and we have got tax at that amazing rate. Now, those that may have seen the Menzies show know that there are times when the nation can run deficits. But the Labor Party was lectured for years and years by those opposite before they came into office about how they were going to reach surplus. I think that Joe Hockey said that they were going to reach surplus within the first year. We have now had increased taxes and increased spending, as we saw the finance minister discussing recently in that great train wreck of an interview with Leigh Sales on 7.30. But the party of supposedly responsible spending and taxing have shown that they have lost control of the situation.

Thankfully, in the Labor Party, we are still doing what we do well. Under Bill Shorten, we are not prepared to be a small target opposition in the lead-up to the last election, and ever since we have been prepared to take on budget repair. We did so before the election campaign—in fact, a year out. Labor's budget repair package would actually raise more than $80 billion over the medium term. But, obviously, because we are the Labor Party, it is
Monday, 10 October 2016

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

1329

budget repair that is fair. For example, when it comes to superannuation, our package is not retrospective. I know that people in Moreton were very worried about the retrospective changes that the government said that they would bring into effect. There has been some retreat from that, but there are other things that were rock-solid election promises that they are not prepared to back away from.

Labor made that strong commitment to reforming negative gearing and capital gains tax. These were sensible changes that would come in over time and would not influence anyone who already had negatively geared properties. But they would in the long run make home ownership more achievable, particularly for the millennial generation, who are missing out on the benefits of home ownership and of being able to transfer accumulated capital to their children. I would hate to see an Australia where owning a home was no longer a dream held by most Australians.

Our budget repair package also included increased tobacco excise. It opposed the return of the baby bonus and it included an $8,000 per year cap on VET FEE-HELP loans. All of these measures are considered. We lost a bit of bark over them, but that is what sensible alternative governments do. They are all measures that are fair and reasonable.

Sadly, the Turnbull government or the Turnbull-Morrison team is committed to delivering a very different budget that focuses on giving big businesses a $50 billion tax cut at a time when we have a budget under stress. That is an unbelievable commitment. As we know, nearly $9 billion of those benefits would flow to overseas companies rather than to Australian companies or to Australian pensioners or schoolkids. They also wanted to give a cut to the marginal tax rate of individuals who earn over $180,000—not exactly battlers. That would be a tax cut to the top three per cent of income earners. Whilst I am always happy to hear their concerns, I do not think a sensible government needs to worry as much for people who are earning over $180,000.

So Prime Minister Turnbull is shackled to the same unfair measures that the member for Warringah brought into place in that disastrous 2014 budget. I am sorry to bring that up for you, Deputy Speaker; I know it troubles you whenever that 2014 budget is mentioned, but that is the reality. You are still out there defending measures that Mr Hockey and the member for Warringah brought in in that horror budget and that they are still trying to visit on the Australian people. It is saddling our children with debt before they have even earned a wage with these $100,000 university degrees. It is raising the pension age to 70, which would give Australia the unlikely record of having the oldest pension age in the world. The age of 70 for a lawyer is not the same experience as for a manual labourer. The experience for an electrician or a builder would be completely different.

I still recall your former colleagues, Deputy Speaker, talking about the double dipping and rorting levelled at hardworking parents when it came to changing the Paid Parental Leave scheme. That was until they found out that some of the people they were talking about were their own spouses. There was also that horrible suggestion of leaving the young unemployed to fend for themselves, magically, for four weeks before receiving any unemployment benefits. That was an incredibly short-sighted and cruel measure. How could any sensible government expect young unemployed people to go to job interviews, to look presentable for those job interviews or to have a phone with some credit when they have no money to house themselves or to feed themselves? That was a particularly cruel measure. Lastly, there was
cutting the pensions of migrant pensioners when they visit their families back in their homeland.

Here we are in the fourth year of this Liberal-National government. Let's look around at the nation. Are we in better shape now than before the Liberal and National Parties took the reins of government? No, not by any reasonable measure! Obviously they talked about the debt and deficit disaster. Well, what has happened under their watch? If we look at the Treasury books at the moment, we see that the coalition has tripled the deficit. Net debt has increased from more than $100 billion; it is now north of $326 billion. The national unemployment rate, which is a good measure of whether the engine of government is working well, has increased to 5.7 per cent, whereas when Labor left office it was 5.1 per cent. This is the government that still has the hide today to talk about jobs and growth. I would also point out, Mr Deputy Speaker, as I am sure you are told by the people in your electorate, that not a single full-time job has been created by the Abbott-Turnbull experiment. There are currently more than 700,000 unemployed Australians—40,000 more since Labor left office.

There was an election commitment that the government made while in opposition that you would create one million jobs in five years. We are now in the fourth year of this government, and you really need to get a wriggle on if you are to meet that one million job target. As we have also seen with the ratings agencies, there is the risk of our AAA credit rating being downgraded. We have seen the concerns raised by those international agencies. I would point out that under the Labor government with the member for Lilley as Treasurer we had, for only the second time, three international ratings agencies give the Australian economy a AAA rating.

The Pre-election Economic and Fiscal Outlook has confirmed that Australians are much worse off in this fourth year of the coalition government. Spending is up, deficits are up, debt is up; wages are down. Wages growth is the lowest since they started to measure wages growth; so people are effectively going backwards which means that their standard of living is going down.

We are still prepared to act sensibly and work with the government to make amendments to their budgets. We have secured important amendments in their omnibus bill which will protect the most vulnerable from the harshest cuts and preserve the ongoing viability of ARENA. We secured that $800 million for ARENA over five years to ensure the continued investment in Australia's clean energy future which will deliver jobs and a planet that we can leave to our great-grandchildren. Labor has also secured the continuation of affordable access to dental care for children by protecting our dental benefits scheme. We have also seen the dropping of the Baby Bonus payment which ensures that all existing categories of recipients to the Energy Supplement will continue to receive this modest supplement. We removed the cuts that would have seen people with severe psychiatric conditions lose support.

Labor's amendments of $6.3 billion in savings over four years can be added to Mr Morrison's budget bottom line, and that is more than the government put forward in its original legislation. We can see that we have a Labor Party that is adventurous when it comes to policy and that is prepared to retail its ideas.

I do ask myself: what is the point of the member for Wentworth when it comes to vision? If it were revenge on the member for Warringah for having knocked him off as leader back in December 2009, that would have been a short-term step towards the Lodge but then you have
to lead the nation. We sadly see a member for Wentworth who is beholden to the right wing of his party. There is almost no Liberal left in the Liberal-National Party—almost none. Deputy Speaker, you are one of the last of his tribe—the last of his tribe. You have the member for Dawson setting the tenor and direction of the government—this sort of hillbilly-harbourside alliance is a crazy combination when it comes to ideas.

So we see the member for Wentworth, who has Oxford Street in the middle of his electorate, representing a significant group of the LGBTIQ community, saying that we will enforce a plebiscite on the LGBTIQ community, where we know there will be hate and division peddled throughout that community and we have had mental health experts saying that that will have horrific consequences.

We have in the member for Wentworth a former environment minister. He was elected 12 years ago yesterday, I think. He was passionate about climate change. Do you remember when he was the environment minister in the Howard government? Now we have a policy on climate change where we will see emissions going up year on year under this government. We saw his ludicrous defence in question time today. What is he passionate about? The enterprise bargaining arrangements between some workers and volunteers that fight fires in Victoria.

This is the vision of the member for Wentworth. It is unbelievable. We had a double dissolution election; we wrote off to the Governor-General saying it was crucial that we go to an election on the ABCC legislation and the registered organisations legislation. They barely rated a mention in the election. We had that most laughable of speeches ever, the speech by the member for Wentworth at the Wentworth Hotel on election night. It will surely go down in political history as one of the worst political speeches ever.

From that I will segue to a comment made by one of the greatest speechwriters ever, Don Watson, Paul Keating's speechwriter, who worked on so many great speeches, including the response to Mabo—that Redfern speech, crafted by Don Watson, where the government had to respond to the Mabo decision and came out with the native title legislation. It was an incredibly difficult idea to sell to the Australian people. Don Watson, writing about the member for Wentworth recently in The Monthly, had a line that, like much of what Don Watson writes, is incredibly poetic but also incredibly accurate. Speaking of the member for Wentworth's previous nature, he compared him to Steppenwolf—being like a wolf. Then he said, 'Now look at him. He is bland in tooth and claw.'

Sadly, it is a damning line about the member for Wentworth; but, more troubling, it says that the nation, when we need direction and a steady hand on the teller, lacks it. When we need some guidance and vision, instead we have this man who is a hollowed-out version of what he used to be.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Irons): I thank the member for his contribution. The member for Moreton did mention the word 'adventurous' a few times in his speech. Remember that members who sit in this chair are independent. You might want to structure your speeches in a way that does not reflect on the chair.

Mr Perrett: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr STEPHEN JONES (Whitlam) (17:25): I rise to speak on Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2016-2017 and related bills. What an honour it is, if somewhat intimidating, to follow the member for Moreton in this important debate. His oratorical and poetical skills are famous
throughout this place. Sometimes they get beyond him, but we are never left in any doubt about what he believes in and what he thinks of the legislation before the House, which is now a set of appropriation bills— a package of bills which are required to fund the normal ongoing business of government.

We have taken a longstanding view that, however repugnant we might find the materials and the decisions underlying the appropriation bills, we will not block them. We will not oppose the appropriation bills; but that does not rob us of our obligation to provide patriotic criticism of some of the policies that lie behind the bills.

I would like to start that patriotic criticism with a bit of analysis of where the economy sits as we near the end of the first calendar year of this parliament. Despite 3.3 per cent GDP growth, we face some significant challenges in this economy. The simple fact of the matter is that since the election of the Abbott and then Turnbull governments, Australia has gone backwards— particularly in terms of its budget, but also in the experience of everyday Australians.

Wages growth is at the lowest level ever. Many may say that there is some good in suppressing wages growth, because if you keep a lid on wages growth that creates an incentive for small and large businesses alike to create more jobs. Then we have a look at the jobs growth part of the ledger. We see that unemployment is at or near the same level, not as it was when the government was elected, but as it was during the global financial crisis. More than a million Australians cannot get the hours they want, and we have a real problem with long and entrenched unemployment.

So the lived experience of people right around the country, particularly in regional Australia and the places that I visit and where I come from, is that they are disconnected from the excitement that the Prime Minister feels when he talks about the fact that there has never been a more exciting time to be an Australian. Their experience, when it comes to their living standards, their capacity to find a job and their capacity to pay their bills or keep their head above water, is that they are not going forward: At best they are running very, very fast to stand still, and in many instances they are going backwards.

If you look at what is underlying all this, if you look at the things that are driving economic activity, you can begin to see where some of the problems are. One of the important things to ensure that we see continued economic growth in the out years is growth in investment and, in particular, private sector investment. But over the last 12 months we have seen private sector investment plummet by over 4.7 per cent. In fact, it is the worst yearly drop in over 16 years. So much for Malcolm Turnbull wresting control from the member for Warringah to take control of the prime ministership, the parliament and the country on the grounds that he had a better economic narrative, a better economic plan and better economic credentials to run this country. What we have seen is the country going backwards on his watch.

Not only that, there is no real sign of things improving. In fact, when it comes to the budget bottom line we see that the deficit has tripled from the disastrous 2014 budget. Indeed, the expected deficit for 2016-17 was $10.6 billion, but it will now be $37 billion. It has more than tripled between 2014 and where we stand today. The people of Australia are in for a very rude shock when the Treasurer gives the mid-year financial update, because we expect it will be very bad news.
To the matters before the House: the real judge of any bill before this House, particularly a money bill or a bill which touches upon social policy, is how it adds to or decreases inequality in this country. Is it a bill which has a tendency to increase inequality in this country? Is it a bill that tends to decrease inequality in this country? We have given a solemn commitment that we will work with the government on the mission of budget repair, but we will sign up for budget repair that is fair and not budget repair that entrenches or increases inequality in this country.

What we see in the bills before the House and in the agenda of Malcolm Turnbull, the Prime Minister, is most of the same measures that led to the downfall of the member for Warringah. The coalition budget continues to benefit the rich at the expense of ordinary working families. On the table there is still the plan to give the big end of town a $50 billion tax cut and give wealthy individuals earning $180,000 a year a tax cut as well. The top three per cent of income earners should not be receiving a tax cut from 1 July next year if the bottom 75 per cent are not receiving some benefit as well. There is no plan to address this problem in the bills before the House, and there is no plan on the table to address this problem. If anything, those people are going backwards.

On top of that there is a plan to cut $30 billion from school funding. This is going to have a devastating impact on our capacity to deal with entrenched inequality and to ensure that we can give kids from modest backgrounds or from wealthy backgrounds the best chance in life. Added to that they have not withdrawn, they have not recanted and they have not stepped back from the plan to introduce $100,000 university degrees.

In question time today we saw the health minister and the Prime Minister talking up the situation with medicines in this country. I applaud the fact that there have been some cuts to the price of medicines, but they are giving with one hand and taking away with the other, because there remains on the books the plan to introduce the co-payment to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. It is still part of the budget forward estimates. There is no plan to remove this, so they are giving with one hand and taking away with the other when it comes to medicines in this country.

The plan to give Australia the world's oldest pension age by increasing the pension age to 70 has got many who have worked in industry all of their lives scratching their heads. There is a good reason why they say to themselves that only a Prime Minister who has worked in an office all of his life instead of with his hands could propose a plan to increase the pension age to 70. If you have worked with your hands all your life, you know that by the time you hit your late fifties and early sixties your back and knees are starting to go and arthritis is starting to hit. For many people trying to still work by the time they are 70 would be simply impossible. But that is still the plan. It is still in their policy proposals, and we say, quite simply, that it is wrong.

Labor believes that it is a fundamental mission of everyone who comes to this parliament to do what we can to reduce inequality in this country. The sad fact is that we are seeing cuts to health care, education and pension payments and changes to the retirement age, which are entrenching, not improving, inequality. Earlier today, in question time, I saw the Prime Minister confect himself up with rage—that vaudeville, that pantomime, that he has become famous for—and howl across from the dispatch box at the Labor opposition for telling the truth about their plans for Medicare during the election campaign. He said that outrageous lies...
were being told and that there were going to be no changes to bulk-billing as a result of their Medicare changes. The sign that gives the lie to that statement is this one here. This sign has recently been displayed at the Milton Medical Centre—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Craig Kelly):** The member knows he should not use props. The member will put the prop down.

**Mr STEPHEN JONES:** It says that there will be changes to bulk-billing and fees are set to rise. It bells the cat. This sign says, 'Due to the Medicare rebate freeze and rising practice costs there will be some fee increases from 1 August this year. Because of the rebate freeze we can no longer guarantee bulk-billing for consultations and services.' There it is, in black and white, on the front window of the medical practice at Milton. This is the sign that gives the lie to the Prime Minister's confected outrage. He is saying one thing, but all Australians right around the country know that in GP practices around the country something very different is happening.

We have an obligation to do something about the growing inequality in this country. We know that inequality is growing in the country that once prided itself on the fact that Jack and Jill were as good as their master and that we had programs in place to ensure that no matter what your standing in life, whatever the circumstances of your birth, through a good education system, through a social welfare safety net and through a fine healthcare system you could go on and reach your aspirations in life. But what we are finding is that cuts to education services, withdrawal of funds from obligations in the healthcare system and no plans to deal with fundamental underlying problems mean inequality is growing.

In the time I have left I want to point to the issue of home ownership. Australia has traditionally had a very high level of private home ownership. We call it the Australian dream. If you work hard you can afford to get the deposit for a mortgage and own your own home. And that becomes a safety net for you, throughout the course of your life, and ensures that you do not suffer from poverty in old age. The sad fact is that home ownership is becoming beyond the reach of ordinary everyday Australians. In fact, in that crucial age group between the ages of 25 and 34—when people are putting their roots down and attempting to buy their own homes—over the last decade home ownership rates have gone backwards, not by a little bit but by a lot, by over 12 per cent.

Today the Swinburne Institute for Social Research released a report that says, quite frighteningly, if you have not purchased your own home—if you have not got your foot in the door of the property market—by the time you are 40 you are probably not going to get one. It is precisely for this reason that we took to the last election a set of measures that would have made home ownership more affordable in this country. It would have put a brake on the excessive tax concessions that go to people after buying their second, third, fourth and fifth properties and would have taken some of the heat out of the property market and would have brought home ownership back within the reach of ordinary everyday Australians once again.

They said on that side of the House that it was going to be the end of the world as we know it, but we know that in their heart of hearts they know it is the right plan. I would not be surprised if, at some stage over the next two years, it were a plan they brought forward because, with home ownership increasingly being pushed beyond the reach of everyday Australians, we know that inequality will grow and we will have a big problem with our economy.
Mr FITZGIBBON (Hunter) (17:40): It is great to have my friends from the National Party rush in to listen to my speech, in readiness of a very significant contribution—as always—and confident that I will be very keen to point out to them the error of their ways, particularly with respect to agriculture policy.

Before I turn to that important matter I just want to say that in my 20 years in this place I have been through three electoral redistributions—that is, for those listening, changes to electoral boundaries. The last one was a particularly willing one for me, because New South Wales lost a seat in the House of Representatives. And, in the end, that seat happened to be mine. Fortuitously—and I hear my friends applauding now—I survived that process and I remain in this place. I want to reflect on some of the opportunities that has presented to me as a local member.

I lament the very many people in communities, friendships, including work working relationships, I lost when large parts of my electorate were carved out of the new Hunter electorate. I miss those people very much. It is a challenging thing when you spend so many years developing those relationships and suddenly you lose them. But I have been delighted, and it has brought me some new energy to meet so many new people in so many new communities, and I have been delighted to find the same sense of community spirit and commitment within those townships—that is, the townships on the western side of Lake Macquarie, in places like Cameron Park, Edgeworth and West Wallsend.

I should not be surprised, because I am a boy who grew up on what was affectionately known as the coalfields towns, including Cessnock, Kurri Kurri and Maitland, which—so not much Maitland but certainly Cessnock and Kurri Kurri and the villages in between—were built around poppet heads of the underground coalmines of the day. Many of the townships on the western side of Lake Macquarie had a similar birth, both coalmines and coalmines that feed the electricity generators on the western side of Lake Macquarie. Of course, I have a significant coal fire generation capacity in the original parts of my electorate. So it is not surprising, on reflection, to find the same strong sense of community spirit and camaraderie in the new parts of the Hunter electorate as I enjoyed in the original parts of the electorate.

I am not going to pretend I have had the opportunity to meet every person or even every group on the western side of the lake, but I have been busy meeting as many people as I can, building on those relationships, including working relationships, working closely with Lake Macquarie City Council. It is an outstanding council and I look forward to working with them, and I look forward to working with the community.

The Hunter Region is strong—probably stronger and more economically diverse than ever before. It is certainly stronger and more economically diverse than when I arrived in this place 20 years ago. Unemployment is much lower, but it remains too high. At one point, during the height of the mining investment boom, unemployment in my electorate sank to about 3.5 per cent, a long way from the 13½ per cent we suffered when I was elected in 1996. But, alas, it is on the rise again as the heat comes out of the mining boom and people struggle and scramble to make a transition into employment elsewhere.

As the member for Paterson so eloquently pointed out earlier today in her first speech in this place—a fantastic speech, I have to say—youth unemployment is a real concern. It is far too high. It is not at its peak. It is not the highest it has ever been, but it is certainly stubbornly high. It is that issue which has probably driven me more than any other issue in my 20 years
in this place—seeking ways to break that cycle of unemployment, which is commonly known as intergenerational unemployment. Over those many years in this place, I have been involved in both the development and the implementation of a whole range of labour market programs designed to break that cycle, and we need to keep finding the best ways to do that. The programs we have had have all played their roles. Even the unfortunately named Work for the Dole plays a role, but the outcomes are very limited and the success rate is very low. I think it is around 15 per cent for Work for the Dole. I am just old enough to remember the RED scheme implemented by the Whitlam government. We have had plenty of labour market programs over that time, but we are yet to see one which produces the sorts of results we would find satisfying both as members of parliament and members of the community.

I came to the conclusion over those many years of work that the only real way to break that cycle is to intervene at the youngest age. There is one place that almost all kids eventually go and that is a place called kindergarten. We need to give our schools, and in particular our public schools, the resources to identify children who come with challenges. Some of these kids, unfortunately, are effectively born to be idle. They have not spent their early years in a household culture where work is the norm and where people wake up at a particular time to an alarm clock to go to work. We need intervention very early.

At the same time we need the resources to intervene with the kids that demonstrate a particular talent so that we can ensure that those children reach their full potential. This is why the government's approach to schools funding is so disappointing for me. That is why the cuts to Gonski have so failed my community. Like we all do, I went to school presentations at the end of last year, and at every school that I attended the principal publicly thanked me and, through me, the Australian Labor Party for the commitment we had made on Gonski. They talked publicly about the difference it was making in their school, both in terms of intervening with children with particular challenges before them but also providing those with more personal talents and more advanced children with the best opportunity in life. I do lament that opportunity foregone.

But, of course, properly resourcing our schools will not deal with all our transitional issues. We are an economy which is very, very strong in the services and manufacturing sectors, although much of our manufacturing sector is in itself tied to coalmining. But the day will come when the big power generators of the Hunter electorate will no longer be in commission. Liddell Power Station, for example, will probably reach the end of its natural life in around a decade. Some, such as Eraring and Bayswater, will remain longer but their time will come within my lifetime. And when those coal-powered generators go, so too, potentially, will the coalmines that supply the coal to those diverse coal-fired generators. The transition will be very large and we cannot expect that new coal-fired generators will replace those generators—they will not, quite clearly. If they are to be replaced by other fossil-fuelled generators, they will be gas generators. But there are question marks about whether the efficiency of high-voltage transmission will continue to necessitate the locating of power generators so far from our capital cities.

These are big transitional issues that we need to grapple with as a parliament and as local communities, including in partnership with our state governments and local government bodies. But what does not help is this ongoing demonisation of renewable energy, which will be an important part of the energy mix. Leaders from Howard through to Rudd and Gillard
and Abbott and now Prime Minister Turnbull have all had market-based policies—although it is a little bit doubtful with respect to the current Prime Minister's policy, but I will give him the benefit of the doubt—designed to help us through that transition. We need to depoliticise this debate and to start bringing some common sense to the debate, rather than watch on and see people like the Deputy Prime Minister so ridiculously reacting to what happened only a week or so ago in South Australia.

I think the Hunter has a big opportunity in agriculture. This can be one of our new sectors. It is part of our economy now but I believe it can be much greater. But it will only happen if the government in this place put the right policies in place. We have heard here lots about the growing food demand in Asia and the so-called dining boom. But, as I always say, the dining boom will not just come to us; we need to go to it. For us, the dining boom will not be so much about volume, as important as that might be; it will be about value. We in this place should be developing strategic plans for pushing our agricultural sector further up the value curve and securing a greater return on the investment of our limited natural resources in this country. It is a myth to say that we are a land with an abundance of water. We are, of course, the driest inhabited continent on the earth, in the world, and our fertile soils, as a proportion of our land mass, are very limited indeed. We need strategic plans to ensure that those resources are being invested wisely and most efficiently and in the most productive way.

The other issue is of course our human resources. Our human resources are critical. I will use that point to make two additional points. The relocation of the APVMA is the most ridiculous policy proposition I have ever seen in my 20 years here. It is populism at its worst; it is pork-barrelling at its worst. The idea of moving 180 or so scientists and lawyers and other professionals who are living here in Canberra, with their children in schools in Canberra, to Armidale in the electorate of the Deputy Prime Minister is an outrageous proposition. It is outrageous not just because of the nature of the pork-barrelling but because of the impact it is going to have on the agriculture sector. The agriculture sector needs, for example, crop protection sprays and other chemicals; it needs veterinary medicines. It needs those medicines and sprays to be approved in a timely manner. This move to Armidale is going destroy the APVMA. These professionals are not going to move. Today I ask only one thing of the Deputy Prime Minister: table the cost-benefit analysis—the $272,000 worth that the Deputy Prime Minister commissioned to look at this relocation. Why won't he table the cost-benefit analysis on this relocation? I will tell you why, Mr Deputy Speaker: he knows that it shows the relocation will be a disaster for Australian agriculture.

My two friends at the table—members of the National Party or the LNP; before I get picked up on a technical point—the member for Mallee and the member for Hinkler say nothing about this attack on Australia's agriculture sector. The question has to be asked in their electorates: why are they remaining silent? More particularly, I cannot say they have all been remaining silent on the issue of the backpackers tax, which is another human resource issue. The member for Mallee, in particular, has been quite vocal, and I congratulate him for that. I cannot say the same for all of his LNP colleagues in Queensland, unfortunately, or, indeed, those who hunt around the Wagga Wagga area. This has been a debacle from day one. There have been some expressions of concern from the other side but nothing like the vocal opposition we would expect from them.
I was astonished to have a briefing from Treasury on Thursday where I was told that the modelling on the fall-off on backpackers shows no change between 32.5 per cent tax and 19 per cent tax. I see the member for Mallee nodding his head. I am shocked that he knew this already. If he knows this, why hasn't the member for Mallee been more vocal? Why is the member for Mallee accepting, without reservation, a move first from zero to 32.5 per cent tax and now a move from 32.5 to 19 per cent, notwithstanding the fact that he knows—he has seen the modelling—that it is going to make no difference. The labour shortages caused by this ill-conceived tax are going to continue to impact on farmers, including farmers in his electorate, and these two sitting on the other side of the table are going to say absolutely nothing about it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Craig Kelly): The member for Adelaide has a personal explanation.

Ms KATE ELLIS (Adelaide) (17:55): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I wish to make a personal explanation.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does the member claim to have been misrepresented?

Ms KATE ELLIS: I do.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please proceed.

Ms KATE ELLIS: Claims by Peta Credlin and Miranda Devine, published in the Daily Telegraph and the Herald Sun on 9 October, allege that fraud in the family day care sector has occurred as a result of the National Quality Framework, which, as the minister, I introduced, and have either stated or implied that I am responsible for this fraud. The facts are: (1) there is no link between the National Quality Framework, which regulates the quality and safety of services, and the decisions of individuals to defraud the Commonwealth by claiming subsidies for which they are not eligible; (2) the current minister for education has himself confirmed that there is not a link between the National Quality Framework and fraud in the family day care sector; and (3) I cannot be held responsible for a billion dollar blow-out in this program, which has occurred under the current government, whilst three Liberal ministers have been asleep at the wheel. I would suggest that Peta Credlin is showing that she makes about as good a journalist as she did a chief of staff.

Ms COLLINS (Franklin) (17:56): These appropriation bills, as we have heard from many people in this chamber, are in relation to the government's budget—the budget that was brought down just before the federal election held on 2 July. This budget still contains what we call on our side of the House 'zombie' measures—that is, measures introduced in that disastrous 2014 budget of former Prime Minister Tony Abbott. Those measures include things like cuts to health; cuts to education; cuts to Medicare; increasing the age pension age to 70; trying to make young job seekers wait up to four weeks before receiving income support, which is of particular concern to me; and changes to the pension that will make 190,000 pensioners worse off. There are still a lot of zombie measures in the budget that was introduced just before the election—and what an election it was.

In my home state of Tasmania, we saw health and education become very big issues in the election. Tasmanians were particularly concerned, because they had been told time and time again by the government that there would not be any cuts to education. They were told prior to the 2013 election that the government was on a Gonski ticket with Labor when it came to
funding. There was great concern about the funding for years 5 and 6 of Gonski. In the
election campaign this time, it became very clear that the government was not going to give
Tasmania that additional funding for our schools. We have a really serious issue in Tasmania
where a lot of the students do not finish years 11 and 12. This is very high in terms of
continuation rates at school, and then we have a very high youth unemployment rate. In the
south-east of Tasmania, we have a youth unemployment rate of over 20 per cent. This funding
for schools in Tasmania was really critical indeed.

The difference between the Gonski and the non-Gonski funding that the government is
offering Tasmania is worth $62 million over the two years that Tasmanian schools would
have available to them that they now do not have available to them. This is a serious amount
of money that Tasmanian schools and Tasmanian students need. If you want to base funding
according to need, if you actually want students who need that support to get that support then
that Gonski funding as originally initiated by Labor should be provided.

The other education cuts—the higher education cuts—are still in the budget. The $100,000
university degrees are still on the agenda of this government, as it was with the Abbott
government. We saw that quite clearly in the campaign too. I went down to the University of
Tasmania and spoke to many students. The concerns from students were about how this
measure would work, particularly if it would mean cuts to the University of Tasmania. The
University of Tasmania is in a really unique position, in that Tasmania only has one university
state wide. It is the only option for students in Tasmania. It is not like they can go and shop
around to try to find a cheaper degree somewhere else. There is not any other option. This is a
really serious issue: the transition to make sure that more Tasmanian students complete year
11 and 12 and that we get students, particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds, into
university in Tasmania so that they have the best employment opportunities.

One of the other issues that I talked about a lot during the campaign was the fact that there
has been more than 5,500 jobs lost in Tasmania since Malcolm Turnbull became Prime
Minister. Unemployment remains a really serious issue in Tasmania, and we have seen
unemployment go up over the last few months. Of particular concern is the participation rate
dropping below 60 per cent. That means Tasmanians have given up looking for work, because
they know there is no longer any work available. That is why that measure of making young
jobseekers wait four weeks before receiving any income support at all is of such concern to
me in a state like Tasmania, where you have students not completing year 12; the $100,000
university degrees putting them off from going to university, even if they do complete year
12; high youth unemployment; and a low participation rate. It really is a recipe for disaster for
the future of Tasmania's economy if this is not addressed.

On the Labor side, we went around and we talked to a lot of community organisations in
Tasmania. We spoke to businesses in Tasmania. We had a lot of consultations about what a
positive plan for Tasmania might look like. We put that to Tasmanians during the campaign,
and what a result Labor had in Tasmania at that election campaign. We now have no Liberals
in the lower house in Tasmania whatsoever—zero, none. The reason for that is twofold: it is
because Tasmanians did not believe in the Liberal plan for jobs and growth—that is because
there have been over 5,000 jobs lost in Tasmania since Malcolm Turnbull became Prime
Minister—and because Tasmanians were concerned about health and education funding.
Tasmanians were really seriously concerned, because they saw the cuts that had happened under the Liberal governments. They had a Liberal state government that would not properly fund our hospitals. After the Abbott cuts, we had a state government saying to the federal government, 'We cannot absorb these cuts. Tasmania cannot afford these cuts,' and we had the federal government not listening to what Tasmanians were saying.

Tasmanians were a little bit encouraged when the Prime Minister changed from Abbott to Turnbull; but the issue now is that Malcolm Turnbull, the member for Wentworth, does not seem to have a real interest in Tasmania at all. It was only after one of my speeches in this place and after several negative front pages that we finally saw the Prime Minister came back to Tasmania close the election. I can count on one hand the number of times that the member for Wentworth has been in Tasmania since he got elected to parliament, since he was minister for communications and since this government has been in government—on one hand.

He is not interested in Tasmania. We have had Smart Cities have roundtables in Tasmania and around the country. They did not have one in Tasmania until it was on the front page of the newspaper. We had a decision to say that we were going to shut down the Antarctic Division's centre on Macquarie Island, which was backflipped a day later after it was on the front page of the paper. This government is wholly disinterested in the state of Tasmania as to what is going on. We have seen it time and time again. We saw it prior to the election campaign, and we have seen it from the Prime Minister's own lack of interest. We saw from their plan in the election campaign that they do not have a serious plan for Tasmania. They do not have a plan to address real jobs and growth in the state of Tasmania. They really seem disinterested on what is happening on our island state.

The backpacker tax is another one of those issues where the government has not been paying attention. We have had the fruitgrowers in Tasmania come out several times about the backpacker tax. They are saying there has been a 40 per cent reduction in people applying for picking work in Tasmania because of that backpacker tax. We have had one of the growers on radio today say, 'This change down to 19c will not make any difference at all. We're going to have fruit that's not going to be able to be picked in Tasmania.' That is because of this government's lack of consultation, its long period of inaction and its disinterest in this issue. Their disinterest just seems to be a repetitive theme from this government.

From the Labor side during the campaign, as part of our plan for Tasmania, we had a tourism package where we were going to invest $15 million in Cradle Mountain, we were going to complete the Three Capes Track and we were going to invest in local and community projects for tourism in Tasmania. The Liberal government came up with a plan to give $1 million to Cradle Mountain, when they had asked for $30 million and we were prepared to put in $15 million. It shows that that side of politics really did not have an interest and had not been listening to what the local issues were.

Tourism has been one of the growth sectors in Tasmania. We have particularly been seeing more international tourists come down to our state. Labor, after consulting with industry and with businesses across the state, decided that this was a good investment Tasmania. It was something the industry had asked for; it was something the state government had asked for. We were expecting the Liberal Party to match our commitments as part of our Tasmania plan, but that did not happen. Instead, they got a much smaller commitment just days out from the election and, again, this was because of disinterest.
The NBN on the West Coast is another example. It took Labor saying that we would provide fibre to some of those West Coast towns before we finally saw some action from the Liberal government in trying to provide some fibre to the West Coast of Tasmania. There was Labor's commitment for the University of Tasmania—and I have talked about funding for the University of Tasmania—where Labor was going to provide $150 million for new campuses in Launceston and in Burnie to trial some sub-bachelor degrees to see if we could try to lift some of the participation in tertiary education in our state.

Labor made that announcement in April of this year. It took the federal government up until the week before the election to make the same commitment after this issue had been on the agenda for months and months. There had been a business case, a feasibility plan and discussions with all sides of politics to try to get bipartisan support for what is a critical community program in Tasmania. We had the state government say that they would fund some of it. Again, the disinterest in what was happening in Tasmania from those opposite was clearly apparent.

It was not until the last week of the campaign when the government finally came to the party and said, 'We might be able to also match Labor's commitment when it comes to the University of Tasmania.' I am very pleased to see that commitment. I, of course, will be making sure that it gets delivered on, because I have my doubts.

The Liberal Party has form on election commitments, when they win elections, in not delivering in Tasmania. One of those was in my electorate in 2013: the Hobart airport runway. Senator Abetz came out and promised that this runway would be 'operational' by 2016. Well, he has turned the sod. The sod has been turned, and $1 million of the several million dollars that is going to be provided to this project—I think it is $38 million in total—has been provided to date. And the sod has been turned. In fact, I was invited to the sod-turning, just a month or so ago. So at least, after two election wins, we have finally seen something happen as to the Hobart airport runway extension. But I will not hold my breath for the completion of that project.

We have seen it again when it comes to the Huon Highway-Summerleas Road intersection, also in my electorate, which Labor actually had in the 2013 budget prior to the election. We had an agreement with the state government and a commitment that that upgrade would occur. It is a very serious crash site, unfortunately, and there have been quite a few incidents in this area. But, again, after several pieces of correspondence and several discussions with the state and federal Liberal governments, I finally got a letter from the state minister saying: 'Construction should start before Christmas this year.' This money has been in the budget since 2013, and it might start by this Christmas! Again, that is two elections that my constituents have had to wait for, for election commitments in Tasmania to actually occur. As I said, I will not be holding my breath on that one. It is a bit like the Hobart airport runway.

But one election commitment that my constituents were expecting this election that they did not get is of great concern. We have now had three rounds of Stronger Regions funding, and my electorate—even though it is regional; even though it is about 7,000 square kilometres—has not received one cent in three rounds of Stronger Regions funding, even though a project in my electorate has had bipartisan support. Even though the Liberal candidate and Eric Abetz and the Liberal Senate team all went and had meetings with the mayor and took their photos and put them up on Facebook and everything, there was not one
cent of funding commitment for a vital project. They need $5 million to open up $80 million of development in an area where unemployment is very high, and they cannot get it. They have a business case that stacks up. They have a whole feasibility study that has been done. They have got community support for it. It is part of a master plan that Labor funded last time we were in government for the area. We have got the state government investing in an integrated care centre in this new precinct. And the government will not fund this under Stronger Regions. I do not know why they will not fund it. And they have not been honest with people about why they were not funding it. The mayor from Kingborough has gone back to the department several times and actually asked for some feedback, and they have been told that it meets the criteria. But it just has not got funding. It is the $5 million redevelopment of the old Kingston High site. It is really important to locals for opening up and creating a new Kingston Park area in Kingston in the south of my electorate—very close to where Senator Abetz lives. And I would have thought that the Liberal Party and Senator Abetz and others would have supported this project. Given that they have put it on Facebook, given that the candidate went down and talked about it, I am really surprised that, in the lead-up to the election campaign, this project did not get funded. And I was even more surprised that, when the last round of Stronger Regions got announced last week, it was not in that. But of course I was able, as a Labor candidate, to make a commitment during the campaign that, if Labor had been elected, we would have funded it, because we have a good record of delivering, not just for my electorate but for the whole state of Tasmania—unlike those opposite.

In the few seconds left to me, I do want to thank the people who worked on my campaign, because you do not often get a chance to do that. I particularly want to thank my staff—Jess, Gabby, Simon and Liam—for their hard work; my campaign team: Innes, Nat, Jackson, Lisa, David and Dan; and my poster-putting-up team, Evan, Mike and Graham. Thank you so much to everybody that worked on the campaign and to anybody I have not named. Thank you to Lisa Mycko who has come back to work with me, and to everybody, and particularly to my duty senator, Senator Catryna Bilyk. I want to put on record that Catryna and I have been working together now in the Franklin electorate since 2008, and it is great to have such a local senator who is happy to be out and about on the ground, working with community groups and supporting me as the local member; I think we make a formidable team. And I look forward to continuing to represent the people of Franklin in this place.

Ms CHESTERS (Bendigo) (18:12): I concur with the member for Franklin when she raises questions about the National Stronger Regions Fund. My area in Bendigo has also had a number of projects in the mix. And I do welcome the member for Murray, who is here today, because there is a project that the member for Murray moonlighted into Bendigo last week to announce. He announced that this government will fund the Bendigo tennis centre redevelopment and upgrade. We were very worried that this government did not understand the importance of this project. This government scrapped the funding for the project when they first came to office after the 2013 election, which was devastating to the community of Bendigo and devastating to the Bendigo tennis centre community. So I do acknowledge the member for Murray, who has been an advocate for this project, first in the state parliament and now in this parliament. He has delivered for Bendigo, more than the senator who is based in Bendigo has, in his short time here. But of course Bendigo was not the only electorate he popped up in last week. He was a very busy man last week. He also popped up in the member for Indi’s electorate to make a few announcements around Stronger Regions. He popped up in
Castlemaine as well. So it appears that the member for Murray is not only the member for Murray but also the acting senator for Victoria for the National Party, given the road miles that he is doing at the moment. Perhaps Senator Bridget McKenzie from the other place needs to get outside of the inner city of Melbourne, rediscover her roots and travel back to the regions and speak up for the regions and speak up for Elmore instead of Elwood.

This is the great challenge that we have: there are lots of projects that still have not been funded. It is great to see the tennis centre be funded. It was something that Labor committed to at both the federal election in 2013 and the one in 2016. It is great to see the government realise the importance of this project and now fund it.

I am concerned, however, about the number of projects in the region that have missed out on funding. I hope that their commitment to fund the RSL upgrade—the revitalisation of the Bendigo RSL project—will go ahead. We had thought that that would be announced in this round of Stronger Regions funding. I hope that the government will continue their commitment towards this bipartisan project.

I also have a number of questions for the government. They announced $10 million during the election for the Calder upgrade, but we still do not know specifically what they are talking about. There are some rumours that it is about going north of Marong and there was some talk that it was for the south. They have said that they will match it with the state government, but the state government are saying that they are waiting to see what they are proposing about this. I would urge the government to look at Marong, to look at Lockwood and to look at the very dangerous intersection after passing Ravenswood as areas of need for prioritising this funding. I know that VicRoads are in active discussion to see some of that funding come south. I appreciate that there are problems on the Calder going north of Bendigo, but Marong is a growth area and we do want to see some of that funding going towards the Marong part of the Calder.

Roads funding is always critical. It is also an area, when it comes to Roads to Recovery and Black Spot funding, that is largely bipartisan. In fact, it was this side of the House that came up with a solution for the previous government about what to do with all of the tax they had collected. You might remember that in the last parliament they asked petrol companies to start collecting an increase to the petrol tax—the tax excise—even though this parliament had not passed the legislation. So, with the clock ticking and with this money collected, the money would not go back to motorists if the parliament did not pass the legislation. This side provided a solution to the government by suggesting: 'Why don't we put it into roads? Since you have collected it, and since we do not want to see it go back to big petrol companies and it will not go back to motorists, let's at least put it into the roads that motorists use.' So it was this side that provided the solution about what to do with that money, even though it was a government mess caused by them getting ahead of themselves in asking for the increased tax to be collected.

It is the role of our local governments and state governments to suggest the roads projects that should be fixed. Unfortunately, as much as I would like to believe that I have a say, I do not. No federal member actually has much of a say about which roads should be prioritised. Like all constituents, we can put forward our projects and we can actively lobby but, ultimately, it is up to local governments and state governments to make recommendations to VicRoads, in partnership with the federal government. The federal government funds these
works but ultimately the priority list comes from local governments and state governments. So it is really cheeky of ministers and of those opposite to say, 'I will upgrade this road.' Well, no; it is local and state governments that decide on the priorities. This place allocates the funding to projects, and we want to see that funding allocated. It is wrong to suggest out in the community that this government makes those decisions. The only decision this government makes and this place makes is how much money goes into the kitty. Unless this government is talking about cutting funding to Roads to Recovery or to the Black Spots funding program, it is not fair to communities to go out there and suggest otherwise.

To this day, we still hear the government ranting a lot about 'jobs and growth'—I think we have discovered that it is the Treasurer's pet phrase, because he seems to be the only one continuing to harbour the term 'jobs and growth' and to labour it over and over again—but what we have not seen from the government is a concrete jobs plan. How are they going to rebuild full-time secure jobs in our community? The government has had many opportunities in my electorate of Bendigo and in regional Australia. You cannot go past past decisions that this government has made in relation to defence uniforms and uniform manufacturing. Bendigo is home to ADA. We have one of their manufacturing facilities in Bendigo, and they are currently manufacturing the combat uniforms—the men and women, predominantly women, who work there have done so. The contract they are working on for this government was signed when Labor was last in government. When the tender for the dress uniforms came around, the facility in Bendigo was not awarded the contract. Whilst ADA was successful in the tender, this government went for an entirely overseas manufacture subcontract and import even though they have the capability and the skills in Bendigo—as well as a number of other manufacturing sites in Victoria—to manufacture the dress uniforms. This was a missed opportunity to create good secure jobs in Bendigo by simply buying Australian made.

It is laughable that a number of defence industry ministers—somebody with the job title 'defence'—have turned up in Bendigo and have talked to the workers—posing for photos—about the great work they do manufacturing combat uniforms, when they are the exact same government that refused to sign a contract to allow those workers to manufacture the dress uniforms. That would have created extra jobs in Bendigo and in Central Victoria. Instead, the government is saying: 'Well, we have run out of ideas on how we are going to get people into work. We are going to put up some funds and say to the not-for-profit sector that they should come up with some innovative programs about how we could get people into work.' We could invest that close to $100 million in Australian-made product. That creates jobs. We could invest that in supporting apprentices by restoring funding that has been cut from our apprenticeship schemes. The number of apprentices continues to decline in this country, and this government's plan is not to reinvest in apprentices and not to reinvest in TAFE but to invest in the program, an exploitative program which is basically going to offer employers—rather than employing the next young person—the chance to hire someone at below-award wages that is then topped up by the government. There is no accountability and no safeguards in place for this program—none whatsoever—to ensure that, when somebody leaves a job, an employer, rather than advertising and hiring the next young person and paying them award rates or paying them on the collective agreement rate, does not go straight to the government's subsidised PaTH program. There are no safeguards whatsoever to ensure that they are not giving a chop-out to their mates in business so that they can hire people on this program. This is essentially what will happen. It has been nicknamed the 'supermarket internships program',
and that is essentially what will happen. It is not a genuine program that will attract young people into new jobs; it is another subsidised program which will see the government potentially displace into exploitative arrangements thousands of young Australians who otherwise would have got the job.

We have not seen this government prioritise a crackdown on worker exploitation. To this date the government has failed to implement any of the recommendations coming from any of the reviews or inquiries about the exploitation of workers. And we are not just talking about the exploitation of temporary workers that we have in our country; we are talking about the tens of thousands of Australian workers who are also being exploited. We are not investigating enough or resourcing the Fair Work Ombudsman enough to investigate cases where people have been made to get their own ABN when they actually should be directly employed by their company. We are talking about cleaners at Myer. There are cleaners in Ballarat—people who, rather than working directly for the cleaning company, were made to get an ABN and are paid well below award wages.

It is not their choice if that is the only option that is on the table. This is where the government likes to get quite tricky with their language and say, 'It's their choice.' It is not a choice if the only job available requires you to go out and get your ABN. Essentially, you are making the employee responsible for their own work cover, you are making the employee responsible for their own superannuation and you are making them responsible for all of their entitlements. Yet, as we know, as defined by the Fair Work Ombudsman, if these people do 100 per cent of their work for this one contractor, wear the uniform of this contractor and use the chemicals and equipment supplied by this contractor, they are not a subcontractor or someone who should be employed on an ABN; they are in fact an employee.

This is happening throughout our economy and throughout our communities, particularly in relation to temporary workers. There are currently 200,000 backpackers in this country, and some of them are employed in some quite precarious situations. Weekly we see reports of their exploitation appear in our media, but, rather than tackle that issue head-on, the government seeks to ignore it. They have appointed another task force, which again will make recommendations that this government will probably choose to ignore.

I talked about the 200,000 backpackers that we have in our country and I have to say that, despite all the rhetoric of those opposite, those 200,000 backpackers are not working on our farms. We do have labour shortages on our farms, I completely agree, and we do need to sit down and look at that issue. But backpackers in the current format and the way in which the visa is structured are not the solution. We need to look at that visa and work out how best to help our farms and our ag industry when it comes to work shortages.

Predominantly these 200,000 backpackers that we have working in this country work in the cities or big regional centres. That is the reality. A small proportion of them do work on farms, but the majority of them work in cities—and why? Farm work is hard. It is hard work, it is low paid, it is hard to get to and it is hard to find living arrangements. So it is wrong for us to stand here and think that whatever happens with the backpacker tax will be the solution for the bush and for our farmers in terms of workforce shortages.

We need to do more in this space to ensure that people coming into our country are not taking the jobs of young Australians. We need to do more in this country to ensure that we genuinely know the impact of temporary work visas. There are 1.2 million people here in this
country as ISB: backpackers, 457 visas, 462 visas and international students working here in this country. We need to review and properly understand what impact that is having on the labour market.

Whilst the government talked a big game about jobs, they have delivered nothing in the way of genuine jobs—full-time secure employment—to Australians. They are tricky with their figures and will talk about stats and statistics that suit them. They are not genuine about creating job opportunities. They are not genuine about funding our regions properly. (Time expired)

Ms RISHWORTH (Kingston) (18:27): I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak on the Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2016-2017. Of course, this bill encapsulates what unfortunately represents another unfair budget by this coalition government. While they have tried to hide from the Australian people with the fact that indeed this does not have the nasty elements of what we experienced in 2014, many of the elements are still there. There is still a $30 billion cut from our schools. There are still cuts from our universities. There is still a plan to have a pension age of 70, the highest in the world. It is a budget that calls parents rorters and double dippers and one that makes young job seekers wait for four weeks. It also is cutting the pension to 190,000 pensioners through the plan to limit overseas travel to Australian pensioners. Far from being a budget that supports our most vulnerable in our community—a budget that looks to lift people up—it is a budget that is inherently unfair.

One of the things that we keep getting lectured about by the government is that we need to live within our means. Of course, what they forget to mention is that they are giving a $50 billion tax cut to some of the largest companies in this country. On one hand they are cutting investment in our future, cutting investment to education and to our healthcare system; at the same time they are giving a $50 billion tax cut to what potentially are very large companies. One really can only describe this as trickle-down economics: hoping that this big tax cut to very large businesses will lead to benefiting those most vulnerable in our community. I think that the government probably should have learnt from the Reagan era. Trickle-down economics does not work. It has been shown time and time again that we need to actually invest in our people if we want to get good economic and social outcomes.

Obviously Labor will not block supply, but there are many unfair measures in the budget that was put before us on the eve on an election. We had to bring the budget forward and then rush to an election, because the government was so worried that any scrutiny of the budget would see them do not so well in the polls. On this side of the House we will continue to hold the government to account. We will oppose unfair measures that do not deliver to those who are most vulnerable. There are a number of different challenges before us. There are a number of issues that I want to highlight, but I do want to voice in particular my concern about the cuts to universities that are still in the budget. We still have not heard from the education minister about any plan going forward, except about the 20 per cent cuts to our universities, which are still in the budget. We continue to see other unfair cuts, which Labor will stand against. The most vulnerable know that they have a strong advocate in the Labor Party standing up for them. We are standing up for education, standing up for health and standing up for those that rely on income support when they are most vulnerable.

Tough decisions do have to be made when it comes the budget repair, and in the election Labor was up-front and honest about our priorities. We made it very clear that we chose to
protect middle and working families. We will not chip away at Medicare until we destroy it in order to provide a tax cut to big business. That is a difficult decision to make. That decision is not saying, 'We'll be everything to everyone.' We clearly illustrated during the election period how we would go about repairing the budget in a way that was fair. I think this is a really important point to make. We will continue to do that as we go forward and we hope that we will, through our stand, be able to protect Australians from some of the worst elements of the budget.

I would implore the government to learn the lessons of the past. Slashing and burning basic healthcare services and other essential government services is not the answer if you want to encourage greater prosperity. If you want jobs and growth, then burning, cutting and slashing is not the way to go. I would urge the government, as they move forward, to rethink some of their proposals—either that or get George Christensen, the member for Dawson, onto the job! He is pretty good at getting the government to change its position on a whole range of things, so we might enlist him! In fact, on many occasions it might be time for the member for Dawson to cross the floor, to come over and join us, because his opposition to what the government is doing is almost as great as the Labor Party's opposition—not always on the same things; nevertheless, he is a fierce opponent of this government. We hope that the government will listen not only to George Christensen but also to the opposition. We think we make a lot more sense.

In addition to that, as I said, Labor will make responsible budget savings. In the election period we outlined a range of savings measures, and we also provided support for reasonable savings in the government's Budget Savings (Omnibus) Bill 2016. When the bill was before the House, I did not get the opportunity to talk about one of the bipartisan elements of the bill, which was support for the single appeal pathway in the portfolio area of Veterans' Affairs. The Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act is amended to create a single appeal pathway of review. This legislation was initially introduced to parliament as part of the Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (2015 Budget Measures) Bill.

The process as it stood was quite complex. Under chapter 8 of the MRCA, an applicant wishing to make an appeal could either seek an internal reconsideration by the commission or apply to have their decision reviewed by the Veterans' Review Board. If they were unhappy with this, they could appeal to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal for final review. The process was further complicated by the time in which the applicant lodged their application. In addition, the appeal path chosen could also affect the level of legal aid funding an applicant could access. This was a complicated process, and the inability among stakeholders to reach consensus on how to move forward during the development of the MRCA had caused a lot of angst for many veterans attempting to work their way through this process.

This being so, Labor did support the concept of a single appeal pathway. However, at the time this legislation was introduced, we raised significant concerns with elements of the legislation outlined in 2015. Concerns included the removal of the internal reconsideration process, and the lack of opportunity of awarding costs to the veteran. We urged the government to undertake significant consultation with stakeholders, and as a consequence the legislation was referred to the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee for inquiry and report. Recurring issues raised with the committee included
confusion around the internal reconsideration process, access to legal representation, access to costs for matters and access to legal aid.

Following the report of the committee, Labor worked with the government to adopt a range of amendments recommended by the Senate committee, which vastly improved the outcomes for veterans. Under the amendments, when an applicant is dissatisfied with the commission's determination, they can appeal to the Veterans' Review Board. This triggers an automatic internal review of the decision by the commission. If the applicant is unhappy with the internal review outcome, they then can proceed to the board for determination. Finally if the applicant is unsatisfied with the board's decision, they are then able to appeal to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, with legal representation and access to legal aid, as well as, importantly, have costs awarded under certain circumstances. The amendments provide an incentive for the right decision to be made at the earliest possible opportunity and provide clarity to applicants on the appeal process.

Due to these amendments, Labor was able to support the legislation. As a result of Labor working with stakeholder organisations and the government we have been able to strengthen this legislation to make a clear and consistent appeal path where decisions are made as soon as practicable, and that enables veterans to access appropriate support. In addition, we listened to the ex-service organisations about the role of lawyers at the Veterans' Review Board stage. Despite pressure from a number of legal representatives, we supported the government's position not to admit lawyers at the Veterans' Review Board stage, which ex-service organisations felt was unnecessarily adversarial and did not respect the professional role played by advocates at this stage of the appeals process.

This amended legislation is important. I must pay respect to the member for Batman, who did a significant amount of work on this legislation. He worked with the minister to get a good outcome for veterans. The passing of this legislation demonstrates that Labor aims to work constructively with the government to strengthen legislation and work on budget repair that is fair. However, what we will not do is just roll over when there are issues that we think are inherently unfair. At the election we have put close to $8 billion worth of savings forward to the Australian people. I am pleased to see that the government may have listened and be taking some of our suggestions on board, including the proposed $8,000 a year cap on VET FEE-HELP loans. The government has sat on its hands over the last number of years letting these warts continue in the VET FEE-HELP area. Of course, we hope from all reports that they will propose and actually support proper administration of this important area and at the same time not make TAFE and vocational education unattainable for so many.

We want to see the government start acting in the area of fairness. We have seen a government that seems absolutely obsessed about giving tax cuts to very large businesses. Part of that is the fact that deep in their DNA the Liberal and National parties are the friends of big business. That is their number one constituent. That is why we have seen the Prime Minister and his ministers work so hard to prevent what I believe is supported by the Australian people—that is, a proper investigation, a royal commission, into the banking and financial services sector. It is so important that we actually allow victims, the many victims who have lost their homes, businesses and retirement savings, an opportunity to have their say. But, more than that, we need to identify the systemic issues that have led to these circumstances and ensure that it does not happen in the future.
So, while the government seems to want to have meetings and try to work with the banks and the financial services sector to work out how not to have a royal commission into these very important issues, Labor will continue to pursue this issue. This is something I have spoken to many constituents in my electorate about and they fundamentally believe that unethical practices and potentially illegal practices need to be properly investigated and need to be safeguarded against for the future. I call on the government to stop being the party for big business and actually be a party for middle Australia, for low and middle Australia. They need you to be responsible and effective.

**Dr LEIGH** (Fenner) (18:42): I was 11 years old when I bought my first computer. It was back in 1984 and the machine called an Aquarius. It had rubber keys, a cassette drive, a black and white television was its monitor and it held a little less than four kilobytes in memory. Back then, the machine was, well, not state of the art, but pretty close. We have come a fair way from that to the advent of the iPad Air.

We didn't get there by settling for second best. We did not get there by saying, 'Well, the technology of today will do us for the course of the next generation.' That is the lesson that this government has failed to learn with its National Broadband Network. It is a government that thinks that investing in the future involves buying millions of metres of copper. Since the change of government, we have seen Australia fall from 30th to 60th in global internet rankings.

The National Broadband Network is 21st century infrastructure. For my electorate of Fenner the lack of access to high-speed broadband is one of the chief issues that is raised with me at street stalls, when I am out doorknocking and when I am speaking with constituents on the phone or in my office. My constituents recognise that we need a technology that is continuously upgradable. Back when I had my Aquarius, the Sydney Morning Herald's computer correspondent predicted that no computer program would need more than 16 kilobytes of memory. Since I stood up to speak tonight I have probably received at least a couple of emails of a size greater than 16 kilobytes. The fact is that the same thing will occur with the National Broadband Network, and the suggestion thatCanberrans will only ever need 25 megabits of data per second misses the fact that the urban standard in South Korea is already 100 megabits per second and that country is now rolling out 1,000 megabits per second.

Australians do not deserve second-rate infrastructure. They need a national broadband network that ensures that schoolkids can engage in high-definition videoconferences. At the Gungahlin Public Library, where the internet hub is located, I have seen students from nearby Harrison School engaged in a high-definition videoconference with their counterpart school in Japan. In that environment there is the opportunity for schoolchildren to interact with one another almost as though they are in the same room. That is what superfast broadband can do—but only if we get fibre all the way to the premises.

In the last election the quality of national broadband was a critical issue in the ACT and I believe one of the reasons ACT Labor saw a swing towards us, not just on the north side, in Fenner, but also on the south side, in Canberra. It was a recognition of the importance of the National Broadband Network and a recognition that when it comes to infrastructure investment it is this side of the House that recognises the importance of investment. Canberrans can see already the benefits of Labor's far-sighted investment through the Majura

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**CHAMBER**
Parkway, an infrastructure project jointly funded by an ACT Labor government and a federal Labor government under Julia Gillard, a piece of infrastructure that never would have received funding under a coalition government but that was funded by a federal Labor government because we recognised that what matters is the benefit-cost ratio—the economic benefit-cost ratio, not the political benefit-cost ratio.

In the electorate of Fenner I was very pleased to be supported for the last election by an extraordinary team of campaign volunteers: Suzanne Tatum, Teresa Foster, Maxine Deakens, David Simpson, corflute construction experts extraordinaire Rob and Robin Eakin, Glen Rose, David Adams, Guy de Cure, Martin Geng, David van der Wolf, Greg Gurr, Denis O’Brien, Keith Sayers, Ken Maher, Paul Maggs, Darryl Erbacher, Packi Rayappu, Teck Lee, Trev Smith, Anna Damiano, John Zerilli, Karen Dahl, Kris Sloane, Joe Walker, Rhianne Grieve, Gerry Lloyd and Maddy Wood. Gerry Lloyd is an extraordinary campaign volunteer, somebody who was first brought into active involvement in Labor politics when Gough Whitlam asked him to play a senior role in the branch—and Gerry has not looked back since. We all learn from his example of selfless dedication to the Labor movement.

On election day we were very fortunate to have as branch captains James Griffith, Naomi Nicholson, Damien McGrath, Nawaf Ibrahim, Lulu Respall-Turner, Helen Roberts, Rob and Margaret Eakin, Charlie Lewis, Gordon Ramsay—who is now standing as an ACT Labor candidate on the weekend—Russell Rollason, Leigh Ramsay, Wayne and Rhonda Berry, Nick Green, Michael Quirk, Vanessa Jacobsen, Chris Sant, Chris McGrane, Lisa Zwankhuizen, Mark Smith, Denis O’Brien, Meredith Hinchcliffe, Christine Wise, Chris Golding, Annie Haggar, Garrett Purtill, Aimee Kable and Richard Niven, who is also standing as a candidate in this weekend’s election.


With a campaign team like that, one can hardly but wonder that Labor did so well in Fenner at the last election. But that focus on an investment approach to the ACT also characterises the way in which ACT Labor has approached its campaign. I mentioned in my remarks a number of those candidates on the north side who are now standing this weekend as candidates: Gordon Ramsay, Richard Niven, Chris Bourke, Tara Cheyne, Kim Fischer, Deepak-Raj Gupta, Meegan Fitzharris, Michael Petterson and Yvette Berry. They are part of...
25 extraordinary candidates whom Andrew Barr will be leading to this weekend's election—an election which will be a referendum for the ACT on the investment approach versus the cuts approach. Here in the ACT we have an ACT government that recognises that Canberra is at its strongest when we continue to invest in the future. The benefits of the National Broadband Network that I spoke about earlier are not simply benefits in terms of how Canberrans use their computers for entertainment or indeed to access government services; they are also benefits that flow through on the business side. A recently released report by Deloitte Access Economics, prepared for Google, found that those nine per cent of small businesses that have an advanced level of connection are 1½ times as likely to be growing revenue, eight times as likely to be creating jobs, 14 times as likely to be innovating and seven times as likely to be exporting.

Here in the ACT, the benefits of the investment approach flow through to having a strong private sector. The federal coalition government has cut deep into the Public Service. They have shed more than the 12,000 jobs they said during the 2013 election would go—it is now getting up towards 20,000 public service jobs. It has been the ACT Labor government that has stepped in to ensure that the ACT economy does not tank.

In the ACT we have seen a government which recognises that light rail is essential for the ACT. Frankly, it has been surprising that Prime Minister Turnbull, who is so pleased to take selfies of himself with light rail in Queensland, is curiously reluctant to jump on the train when it comes to light rail here in the ACT. It is the same principle: a public transport system which is in the long-term interests of Canberrans.

We have also seen Andrew Barr’s government delivering international flights for Canberra Airport, with regular international flights now scheduled to both Singapore and Wellington. Those who do frequent business in the ACT—and many in the parliament are among those—will appreciate now having the New Zealand and Australian capitals connected by a direct flight and being able to use Singapore as a gateway destination or, indeed, as a final destination in itself. That again epitomises the investment approach that we have seen from the ACT Labor government.

That investment approach involves investing in the health of Canberrans, too. The ACT Labor government has promised that, if ACT Labor wins the election, there will be new nurse-led walk-in centres in Weston Creek and Gungahlin. These centres have proven enormously popular among Canberrans. The Belconnen centre had more than 16,000 attendances in the last financial year. It provides free, one-off advice and treatment for people with minor illnesses and injuries, ensuring not only that people get the health support they need but also that they do not clog up the emergency system. While the ACT Liberals have been promising to rip money out of the ACT health system, it has been the ACT Labor government under Andrew Barr that has been investing.

There have also been important investments in ensuring that the social fabric of the ACT remains strong. There is a commitment from ACT Labor to maintain the Safe Schools Program, with the ACT being a leader in Australia in making sure that we fight the scourge of homophobia and bigotry in our schools. The ACT has always been a social leader for Australia, with a 100 per cent renewables target that enjoys bipartisan support. This is something which I know Canberrans cherish. It is, therefore, surprising that it is the Canberra Liberals that are so socially regressive. Canberra is the most conservative state or territory
branch of the Liberal Party in Australia. It is a branch which got rid of a relatively progressive Liberal senator, in Gary Humphries, and replaced him with one of the most conservative Liberal senators, in Zed Seselja.

In the ACT we have seen the savage impact that cuts by the Abbott and Turnbull governments have inflicted on Canberrans. We know community legal centres have an important role to play in assisting Canberrans who get into trouble, particularly as victims of financial scams or of family violence. But Malcolm Turnbull and George Brandis have cut $52 million from community legal centres, legal aid commissions and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal services. That is why the Labor Party made a commitment at the last election that, had a Labor government been elected, we would have ensured that the Women's Legal Centre, Canberra Community Law and Street Law had the funds they needed to keep their doors open. We know that the impact of not having adequate legal presentation can be significant. One case study, from a woman named as Amanda, gave the instance of a young Aboriginal woman who had commenced receipt of youth allowance payments when she was 15 and had spent time in and out of refuges. It was only through help from an ACT community legal centre that she was able to have an unfair debt waived.

It is vital that we continue the investment approach here in the ACT. I hope that Canberrans will see the wisdom of that approach by supporting Andrew Barr's government to be re-elected on the weekend.

Mr ZAPPIA (Makin) (18:57): I welcome the opportunity to speak on Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2016-2017. I understand that this bill, which is part of a package, is required to ensure that the ordinary functions of government continue for the remainder of the 2016-17 financial year. I understand this bill will appropriate some $58 billion for the 2016-17 financial year, which is in addition to some $41 billion that was appropriated in the supply acts earlier this year. Labor have always made it clear that we will not block supply bills.

The reality is that the government has mismanaged the economy. The facts speak for themselves. We have a deficit that the government projected to be $10.6 billion this year but that is going to hit $37 billion or perhaps $38 billion. Net debt has increased by $100 billion since 2013 and is expected to reach $326 billion this year. Foreign debt has gone up from $976 billion last year to $1,045 billion as at June this year. Spending is at a nearly all-time high at 25.8 per cent of GDP—just slightly under the figure of 26 per cent at the height of the GFC, when spending was higher in order to keep Australia's economy strong. We know that, as a result of those figures, Australia's AAA credit rating is at risk of being downgraded. If that happens, when the Australian government borrows money it will borrow it at a higher interest rate and that, in turn, will simply add to the mounting debt of this country. The reality is that debt is up and the deficit is up, but wages and the living standards of Australians are down.

We have a government that is trying to spin its way out of all of this and has been doing so for over three years now. One day it says that we have a spending problem in this country; the next day it says that we have an income problem. The reality is that it lies somewhere in between, and perhaps we have a problem with both. But it is clear that the government does not know what it is doing if it is jumping from one argument to another in order to try to defend its position when it comes to managing the economy and, in turn, the budget.
We saw in 2014 an austerity budget which the Australian people clearly rejected. In fact, it was as a result of the Australian people clearly rejecting the austerity budget of the Abbott government at the time that the Prime Minister found himself in great difficulty. His personal following and support throughout the community dropped markedly. We saw the Treasurer effectively lose his job because of mismanagement of the Australian economy. Some could say that he actually secured himself a better job, depending on what you prefer to do in life, but clearly at the time the Treasurer was under pressure and had lost control of the Australian economy.

Yet whilst we have all of these things happening and the government telling everybody that it has a plan for the future—jobs and growth—and that it will control and manage the Australian economy wisely, prudently and so on, it is prepared to give $50 billion back to the big corporates of this country. At a time when it is trying to squeeze the last dollar out of low-income households, this is a government that is saying, 'You, the low-income earners of Australia, need to just tighten your belts a little further. But, for the corporate into town, we are happy to give them an additional $50 billion or close to it.' Most of the $50 billion of tax cuts that the government was proposing was going to go to the big corporates, including the four big banks, which again this year together collectively made billions of dollars in profits. That is not to mention that those same corporates are paying their CEOs tens of millions of dollars for their work whilst Australians on perhaps $200 or $300 a week are being told that they have to squeeze their belts.

The government's mismanagement goes further. Just like the previous Treasurer that I referred to lost his job over the economy of this country, the current Treasurer is just as incompetent. We have seen in the last 12 to 18 months a series of backflips, the most recent being the backflips in respect of the superannuation policy of this government, going from one side to another. He was ultimately rolled by his own backbenchers and had to cave into their demands. We saw another backflip only last week, or perhaps a week or so ago, in respect to the backpacker's tax. Again, it is not the outcome that everybody wanted, but the government had to compromise in order to get something through. But, clearly, it was a compromise that the Treasurer never set out to achieve when he proposed the backpacker's tax.

Then we have the debacle about negative gearing, which this side of politics put forward. We know full well that it was a policy that the Treasurer and perhaps the Prime Minister personally supported. I understand that they were rolled within their own party room over it. We also have the debacle—that is the best way I could describe it—in respect to the public GST debate about a year or so ago. Again, that has got nowhere as well. We even had the Prime Minister talking about empowering the states to levy their own income tax. Nothing has come of that also. Clearly, this is a government that does not know which way to jump whenever there is a problem.

What this government does know is that it is only policies are policies that bring more austerity measures to people on low incomes in this country. It is a government that continuously looks at trying to cut social spending. Prudent management of the economy and preventing abuse and rorts is one thing; austerity policies that simply punish already struggling families is another. Low-income households spend all of their income on consumables and within their local economy. They keep their local economies going. When
their income is cut, so is their spending. There is then a flow-on effect right through their local communities and, in turn, it is felt by the local communities and the small business operators within them in particular. As one business person in my community once told me, and he has been in business pretty much all of his life: whenever Labor is in government, his business does better.

What equally concerns me and should be of concern to all Australians is the way that this government, whilst it is focused on low-income Australians, has taken its eye off the ball when it comes to many of the government programs. I refer to in particular the VET courses, the VET course operators and the childcare centre operators who have rorted this government out of billions of dollars. Indeed, in respect to some of the rorting, I cannot understand how any government could not have seen what was going on. I cannot understand how the alarm bells did not ring for any minister when some of the payments were being made. It is beyond comprehension.

Whilst the government now talks about fixing the problem, changing their VET scheme and following up on those people who rorted the scheme, the reality is that it is too late. Much of the money that was rorted, from my understanding, will never be recovered. Indeed, I understand that some of it has already left Australia and been sent offshore. When you look at the figures again with respect to the VET FEE-HELP costings, the figures speak for themselves. According to one report, the Department of Finance paid out $325 million in 2012. In 2014, the figure was $1.8 billion. In 2015, the figure had blown out to $2.9 billion. Surely, that kind of trend should have rung alarm bells much, much earlier.

There were members in this place—including the member for Bendigo, who is at the table, and myself—who spoke months and months ago about the rorting that was taking place. It took so long for the government to actually do something about it. This is a government that was prepared to turn a blind eye to that rorting but say to low-income Australians, 'You have to forgo another $5 out of the measly amount of money we are already giving to you.'

Again, we saw this with respect to the omnibus bill. It was only after Labor's responsible amendments to the bill that the government was able to get those measures through the parliament. I am pleased to see that at least the government was not able to totally close down the Australian Renewable Energy Agency and that $800 million has been preserved for that agency to do the good work that it has been doing and that it will continue to do. I am also pleased to see that the energy supplement for low-income earners was also preserved as a result of Labor's stance on it. In particular, I see that the Child Dental Benefits Schedule has been put to one side. At least it was taken out of the omnibus bill. It has not been saved at this point in time, but Labor will do all it can to ensure it will be saved, because this is another example of a government trying to disguise a new scheme as better than the scheme currently in place. The reality is the disguise is so that the government can cover for the cuts it wants to make to the Child Dental Benefits Schedule.

My understanding is that some one million eligible Australian children accessed that scheme over recent years. That is about 32 per cent of those people that could have accessed it. The government says that those figures are too low and the scheme was not working. What the government does not say is that it did nothing to try and publicise the scheme at all. But it is the alternative that the government has in mind that is of more concern to me. The government wants to reduce the scheme so that public dental services will only be available
through public dental service providers—in other words, through government funded dental service providers. There are a couple of problems with that. The first is that public dental services are not located evenly around Australia. The second problem is that there is already a waiting list ranging, depending on which state you live in, from several months to several years before you can get in to a public dental service. So people wanting to access this service will be waiting a long time before they can, and if you add more people to it then of course that is going to make the waiting lists even longer.

For regional and remote Australians this is another cruel blow. We already know that regional and remote Australians cost the government some 60 per cent less for health services than their counterparts in the city. For them, if they have to access a public dental service, it could mean driving two, three or four hours to get to it. If the service is further away from them—and just bear in mind that some half a million Australians live in remote Australia—then clearly they are less likely to ever access the service at all. So it is simply going to disadvantage them even more. Remote Australians are already grossly disadvantaged with respect to the health services they can access. Not surprisingly, the statistics will show that their health is much, much worse compared to Australians in major cities—across every statistical area you can go to, the health of people living in remote and regional Australia is worse. Here is an example of a government trying to penny pinch its way out so that it can save a few more dollars at the expense of the people who are already doing it the hardest.

The last point I want to make is this: we recently had both the census and the federal election. In my view, both were the worst managed of their kind that I can recall. With respect to the federal election, for almost eight weeks my office became a de facto Australian Electoral Commission office, fielding questions and queries that people in my community could not get answers to anywhere else and so ultimately came to my office for answers on. That is what my staff did almost full-time for the eight weeks after the election was called. On election day, there were people waiting at many booths in my electorate for not one hour but for two hours or even longer. That is simply unacceptable. With respect to the census, the whole thing was a debacle and I think it was a public embarrassment for the government.

The point I make about all that is this: I suspect the reason why both the federal election and the census were so badly managed was cost cutting. I suspect both departments were under-resourced. I suspect both departments had their funding cut and I suspect both departments had fewer staff to deal with both matters. I am not blaming the staff. I am suggesting that the government again ought to think carefully about where it makes its cost cutting, because the Australian voters are no fools and ultimately the government will wear the wroth of their anger when they have to go and vote or fill out census forms.

Ms Ryan (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (19:12): I rise to join the debate on the Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2016-2017 and cognate bills. It has been some time since I stood in this chamber to join a legislative debate, some time indeed.

I have been thinking a bit about time today and asking myself the question: how long is it since we heard our now Prime Minister, in a press conference on the lawn just out here, say that he needed to challenge the member for Warringah because this country needed economic leadership? How long ago was that? How long ago was it since we had the 2016-17 budget? It seems like an absolute age since the budget. Why would it be such a long time for us in between a budget, a budget reply and me being in my place, making my contribution? I
remember. It is because we had an eight-week election campaign—a double dissolution election that those in government determined, with a bit of help from their mates in the Greens, that we needed to have. They determined that we had to have this double dissolution election; that we had to have an eight-week campaign—the longest campaign in most people's memory—and a winter campaign; and that after the election we needed to be away from this chamber, the people's House, for another three months before we returned to this House to get on with the business that the Australian people pay us to do. They send us here to represent them.

Months later I am standing here making a contribution on the appropriation bills. I strongly suggest that the government be condemned for the time wasting that has occurred this year. Our Prime Minister should ask every day when he looks in the mirror: 'Where is the man who was going to deliver economic leadership? Where has he gone?' That is what the public are asking. The public are asking, 'Where is that man?' We know from the 2016-17 budget, we know from the change in leadership for those opposite and we know from the eight-week election campaign that nothing has changed. Nothing has changed with the change in the leader. Nothing has changed with the change of members in the seats previously held by that side. A lot has changed on this side because we have a lot more members, and I look at my colleagues around this room. The other thing the Prime Minister said was that he has got a working majority. Of course, in the first week back at work he found out what a working majority should look like—but it did not look like that late on Thursday afternoon.

We also know that nothing has changed. We have got a work-shy government. We have got a government that does not want to show up and sit on the benches opposite and be held accountable to the public of Australia. They want to run the country from inside a shock jock's studio or inside Sky News. They do not want to be in this space and run this government. They do not want to answer questions at question time. It is not a surprise because, let us face it, straight after the election we saw the Prime Minister's battle plan and 23 of the 25 points in that battle plan were Abbott policy. Nothing has changed.

In the PM's battle plan there was no mention of climate change policy—no mention at all. We heard about it last week though when they hijacked and politicised a natural disaster for political ends. The coalition are usually hot on the tail of anyone who tries to politicise a national disaster and suggest that climate change is real. Suddenly they found a disaster that they could leap off the back of, but they did not mention doing anything about climate change. They used it as a wedge to suggest that renewable energy is a threat to energy security.

In that 25-point plan there was no mention of the NBN—surprise, surprise! Call the police. Every time we on this side mention the NBN we are going to call for the police, because the things that have been happening with the NBN are indefensible. We have had another backflip on the NBN of late. In our communities and in the electorate of Lalor the public know. The people in my community know that what they are getting with this government's second-rate NBN is entrenched digital divide. I have emails from people in the country who cannot believe that so close to the city of Melbourne, so close to the CBD, we have people on ADSL1 and ADSL2 and have people who can access neither ADSL1 nor ADSL2 and who cannot get the NBN. There was no mention of that because that is not a good news story.
There was no mention of protecting Medicare in this 25-point plan. Today in this House those opposite came in and voted not to defend Medicare. There is no new vision from this Prime Minister because he is being held captive by his coalition friends. He is being held captive and he cannot do anything without first checking with the member for Dawson. The member for Dawson is actually running the country. That is what we on this side are coming to understand every day.

The worst part of this is that we know that, since this Prime Minister came to office after the election, he has been intent on continuing the unfairness of the last government. He is still planning to give tax cuts to big business rather than assist the most vulnerable. You have got the education minister, Minister Birmingham, with his fishing rod throwing out the bait in the education debate and suggesting that there are very wealthy schools that are overfunded. Well, hello, John Howard! Very wealthy schools have been overfunded by those opposite for a long time. They are seeking to divide the community around school education because they refuse to back in their promise and fund the Gonski model, as they promised at the 2013 election. They refuse to change their position on that and they seek to divide us wherever we turn.

We have a government that is refusing to hold a royal commission into banking. Why would you refuse to do this? Why would you choose to dig in on this point? Why would you choose to live with the pain of the embarrassment of having the committee meet with the banks? Now we are going to go to some kind of tribunal with the banks when what we need here is a royal commission. It is high time in this place that those opposite started to put those who need help before the interests of big business and to hold big business accountable for their actions. We all know that the banks have a case to answer. The public know that the banks have a case to answer. The government need to get behind it and do the job that they have been elected to do.

It is time for them to invest in education and to give up on their $100,000 degrees. It is time for them to dig in and do the work and give the community the consistency and the certainty that they need. It is time that they got busy in employment and creating jobs. It is time they got busy in backing in health. It is time they got busy sitting with state ministers to talk about funding for our hospitals. We on this side remember the cuts that were delivered in the 2014 budget to hospitals in this country. Our communities are living with those cuts every day. It is time they started supporting the Australian people and started supporting our neighbours in our communities who are really doing it tough.

In my contribution I want to go to housing and homelessness because I do not feel that it gets raised enough. This government has no policy for homelessness. They have nothing on the table around housing affordability. They have nothing for that growing number of people in our communities—families in my electorate; mum's with kids—who find themselves, through either mortgage or rental stress, sleeping in cars.

It is over three years now since I was elected as the member for Lalor. One of the first things I did was hold a homelessness forum with the community organisations that support the homeless. We knew what was coming even before the 2014 budget hit the ground, because the messages were coming out that this government did not want to fund advocacy in the community sector. What a terrible thing if we know what is going on in our communities! What a terrible thing if the people who work with the most vulnerable and the most at risk...
have a voice and can contribute to the national debate by being funded to provide the research and the papers that we need to stand in this place and advocate for the people that we represent!

Three years ago this was becoming a crisis in my electorate. The city of Wyndham has the highest number of evictions in the state of Victoria. They were in crisis, but during the last three years under this government it was fast becoming something worse than that. On 11 August, the ABC *Lateline* program vividly captured the tyranny of local homelessness in my electorate. It was a reminder that any one of us can fall on hard times and find ourselves sleeping rough. The solemn reality is that many are forced into homelessness because of circumstances completely out of their control.

This program highlighted a young homeless man in Wyndham in the electorate of Lalor. He had lost his job when his employer shut up shop. He lost his home and he is now living in his car. He is a tradie, so the last thing he is going to give up is his car because without that car he is not employable. He has made a really smart decision to keep his wheels so that he has got the capacity to rejoin the workforce. This young man talked about his battles trying to stay connected in the community and looking for work and just trying to survive at the same time. This is one story; there are many in the electorate of Lalor. Local council and support services in the area are all reporting increasing numbers. None of the people that I have spoken to—and I have spoken to several who are homeless in our community—want to keep suffering the perpetual indignities that come with this. They simply want another chance to be part of their community.

Unfortunately, the cuts that have come into play across the last three years from that dreadful 2014 budget are pushing those services that support these people further and further behind the eight ball. The guard rail that used to stop people from going over this cliff edge is being undermined by the cuts from this government—and they are across the board. They are about domestic violence. They are about community legal centres. They are about community organisations. They are about relief funding. In Wyndham we are down to families and individuals getting one food voucher a year. It is outrageous. Cutting funding to these initiatives has meant heartbreaking stories. These are my neighbours. These are people who are living in our community. This government has no homelessness strategy, and they went to an election with no housing affordability strategy. In fact, they went to an election telling parents, 'Shell out. You need to shell out to buy the kids a house. That's how you can do it.' I am not sure what planet they live on. 'Get yourself some rich parents and life will be good.'

Where is there a reference in this bill to homelessness or to housing affordability? Where is it in the appropriations bill? Where is it in the budget? Nothing has changed. This government is here, but they are giving us no certainty. They are giving no certainty to the most disadvantaged people in our community and no certainty to the systems that our communities rely on. They are giving no certainty around school education. If you want to apply a business model to all of our services, what they need is certainty. We need certainty in hospitals. We need certainty in aged care. We need certainty for our community organisations and some certainty for our community legal centres. We need certainty in the renewable energy sector. Pensioners need certainty. Superannuants need certainty—in the last 24 seconds, let's not go to the roller-coaster that superannuants have been on. Workers need certainty. What we are getting from this government is not certainty. There has been no action on the casuralisation of
the workforce. We have a system that is undermining conditions in workplaces. This government failed to deliver in last three years. This new government will do the same.

Mr ROB MITCHELL (McEwen) (19:28): I rise to briefly speak on the Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2016-2017, the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2016-2017 and the Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Bill (No. 1) 2016-2017. I echo the sentiments of my colleagues on this side of the House that say this government, both before the election and since the election, has been nothing but an absolute failure at looking after people who need support that government should provide. The trickle-down economic theory that the government runs does not work. It has never worked anywhere, and it is not going to work in this day and age.

While the government talks about trickle-down economics, we see their popularity on a great, big, fast slide. That is because they have focused on one thing. The government has been looking after big businesses at the expense of families and people who can least afford it. It is a government that is too scared to come out and say, 'Look, we've made a blue here and there, and we will look to address it.' To illustrate the point, I use the GP Super Clinics program that was started under the Gillard and Rudd governments. We have had one open in Wallan since 2013. The health ministers in these conservative governments refused to come out and officially open it because that would then stuff up their rhetoric about the GP Super Clinics program being a failure. It is absolutely embarrassing that the government is too scared to come out and open something which not only is working for the community but is at the point of us saying, 'Hey, we have to look at how we extend this. How do we make it bigger, because of the amount of people going there and being part of the services?'

The minister laughs. He sits there at the table and laughs. This is a program that has delivered something strong in a regional area, and your lot are too gutless to come out and open it because it means you would have to admit you were wrong. It is almost like Fonzie in Happy Days—they just cannot say the word 'wrong'. They stumble and say 'wr-wr-wr', but nothing comes out. The failure of this government is just about endless. We have seen the now Prime Minister—

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

That the House do now adjourn.

McEwen Electorate: Sunbury Neighbourhood Kitchen

Mr ROB MITCHELL (McEwen) (19:30): Back again, but this time I am going to talk on something positive, because it is not about the government.

One of the great pleasures of representing the electorate of McEwen is the countless examples of communities stepping up in times of need to look after their own. Whether I am in Seymour, Pyalong, Lancefield or Doreen, I see examples of the life-changing impact of that spirit of caring for our neighbours.

On Monday, 26 September, I had the great honour to participate in a fantastic example of this in Sunbury. The Sunbury Neighbourhood Kitchen exemplifies the fundamental truth that simple respect and kindness can sometimes be the difference for a person who is struggling. It can give them comfort, peace of mind and, most importantly, a sense of belonging.
The kitchen is run every Monday night out of the Sunbury Neighbourhood House. It is designed as a place where people can come together, meet each other, and socialise as a community over dinner. It is a place where no mobiles or other distractions are present, where guests and volunteers can all focus on person-to-person interaction—that sense that the biggest difference we can make in the lives of others is to be present and to listen.

Three years ago, Neil and Marianne Williams—just beautiful people—saw a need in their community and decided they were going to be part of the solution. They saw many struggling to make ends meet and recognised that one of the first things to go when we are struggling is our connection to community. We see people shut themselves off; sometimes they are embarrassed or ashamed that they are in need of that little bit of help and support.

This year the Sunbury Neighbourhood Kitchen celebrated three years of serving the greater Sunbury community. From those humble beginnings back in September 2013, when Neil and Marianne were joined by six volunteers and four guests, the kitchen now has 60 passionate volunteers and serves a hot meal and, just as importantly, a community to share it with, to over 170 guests every Monday evening.

These volunteers—community members like Julie and Ned Summers who joined the kitchen in the beginning, or Faye Marsden Ivor who joined not long after—are often modest about it, but the truth is that their kindness and their company can be a light in the life of people every Monday night.

So there can be no surprises why it was my pleasure to attend the 'Pay It Forward' event. The 'Pay It Forward' dinner is the kitchen's annual major fundraising event. It is a chance to invite members of the community and the public to come along, have a meal and experience the passionate work that the team of volunteers spend every Monday night doing—dedicating themselves to feeding those in our community who are finding it tough.

Each $40 ticket purchased to this dinner assists the kitchen to help 'Pay It Forward' and will cover at least 10 meals for a single guest within the Sunbury Neighbourhood Kitchen community. The team also held an auction with items so generously donated by residents and community groups. That is in keeping with the all-in flavour and approach of the group. We ate, drank, chatted and listened to some great tunes from local muso Pip Joyce. I have to give a special mention to the ladies who were cutting a rug up on the dance floor. I did tell them I pulled a hamstring, but the reality is that it was a heartstring and dancing is not my forte. I guess I jibbed it, in that sense. All in all, a fantastic night which provides a strong foundation for the year's fundraising.

Last year's 'Pay It Forward' raised enough funds to serve meals to 150 guests for 13 weeks—13 Mondays without the anxiety of wondering where tonight's meal is going to come from for those guests at the kitchen. What a powerful example of the difference one night of great food and good company can make for those who need the help most!

While we are waiting to hear the final tally from this year's event, we can safely say that, through the commitment of the team at Sunbury Neighbourhood Kitchen, there will be community members who feel that little bit more supported as a result; they feel a little bit closer and more connected; they have the opportunity to get out and share some times.

It is interesting to sit there, talk to people and hear their stories. By a stroke of whatever, you and I can be sitting here doing what we are doing, but people can end up on a different
Sometimes it is not hard to end up in a position where you are alone, where you do not have friends or family around and you need the support of your community. I guess we are all blessed to be able to stand here and talk about wonderful things.

The pride I have in the Sunbury Community Kitchen and its supporters can never be overstated. It is an absolutely fantastic thing. I ask them to keep up the great work. We appreciate it: not only are you filling people's stomachs, but you are filling people's hearts.

**Broken Hill: Heritage City Week**

Mr COULTON (Parkes—Deputy Speaker) (19:35): In my electorate of Parkes, I am very pleased to say that Broken Hill is having its Heritage City Week, which runs from 8 to 14 October.

Broken Hill is the very first and only entire city or town on the National Heritage List; it was placed on the list on 20 January last year. As part of Heritage City Week, my wife Robyn and I attended the annual Miners' Memorial Day yesterday. It was a very moving experience.

Yesterday was chosen because it is the closest Sunday to 8 October, the day on which Leopold Campbell and Thomas Jordan died on the Central Mine in 1902. Their bodies were never recovered. They were young men—from memory one was 18 and one might have been 20.

The Miners' Memorial Service was conducted on the Line of Lode within the vicinity of the Miners' Memorial. The Line of Lode is the ore body that bisects the town and is the physical reminder of the city's mining origins. Mining commenced in Broken Hill in 1883, but, sadly, there have been more than 800 deaths since mining commenced in that town.

Needless to say, the city of Broken Hill has outstanding significance to the nation for its long, enduring and continuing mining operations. Indeed, the famous Australian company, BHP, started in Broken Hill many years ago.

There are lots of activities taking place for Heritage Week in Broken Hill. As a relatively new member after the boundary change, taking over from the honourable Susan Ley, I have really enjoyed being part of this truly unique city in western New South Wales. As part of Heritage Week, the Quota Heritage Display and Photography and Art Competition, which is being managed by West Darling Arts Incorporated, is being housed in the iconic Trades Hall.

I was in the Trades Hall yesterday. If anyone has not been to Broken Hill, they should go and visit the Trades Hall. Broken Hill has a very unique history and culture, which maybe has not always embraced my side of politics, but I might say that it is a heritage that Broken Hill can be proud of. Certainly that heritage and pride was on display yesterday when we were there.

Another attraction is tours of the flora and fauna of the Barrier Ranges conducted by the Broken Hill City Council ranger. Also there are heritage-related workshops being held across the city, including local heritage skills training and stone and rising damp conservation workshops. And yesterday there was a wheelbarrow race around Sturt Park. The significance of that is that it is a re-enactment of the miners moving from Burra in South Australia to Broken Hill, carrying their possessions in wheelbarrows and pushing them to the city. I understand that that is about a 400-kilometre trip. In the early days this would have been a mighty undertaking.

I am very pleased that the Electoral Commission chose to change the boundaries and put Broken Hill in the electorate of Parkes. I am very much enjoying understanding the unique
culture and history of this wonderful town and I am very appreciative of the great warm welcome and respect that I have been shown in the short time that I have been there. I am very pleased to announce that I am advertising for positions to staff my office, which will be opened very shortly, so that I will have a permanent presence in the city of Broken Hill.

National Police Remembrance Day

Mr BYRNE (Holt) (19:40): Tonight I rise to add my remarks to those made by my friend and colleague, the member for Fowler, in his private member's bill contribution today, regarding National Police Remembrance Day. This incredibly important day of remembrance took place on 29 September this year. It acknowledges the significant role that police have and have had, the contribution they have made to our local communities and the very high degree of risk and personal sacrifice that comes with the exercise their duty. National Police Remembrance Day remembers the sacrifice of police officers throughout Australasia and the South-West Pacific region who were killed on duty or who have died whilst serving.

I would also like to take a moment to commend the work of Police Legacy in looking after the loved ones of police who have died as a result of their duties.

The member for Fowler's motion also, quite rightly, re-affirms our support—and, as I am sure I can say with some measure of confidence, this parliament's support—for the nation's 56,000 police officers. It honours their efforts to make a difference, to defend our way of life and to safeguard the peace and security of our communities. In our nation's capital this year we are also able to mark the 10th anniversary of the building and commemoration of the National Police Memorial in Canberra.

In particular, I would like to talk about how, in Melbourne, people gathered to pay tribute to Victoria's fallen police officers as part of the National Police Remembrance Day memorial service in Kings Domain, as well as throughout the state at various regional locations. This year, hundreds attended the march and service at the Victorian Police Memorial at Kings Domain to remember the 159 police officers killed in Victoria whilst serving the force over the past 163 years.

This year's service also paid tribute to Senior Constable Maurice Moore, who was killed 30 years ago whilst patrolling late at night in Maryborough. To mark the anniversary, the Blue Ribbon Foundation raised money for improved emergency facilities named in memory of fallen officers and dedicated the urgent care centre at Maryborough hospital in his memory. I wish to congratulate the Blue Ribbon Foundation on their efforts this year.

I also would like to acknowledge the work of our local police officers in Holt, in the City of Casey, Endeavour Hills, Narre Warren in particular, and the Cranbourne police stations. In Holt our police officers are going above and beyond to keep our community safe, as issues of domestic violence, ice, home invasions, terrorism and gang activity are stretching their resources.

There are two police officers who are worthy of mention who I cannot name and I suspect, will never be able to name in this place, who were almost killed at the Endeavours Hills police station on 23 September 2014 in a terrorist attack incident. Two years later, both officers are recovering from this incident, but on National Police Remembrance Day obviously my thoughts turned to the wellbeing of them and their families. I hold both officers in the highest regard for their service to the community, for their commitment to keeping their
community safe, and the sacrifice they make physically and psychologically on behalf of our community. Most importantly, I am deeply honoured to call them friends.

Let us never forget the ongoing service of our police officers around our country, especially this week, in particular because on 12 October 2016 it will be the 28th anniversary of the horrific Walsh St police shootings in Melbourne. As one of my friends, the Vicpol officer involved in the Endeavour Hills incident, remarked—I told him that I would read his words about this event into this place:

The Victorian Police and the general public recognise the loss of life of two young constables, Steven Tynan, 22, and Damian Eyre, 20, who were murdered at 4.50 am on 12 October 1988 in Walsh Street, South Yarra, responding to an incident which was nothing short of an ambush. The current security environment is just as volatile now as it was then, nearly 28 years ago.

Victoria and Australia have seen the loss of plenty of fine men and women in the protection of our country. They have made the ultimate sacrifice, and I pay my respects to them. I reiterate to those police officers serving in my community—in the City of Casey region—that I am deeply aware of the sacrifices that you are making, I am aware of your resources being stretched and I encourage you to continue talking to me about how we can solve those issues, but on this night I thank you for your service to the community and for keeping our community safe.

Banks Electorate: Community Organisations

Mr COLEMAN (Banks) (19:45): I am very pleased this evening to have the opportunity to highlight a number of community organisations in my electorate of Banks that are doing great work in our area. On 21 September I attended the P&C meeting at East Hills Girls Technology High School in my electorate. It was good to be invited along by Joanne Colliss, the P&C President, and Veronica Necyporuk, the school principal. East Hills Girls is one of the largest schools anywhere in my electorate; in fact, it just recently became part of my electorate after the recent redistribution. It was good to attend the P&C meeting. We talked about a number of the initiatives coming up at the school, various fundraising activities and a range of other things. The school is currently looking at putting in place a uniform shop, and it has recently conducted a fundraising event for various priorities around the school. It is a big school with a very big reputation around not only my electorate but Sydney more generally. Girls come from all over Sydney because of the wide range of subjects that are taught in the technical environment at East Hills Girls. I want to thank the school again.

I also recently attended the annual presentation of the Revesby Rovers Soccer Football Club at Amour Park in Revesby. Revesby Rovers has been a part of our community since 1950 when a gentleman by the name of Alan Addie established the club. It has gone from strength to strength in that time. It had more than 300 players in 2015, with teams ranging from grade 6 through to grade 12. A wide range of achievements were celebrated on the day. It was good to see Fouad Dabliz, the President, and Dimitri Hursalas, the Secretary. The committee more generally was there in force on the day. I do want to thank Revesby Rovers for inviting me along. It was nice to be able to present the Banks outstanding sporting achievement awards on the day. Congratulations, in particular, to all the kids who were successful.

I also recently attended the Macedonian Language School at Peakhurst West in my electorate. About three per cent of people in the Banks electorate are of Macedonian
background, and Macedonian is one of the most widely spoken languages in my electorate. At Peakhurst West Public School, Danny Kochankovski, the president of the after-school school, has a great committee supporting him, including local families of Macedonian background. Many of the parents of the kids who attend the language school are also on the board. It was nice to meet the kids from different age groups, from kinder right through to high school. Of course, Macedonia has an ancient culture and language. It was good to be able to meet with the school, and I certainly look forward to visiting again.

I also recently attended the Clavier Music and Art school in Hurstville. It was great to see on the day some really quite exceptional performances—piano, strings and a range of other performances. The school specialises in both music and painting. It has a long history dating back more than a decade. Grace Leong is the principal. On the day I met a very impressive group of kids and presented a range of awards.

As a society we are very good at acknowledging sporting achievements. That is good and appropriate; we should celebrate our sporting achievements. It is good that we do that, but we should also celebrate achievements in the arts because one of the great marks of a civilised society is its appreciation of the arts, and that is certainly the case in my electorate, where there are many flourishing artistic schools. I do commend them, particularly the Clavier Music and Art school and all of the kids who were successful at the awards ceremony.

**Hindmarsh Electorate: Infrastructure**

Mr GEORGANAS (Hindmarsh) (19:50): I rise tonight to speak about a few election commitments made by the Turnbull government in the lead-up to the 2016 election. I am raising the promises that were made to ensure that those clubs, associations and councils that were promised funding get their funding. For example, one promise made by the government in the lead-up to the federal election that I want to talk about specifically this evening was the commitment of $3.25 million for the redevelopment of Lockleys Oval in the electorate of Hindmarsh. This was very welcomed by all of us—by me, the community and the people of Hindmarsh. Lockleys Oval is situated on Rutland Avenue in the middle of the electorate in Lockleys. It is a much loved and valued community facility.

There were some doubts thrown onto this particular commitment a couple of weeks ago. On the front page of our local paper, *The Weekly Times*, of 28 September we were shocked to read that the federal government had written to the owners of the oval and the facility there—the West Torrens council—asking for details about the project and questioning its benefit and the benefit of this upgrade.

This has caused considerable concern amongst the affected residents within my electorate of Hindmarsh and the groups that use this particular oval. Many of these groups were promised this funding: the Lockleys Football Club, one of the largest amateur football clubs in my electorate; the West Torrens Baseball Club Juniors; the West Beach Football Club; the Goodwood Cricket Club; the Girl Guides; the Homing Pigeon Club, which also uses the Lockleys community oval; the Tennis Club and the Lockleys Riding Club.

There is all of a sudden some concern that perhaps we are being treated a little bit like Indi—where we heard, before the election, that the much-needed hospital was ripped up from under their noses because the Liberal candidate was not successful. I am hoping this will not be the same in Hindmarsh. There are many other clubs' ovals that were promised money as...
well. For example, $4 million was promised for the redevelopment of the Edwardstown Soldiers Memorial Recreation Ground, also known as the Edwardstown oval, in the Electorate of Hindmarsh. This recreation ground plays an important role in the lives of the local residents, with both sporting and recreational facilities.

It is home to The Towns, one of the oldest and proudest football clubs in the area and is almost 100 years old, and I was very honoured to be at the club a few weeks ago to present trophies to their junior teams. Many other clubs use the Edwardstown oval, including the Edwardstown Bowling Club, South Road Cricket Club, the South Coast Cycling Club, the Edwardstown Community Hall Committee and the Edwardstown Junior Sports Club. The Edwardstown oval is a very important and valued fixture in the sporting and social life of the people in my electorate, and this upgrade should absolutely go ahead.

Another promise made by the Turnbull government was $750,000 towards the much needed upgrade of the Torrensville Bowling Club, located on South Road, Torrensville, in the Electorate of Hindmarsh. This bowling club has shown great initiative in getting this project up and running. They have a really good redevelopment plan, which is primarily being funded through the merger of two smaller bowling clubs to create a strong, financially viable lawn bowls club with world-class facilities. It is important to note that these facilities will be used not only by its club members but also by those from other bowling clubs, Bowls SA and the general public.

The Torrensville Bowling Club is relying on that government funding commitment, that was made before the last federal election, to establish this facility. So this is another important project that will greatly benefit the wider Hindmarsh community. These community clubs are absolutely vital to our electorate. I wrote today to the Prime Minister asking him to ensure that funding will be given to these clubs. (Time expired)

Wright Electorate: Broadband

Wright Electorate: Infrastructure

Working Holiday Maker Program

Mr BUCHHOLZ (Wright) (19:55): It is indeed a privilege to be able to stand in this parliament, having returned for my third term, and continue on with the work that the good people of Wright have asked me to continue on with—because there is unfinished work in the electorate of Wright. And what a picturesque and diverse electorate it is.

In dealing with the amount of diversity we have across the electorate there is one issue that underpins and brings my electorate together, and that is their want for exceptional telecommunications. Before coming to this place the former rollout plans for the NBN, under the former government, were that we were not going to see a bobcat or a shovel turning the soil until the year 2022.

I am very proud to have fast tracked the rollout of the NBN through our electorate. To date, we have no less than 18,500 premises across Wright hooked up and NBN ready, either through fibre-to-the-node technology or through wireless technology. My own home is on wireless and I am being schooled, very quickly, by a young daughter who is all over the advances of technology. Furthermore, up to 75 per cent of the electorate of Wright is expected to be connected to the fibre to the node or wireless technology by the end of 2018.
Throughout the long election campaign, The Mount Lindesay Highway was front and centre. It is one of the main arterial roads that move from Brisbane down to Beaudesert. I was very proud during the campaign to have committed $10 million and we have asked the state government to match that funding. I am sure the Queensland government sees the priority in putting $10 million on the table to address some of the concerns around Mount Lindesay.

Front and centre in my electorate also is the importance of our horticultural and agricultural sector. It is the largest contributor to GDP in the electorate by far and the associated industries that go with it. A buoyant agricultural sector means buoyant regional communities. The backpacker tax had strong tentacles into the community and I was pleased when the Treasurer recently made an announcement in and around the review of the backpacker’s tax, which looked at shifting the rate of tax from 32.5 per cent back to 19 per cent.

I was pleased that we will play a role in taking a 95 per cent withholding provision on the superannuation of backpackers. It is salient that we will look at increasing the age limit from 30 to 35 for backpackers and the provision that we have allowed to give backpackers the flexibility to move from region to region yet staying with the same company. We have growers in our area that might have large contracts—producing lettuce or celery or tomatoes—who will have operations in north Australia, Central Australia and southern Australia. They will use those geographical landscapes to plan particular windows to hit markets.

In addition, the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing has no less than $1.4 billion worth of road infrastructure underway. It is well beyond planning. There are graders and there are dozers, as we speak, and it is Australia’s largest inland road infrastructure project. I am proud that the majority of that will be constructed in my electorate.

We have also committed $10 million to the Bromelton intermodal rail hub, a remarkable piece of infrastructure. When partnering with private enterprise you really get to see how effective private enterprise can be when partnering with government. SCT Logistics, Specialised Container Transport, is the company that put $30 million of their own money into this project. We made the announcement a number of months ago and expectations are that the first train will be rolling into their facility and rolling out the first thousand jobs, both direct and indirect, by 15 January of next year. It is a truly remarkable undertaking and I look forward to working with those guys as we develop the region.

Of course, jobs and growth in the region are a priority and we will always continue to advocate for our pensions and our veterans in Wright who provide, historically, a blanket of security for us as returned servicemen so that we can live the life that we so well deserve. In addition to that, Yarrabilba precinct—I am proud to say—is the fastest growing precinct in Queensland.

**The SPEAKER:** It being 8 pm, the House stands adjourned until 12 pm tomorrow.

**House adjourned at 20:00**

**NOTICES**

The following notices were given:

**Ms Owens:** to move:

That this House:
(1) recognises that 15 to 23 October is National Week of Deaf People, which provides an opportunity for:
   (a) deaf people to celebrate their communities and achievements;
   (b) awareness of local, state and national communities to be promoted; and
   (c) Parliament's current pilot of captioning in the House and Senate to be acknowledged;
(2) notes the rights of deaf people to access Australian Sign Language (AUSLAN) as their first language; and
(3) acknowledges that:
   (a) deaf people are a minority both culturally and linguistically; and
   (b) acceptance of the need for bilingual education of AUSLAN and English is necessary to promote equality and lifelong learning.

Mr Perrett: to move:
That this House:
(1) recognises that:
   (a) some young Australians are being forced into marriage against their will;
   (b) child marriage and forced marriage are forms of slavery; and
   (c) the Labor Government in 2013 introduced into the *Criminal Code 1995* specific offences for forced marriage;
(2) notes that:
   (a) there has been a gradual increase in people referring to community services for forced marriage since the law was introduced in 2013;
   (b) investigations of forced marriage by the Australian Federal Police (AFP) have increased from 3 in 2012-13 to 69 in 2015-16;
   (c) the Australian Red Cross and the AFP consider that part of the increase in identifications of forced marriage is due to better community awareness and access to help; and
   (d) it is crucial that community awareness continues to be raised so that young people know their right to refuse to be forced into marriage;
(3) notes that:
   (a) the Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans produced curriculum materials for the Australian forced marriage Pilot Program for Australian schools;
   (b) in every school that participated in the Pilot Program, girls at risk of forced marriage were identified;
   (c) funding for the Pilot Program ceased in 2015; and
   (d) it is crucial that the Pilot Program is continued as teachers are often the first person a child will tell of their fear of being forced to marry; and
(4) calls on the Government to immediately renew funding to further provide awareness of child marriage and forced marriage in Australian schools and the broader community.

Mr Perrett: to move:
That this House:
(1) recognises that:
   (a) prior to the passage of the *Parliamentary Privileges Act 1987* the Houses of the Australian Parliament had the power to expel a Senator or Member of the House of Representatives;
(b) the expulsion of a Member of this House is the most drastic of sanctions;
(c) on 11 November 1920, the then Member for Kalgoorlie, Mr Hugh Mahon, was expelled from this House; and
(d) Mr Mahon is the only Member to have ever been expelled from this House;
(2) acknowledges that Mr Mahon was expelled:
   (a) by a motion brought on hastily and with limited time for debate;
   (b) by a vote of the House on party lines; and
   (c) without the due process and procedural fairness that such an important issue deserves; and
(3) recognises that:
   (a) it was unjust on the limited evidence for the institution to which Mr Mahon had been democratically elected to reverse the decision of his constituents; and
   (b) the expulsion of Mr Mahon was a misuse of the power then invested in the House.

**Mr Champion:** to move:

That this House notes that:
(1) on Saturday 15 October 2016 significant monuments and landmarks will be lit red across Australia as part of Light it Red for Dyslexia; and
(2) Light it Red for Dyslexia:
   (a) is an initiative to increase dyslexia awareness;
   (b) coincides with international World Dyslexia Day; and
   (c) is a prelaunch of Dyslexia Empowerment Week in Australia, running from 16 to 22 October 2016.
The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Coulton) took the chair at 10:30.

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Greyhound Racing

Mr STEPHEN JONES (Whitlam) (10:30): The Dapto dogs are an icon of the Illawarra—in fact, not just of the Illawarra, because, wherever I go throughout New South Wales, Australia and even the world, when I people where I am from they go, 'Ah, the Dapto dogs.' There has been racing continuously in the Illawarra since 1937, but the New South Wales Premier is attempting to criminalise this sport. If he gets his way, the Dapto dogs will cease to operate in July next year. He says he has no choice. He says he is operating on the recommendations of the commissioner he appointed to investigate the sport. That is simply not true. If you look at the report, the report by former Justice Michael McHugh AC QC, you will see it provides the New South Wales government with not one but two courses of action.

The New South Wales Premier has pulled on the wrong rein. The report actually says there can be a future for the industry. It puts in place a strict set of recommendations, over 78 of them. Of course there is an alternative course of action, which would only be followed after a full-blown debate within the community and within the parliament. The New South Wales Premier has adopted none of these courses of action. As a result of that, over 1,080 people are facing the threat of losing full-time employment, as are another 500 people with equivalent employment in part-time positions. Over 13,000 people throughout the state of New South Wales who love and enjoy the sport of greyhound racing will lose that pleasure.

The principal objection that is raised against greyhound racing by the Premier is not doping or baiting, behaviours that are abhorred by everybody and that are currently criminal. The principle objection is the fact that in the sport of greyhound racing there are a large number of dogs which are euthanased every year. There is some debate about whether it is 5,000 or 6,000 pups each year which are euthanased. Whatever the number is, I think it is too high. It is almost as high as the number of dogs and cats that are euthanased by the RSPCA and local councils throughout New South Wales every year.

You cannot run around the country looking at things that you do not like and start banning them. You have to work with the people to ensure that you can address the problems that exist. I can tell you that the action of the New South Wales government, if not reversed, will not stop the sport of greyhound racing or any of the problems the Premier is concerned with. It will just move it interstate or underground. That is not a future that we can stand for and it is not a future for the people who love the Dapto dogs, whether they are from my electorate or the electorate of the member for Cunningham, who is with me in the chamber today.

This is something that has to be stopped, and I sincerely hope, Mr Deputy Speaker, that the statements that have been made by members of your party are followed through in New South Wales parliament. I have actually written to the Deputy Prime Minister and invited him to come to the next meeting of the Dapto dogs. I am sure he will be well received if we get the right result.
O'Connor Electorate: Wellness and Respite Centre

Mr RICK WILSON (O'Connor) (10:33): I also like to support the dogs, particularly the Western Bulldogs who had a wonderful win in the grand final during our break.

I am very pleased to discuss a recent funding announcement in my electorate of O'Connor, one that will complete an important project that has been planned for several years. The latest round of the National Stronger Regions Fund will deliver $1.6 million to complete a wellness and respite centre in the Shire of Manjimup. The multipurpose facility will provide a dedicated home for the town's home- and community-care programs to operate from.

Manjimup is a small community with a population of about 5,000. Like many towns that sit in relative proximity to a bigger regional centre, it does not enjoy the comprehensive range of services that one might expect in a major city. Providing the means for our seniors to age with peace and dignity in regional areas has always been a priority for me as the member for O'Connor. Elderly citizens often need to access support services in order to continue living in their home town. The population demographic of this region has created a significant demand for expanded aged care facilities in the Shire of Manjimup.

The median age in the region is 44 years, some eight years higher than the national average. People aged 65 and above comprise nearly 17 per cent of the population, compared to about 12 per cent for the state of Western Australia. People aged 50 and above make up 40 per cent of the region's population—about 10 per cent higher than the state average. The number of people with a disability living in and around Manjimup also exceeds the Western Australian average.

The demand for aged care, home and community care and dementia services has increased in recent years and will continue to grow. This places pressures on the home based carers, but despite Manjimup's ageing population the nearest respite service is nearly 200 kilometres away. A 400-kilometre round trip to access an overnight respite centre places an unacceptable burden on people engaged in full-time care. The Manjimup wellness and respite centre will provide the community with a 24-hour five-bed wing for planned, emergency or crisis respite care in a home-like environment. Elderly citizens, people with disabilities, and dementia patients will all have access to high-needs care within the town.

The government has previously supported the shire project through a home and community care program. In 2014, $750,000 of capital works funding was allocated to the project. This grant, along with a national stronger regions grant from the federal government, will enable the shire of Mandurah to leverage other sources of funding to ensure the facility can be constructed to the standard that our senior citizens deserve.

I commend the government on its commitment to providing such a vital service for the Manjimup community. I would also like to congratulate the Shire of Manjimup for its dedication to providing a better standard of living for its community.

Steel Industry

Ms BIRD (Cunningham) (10:36): This evening a very important meeting will be occurring in Wollongong, and if it were not for the fact that the House will be sitting the member for Whitlam and I would definitely be there. The Save our Steel committee has convened the public meeting to be held this evening in particular because at this point in time there is legislation before the state parliament that is looking at a strong proposal put forward,
which the Labor team are committed to progressing, to provide real opportunities for a strong
and vibrant steel industry into the future and to protect long-term jobs. Of course, this meeting
occurs in the aftermath of the decisions we saw last week in relation to the loss of car
manufacturing across this country.

It would not be a surprise to the House that the member for Whitlam and I are very
concerned to ensure the future of the steel industry is kept on the agenda. Labor took to the
last election a very strong platform around actions that could be put in place to support our
steel industry, but we have seen a very, very mild, tepid and disinterested response from the
government.

I will acknowledge that the new minister actually came to the Illawarra in the last few
weeks—that was a great improvement. Minister Pyne, when he had the portfolio, thought that
the Port Kembla steel works was somewhere near Nowra, so it was good to see the new
minister take an interest. Unfortunately, he did not bring any commitments or announcements
that would give us hope that there will be a better policy position from this government, so it
is really good to see our Labor colleagues at the state level backing a strong platform for the
future of the steel industry. So while we cannot be there this evening there is no doubt that our
support an commitment to those campaigners stands firm.

I would like also to acknowledge that our state Labor colleagues will be there as will Mr
Paul Scully, the Labor candidate for the state seat of Wollongong. He is a champion
candidate; a fantastic candidate. Unfortunately the Liberal Party have squibbed it. They are
not even going to defend their record in the Illawarra by putting a candidate up. It is a pretty
shameful record, so perhaps we can well understand that. But I know that Paul Scully will be
there taking a great interest in these issues and will continue to provide very strong support to
the future of not only our steel-making industry and our fabricating industry but the broader
manufacturing industry across our region.

If you want to talk jobs and growth you cannot continue with pathetic, weak and
disinterested policies in industry and manufacturing. We need better in the Illawarra. Labor is
delivering on that at the federal and state levels, and we will continue to hold both
governments to account for better policies in this area.

Canta, Mr Dan

Robert Connor Dawes Foundation

Mr TIM WILSON (Goldstein) (10:39): Today we celebrate stories of human
achievement. Recently, 17-year-old Goldstein resident and Brighton Grammarian Dan Canter
joined an exclusive club. Dan is one of only 142 people who have ever completed the triple
crown of marathon open water swims: 33.7 kilometres across the English Channel, 33.7
kilometres across the Catalina channel and 45.8 kilometres around Manhattan island. He is
also the youngest male and youngest Australian to have achieved such feats.

Such an incredible achievement could not have occurred without hard work and sacrifice,
not just by Dan but also by his important support crew, particularly his dedicated and
hardworking mother, Doina Canta, and his trainer, and world-renowned elite marathon
swimmer, John van Wisse. In November, Dan’s unique story will be told in a documentary
screening called The Swim Kid. The documentary is a story of strength—a battle of mind,
body and soul—and a will to succeed.
Most importantly, Dan was originally inspired, at the age of only 14, to be the youngest Australian male to swim the English Channel by the legacy of fellow Brighton Grammian Robert Connor Dawes. Known by his second name, Connor was academically gifted and showed sporting prowess. He tragically passed away in 2013, after a 16-month battle with an ependymoma brain tumour. As his mother said, Connor fought his good fight—the best fight—with dignity, courage and humour that belied his years. Dan learned from Connor's legacy the true meaning of courage and strength. After his passing, Connor's amazing parents, Liz and Scott Dawes, established the RCD Foundation as a tribute to him and other brain tumour fighters. Each year, the RCD Foundation raises money for pediatric brain cancer. This year, the annual Connor's Run mobilised 3,600 people to raise more than $630,000. Dan's swims also help raise awareness for the RCD foundation.

Goldstein is full of individuals, families and community groups that support each other and help build a great community from the individual upwards, and that is why we are so proud of them. I am sure I can speak for all members in congratulating Liz Dawes, Scott Dawes, Doina Canta, John van Wisse and, particularly, Dan Canta on their amazing achievements and their inspiration, especially in recognition of their effort to help honour the memory and the legacy of Robert Connor Dawes by helping others with brain tumours.

Ms RISHWORTH (Kingston) (10:42): I rise to speak about the uncertain future that seafarers on the CSL Brisbane have in front of them. Last week I met with Paul and Thomas, two men who unexpectedly found out only a number of weeks ago that they would no longer have work on the CSL Brisbane.

The CSL Brisbane is a ship that predominantly carries commodities from one Australian port to another Australian port. Unfortunately, despite seeking assurances, seafarers on this ship have been told that there will not be work in the future. It is of great concern that it looks like the CSL Brisbane, which is now docked in Singapore, will be replaced. The Australian crew will be replaced by a foreign crew. This is an unacceptable situation, and one that the government needs to address.

I am giving a voice to both Thomas and Paul. They are at each end of the age spectrum in their careers. Thomas started when he was 19. He has spent six years on the ship and is now 25. He has serious concerns about what his employment will be in the future. He knows that there are many, many other ships where Australian crews are being replaced by foreign crews, and he is worried about being able to get another job. He has never been unemployed and is now facing the prospect of having to go into Centrelink and register. He is worried. He enjoyed the job and is worried that it is not in his future. Paul, has spent many, many years working—he says himself that he is a mature age. He is worried about what the future holds for him as well. He believes that the crew on the ship were a close-knit family of different ages and genders living in close confinement, and were very supportive. He believes that the crew were very productive, and that they made their schedules and worked very hard to deliver goods on time.

What we are seeing, unfortunately, is that these Australian seafarers are being replaced by foreign workers. This is a trend that is continuing. It is a trend that started on the Turnbull
government's watch. The government needs to enact legislation. Despite trying to change legislation, which it was not successful in doing, it is now trying to go through the back door. It is time for the government to start paying attention to Australian jobs, to start paying attention to the voices of these seafarers, because they deserve to be heard. People like Paul and Thomas deserve to have jobs, and I ask the government to listen to them. (Time expired)

Mobile Black Spot Program

Mr WOOD (La Trobe) (10:45): In the electorate of La Trobe, when you are driving your car along and you are on the mobile phone, there is nothing worse than realising that the person you were talking to is no longer there. Why? Because you have hit a mobile black spot. But, in actual fact, it can be a lot worse—through the upcoming fire season local residents need to ensure they have connection when it comes to mobile coverage.

The coalition government understands the importance of mobile phone coverage and has identified inadequate coverage in remote and regional areas, and outer metropolitan areas, across Australia. My electorate of La Trobe has grown rapidly in population, making the current infrastructure, which was limited, now non-existent for a large number of my constituents. Mobile phone coverage is one of the biggest issues in my electorate of La Trobe. I receive emails from my constituents on a weekly basis in relation to this issue. Mobile phone coverage is essential in today's modern life. Unreliable or no mobile phone reception is also a major safety risk, as I previously mentioned, particularly for those who may require support or assistance from emergency service operators.

Despite being in government for six years, Labor did not spend one dollar on fixing mobile black spots, leaving the community at risk. I have relayed the calls from my constituents for help back to the Turnbull Liberal team, which, I am proud to say, has taken action. To date the coalition has made a total investment of $220 million towards the rollout of 499 new or upgraded mobile stations, which is fantastic. This is an important investment in infrastructure for the future. Four suburbs in my electorate—Officer, Beaconsfield, Gembrook and Guys Hill—have been included in this rollout. There are also a number of mobile phone towers going up in the seat of Casey, where the Speaker sits.

These suburbs have been specifically selected as they have been overlooked by mobile network operators due to commercial factors. Having travelled through all of these areas, I understand the community's need for better coverage and services—and their frustration, which I previously mentioned. The Mobile Black Spot Program will improve both phone coverage and competition for customers, which will only be a good thing. The beneficiaries of this program will be residents and businesses, who will be enabled to communicate with the outside world. This program is a win for the community. Thank you to all of my constituents who took the time to contact my office regarding this issue.

Lowles, Mr Charlie

Mr HUSIC (Chifley) (10:48): The recent local government elections in New South Wales saw many new faces appear at Blacktown City Council. While we welcome them, I would like to take some time this morning to recognise the immeasurable contribution of ward 5 stalwart Charlie Lowles, who announced his retirement before the election. Charlie, 84, has lived in Blackett since 1970 and served on Blacktown council from 1989. A military veteran, Charlie brought huge energy and dedication to the local community. He is probably one of the
great volunteers of Blacktown and Mount Druitt. His public service will be remembered for generations and is a huge legacy to live up to. His council contribution was a bookend to years of work nurturing connections between sporting and charity organisations well before he even stood for elected office—for example, being integral to the Lethbridge Park Rangers soccer club for decades and serving as president of the Popondetta Park committee.

Then, through more than 27 years of council service, Charlie helped to shape and mould the future of Blacktown city. We are all grateful for his generosity and the work that he showed and delivered at all times through his pursuit of social justice, fairness, educational opportunities and multicultural cohesion. He was a strong advocate for many community projects, including the Mount Druitt library and community hub, Mount Druitt swimming pools, the volleyball and basketball courts and Emerton youth centre. He would always speak up if people were not getting a fair go, regardless of the political party involved. As much as he spearheaded the push to see a debt-free council, he championed social investment for education, training, community health—things that the booming Blacktown region would be poised to benefit from for many years to come.

While representing an area full of young families, Charlie actively promoted recreational spaces and participation in organised activities. He defended the retention of the city name Blacktown, saying it is the city’s heritage and history acknowledging the people who walked the land before he did. He challenged perceptions about the suburbs he loved through simple acts—for example, 'Why shouldn't we beautify things like roundabouts,' he would ask? 'Because they get vandalised,' he was told. 'No, community pride will protect them better than any council ranger can'—and he was right. He was always pushing for quality to reflect the quality of the people we are proud to represent. In 2013, he was awarded an Order of Australia for his service to local government. It was a rightful recognition of his contribution.

Charlie Lowles is one of the unsung heroes of the Labor Party in Western Sydney. I will always be indebted for the care and guidance he extended to me as a new member of parliament. I do not think there will ever be another Charlie Lowles in our area, but we can aspire to serve as well as he did. His lasting contribution is a monument to his stamina, decency and good will. On behalf of our entire community, we thank Charlie Lowles.

Republic of Armenia

Mr ZIMMERMAN (North Sydney) (10:50): I rise today to congratulate the people of Armenia on a significant milestone in the modern history of a nation that holds a special place in the hearts of many residents in my electorate. On 21 September 2016, the streets of Yerevan, the capital and largest city in Armenia, were filled with the sounds of celebration as a new, yet ancient, nation celebrated its 25th year of independence. Fireworks, music and military parades filled this beautiful capital. It was on this historic day 25 years ago that the Armenian people boldly and with near unanimity voted yes to secure their independence from the yoke of the Soviet Union. After seven decades of Soviet rule, the Armenian people vowed to proudly stand on their own two feet and to walk ahead as an independent nation, with a new sense of purpose and belonging.

The path to independence for the Armenian people has not been an easy one. As the world's first Christian nation, Armenia has an incredible history dating back thousands of years. Yet its geopolitical location at the crossroads of larger neighbours has meant that Armenia has been at the centre of a tug of war between the empires of the Ottomans, Russians...
and Persians. In fact, barring the last 25 years and two years of hope following World War I, Armenia has spent six centuries under occupation. It is an extraordinary testament to the spirit of survival and resilience of Armenians, who have endured foreign rule and of course the devastating impacts of the Armenian genocide, that it emerged from the collapse of the Soviet Union as a free nation. So the 25th anniversary of independence is a real cause for celebration.

As a small land-locked nation, bordering, in some cases, hostile neighbours, its challenges are considerable. Yet it has achieved a great deal. With some of the highest levels of educational attainment in the world, a rich culture and a sense of determination that is a hallmark of the Armenian character, I am sure that its future as a successful nation is secure. In large measure, the success of Armenia has occurred with the support of the Armenian diaspora. Scattered in every part of the world, those of Armenian heritage have made such significant contributions to their new homes wherever they have settled. This is evident across Australia in business, the arts, community and even politics. My predecessor, the Hon. Joe Hockey, along with my friends Gladys Berejiklian and the member for Goldstein, is testament to the latter.

My own electorate is fortunate to be home to many of Armenian heritage, and I see so often their involvement in my own local community. Their contribution to Australia is matched by support for the future of their cultural homeland. I know that many Australian Armenians joined in celebrating the 25th anniversary of independence. I am sure that all members of this House wish Armenia well for its future as a stable, secure, prosperous and free nation.

**Workplace Relations**

Ms CATHERINE KING (Ballarat) (10:54): I rise to talk about an issue that is currently occurring in my constituency, and that is the dispute in the McCain’s workforce. There are some 400 workers employed at the McCain plant in Ballarat—400 workers who are, frankly, dealing with significant uncertainty about their future employment conditions as a result of the current workplace agreement negotiations.

A particular concern is the attempt by McCain to tender out significant parts of the operations at the site, such as cleaning and engineering, and use cut-price contractors to replace jobs. They have already flown in workers from New Zealand in response to the industrial action that is currently being undertaken. The dispute is about entitlements and hard-fought conditions in that place of work. It is also about a fight for Ballarat, to ensure that we continue to have high-paid, good quality work in our regional community.

We have already seen repercussions of conditions and standards not being upheld. I am told that, last month, a worker at the factory had both his forearms badly burnt by oil that sprayed from a hot chip fryer that had not been properly cleaned by replacement workers. When people go to work they deserve to be safe and have proper conditions in place. McCain's proposed agreement would also hand the company power to move employees from eight- to 12-hour shifts with minimal input. That has a significant impact on family life in my community. One shift worker who has worked for the plant for some 27 years said: They don't want our agreement; they simply want to be able to do it. That's a little bit frightening to people.
I encourage McCain to bargain in good faith.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Buchholz): Order! The member's time has expired. I call the member for Bennelong.

The remainder of the member for Ballarat's speech read as follows—

We have seen this elsewhere, such as at CUB, where 55 workers were sacked without notices and then offered their jobs back with a 65 per cent reduction in monetary entitlements and cuts to conditions.

We have heard that McCain has threatened to leave Ballarat if this deal is not done, despite the fact that Ballarat is one of their best performing plants and provides an excellent pipeline of local primary produce. Local workers deserve better. This is an already casualised and precarious workforce fighting for its jobs, and stripping away conditions is a kick in the guts for workers who have been at the plant for decades.

Bennelong Electorate: Eureka Prizes

Mr ALEXANDER (Bennelong) (10:56): Bennelong is the innovation capital of Australia. It is home to some of the world's largest pharmaceutical companies, and tech giants like Microsoft, Optus and innovators like 3M—beat that. We are the home to Australia's first hydrogen fuelling station, at Hyundai's headquarters, and the world's leading gamma knife, which can cut out brain tumours without affecting the surrounding tissue. I am pleased to announce that we also now have two local winners of the Australian Museum Eureka Prize, which rewards excellence in the fields of research and innovation leadership, science communication and school science.

Professor Ewa Goldys from the Department of Physics and Astronomy at the excellent Macquarie University is winner of the ANSTO Eureka Prize for Innovative Use of Technology. Dr Lisa Harvey-Smith, a research astronomer with the CSIRO is the winner of the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science Eureka Prize for Promoting Understanding of Australian Science Research.

Professor Ewa Goldys has developed a new use for the common microscope by using hyperspectral imaging. This innovative method can analyse biological matter to pick up the individual fluorescent colours of cells. This allows scientists to identify specific qualities and characteristics of those cells. While this study holds interest from a purely scientific perspective in expanding our knowledge of the way the world works, it also yields significant real-world benefits. This breakthrough will allow a completely new, non-invasive and rapid screening for diseases and diagnosis of health conditions. Professor Goldys says that this procedure will, importantly, improve the effectiveness of therapy, enhance scientific and medical understanding of diseases, and help patients better manage their conditions.

Bennelong's second champion of science innovation recognised in the awards is Dr Lisa Harvey-Smith of CSIRO astronomy and space science, and she is the project scientist of the Australian Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder. The modern evolution of the Parkes telescope is an example of Australia's leadership in the field of astronomy. Built in one of the quietest places on earth, in remote Western Australia, the Australian Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder surveys the night sky looking for new galaxies, black holes and even astronomical phenomena that we do not yet know exist. For the past 50 years, Australia has been at the forefront of scientific discovery and innovation in astronomy and space science. Dr Harvey-
Smith uses her scholarship, passion and enthusiasm to engage the science user community and the commissioning team by articulating clearly what is often complex science. Dr Harvey-Smith frequently promotes the work of the CSIRO. (Time expired)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Buchholz): For the benefit of the House and the member for Ballarat, the clock had not reset. I acknowledge that, and the speech has been given to Hansard. Just a reminder for our clock keepers to make sure we stay on that. In accordance with standing order 193, the time for members' constituency statements has concluded.

MOTIONS

International Day of the Girl Child

Ms CLAYDON (Newcastle) (10:59): I move:

That this House:

(1) notes that the International Day of the Girl Child:

(a) will be celebrated globally on 11 October 2016; and

(b) is an international day of observance that promotes girls' human rights, highlights gender inequalities that remain between girls and boys and addresses the various forms of discrimination and abuse suffered by girls around the globe;

(2) recognises that:

(a) the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals include key targets for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by 2030;

(b) achieving these targets will require increased investment by national governments, national aid agencies, and global companies and foundations; and

(c) increased investments in gender equality are vital if the world is to achieve sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and development;

(3) calls on the Australian Government to work towards the longstanding internationally agreed aid targets in order for Australia to contribute its fair share to international development and aid the empowerment of all women and girls under the Sustainable Development Goals; and

(4) urges all Members to be leaders in their community and in Parliament, to act on the advancement of gender equality.

It is my pleasure to move this motion before the House today recognising that tomorrow, 11 October, is the International Day of the Girl Child. On 19 December 2011, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution to create the International Day of the Girl Child to recognise girls' rights and the unique challenges girls face across the globe. Discrimination against girls and women is a devastating reality in countries across the globe. It results in millions of individual tragedies, which add up to a lost potential for entire nations. Studies have shown that there is a direct link between a country's treatment of girls and women and its progress socially and economically. The status of women is central to the health of a society. If one part suffers, so does the whole.

What are some of the issues for girls today? Over the period between 2011 and 2020, we know that more than 140 million girls will have become child brides and many will drop out of school. Every day that is 41,000 girls. Every 10 minutes an adolescent girl dies as a result of violence. Right now, as I speak, an estimated 62 million girls are not at school and 16 million girls between the ages of six and 11 will never start school. That compares with a
figure of eight million boys. Gender remains a central factor in deciding a child's access to education, health care, safety and wellbeing and, significantly, their opportunities.

Globally, there are more than 1.1 billion girls under the age of 18. Their future is our future. If we are to leave our world in a better state than we found it, which should be the aim of all of us here, we must redouble our efforts to redress gender inequality wherever it lives. That means we need to invest in girls' and women's health, education, safety and wellbeing. Supporting girls to build better lives gives us renewed hope to create a more peaceful and prosperous world for all.

In 2015, Australia signed up to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals, which included a renewed commitment to achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls. These goals provide a tangible pathway towards a more equal society. Under the previous Labor government, Australia led the way on programs to empower women and girls in our region. While I welcome the foreign minister's efforts to uphold this important work in the Pacific, there is no denying the impact of her government's cuts to the overseas aid budget—a massive $1.3 billion. These cuts, which take Australia to our lowest level of spending on overseas aid as a proportion of gross national income since records were first kept, mean less education, less access to health care and less opportunity for the poorest in our world—and that means girls and women. The cuts to the African programs alone have meant that 220,000 girls every year are denied the chance for an education.

The correlation between the progress of girls and the amelioration of poverty is well supported by research. We know, for example, that one extra year of primary school increases a girl's eventual adult wages by 10 to 20 per cent, while every year of secondary school increases them by 15 to 20 per cent. Studies from Brazil, Kenya and India show that delaying adolescent child-bearing could increase national economic productivity by US$3.5 billion, US$3.4 billion and US$7.7 billion respectively.

It is time for the Australian government to step up to the task of rebuilding our overseas aid budget. We need to invest in programs that empower women and girls and that expand women's access to political, economic and social opportunities across the world, if we want to make lasting change. We know that investing in adolescent girls not only improves their lives but also is critical to the success of key development goals like reducing poverty and improving global health and education. Challenging institutionalised and ingrained inequality may not be easy, but it is essential. If we want real progress and prosperity for all human beings, we need to invest in our girls and women.

I urge all members of parliament to become champions of change, to stand up and be strong advocates for gender equality, both in this House and in our respective communities. Failing to do so is tantamount to planning for a world that will never reach its full potential.

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

Ms O'Toole: I second the motion and reserve my right to speak.

Mr CRAIG KELLY (Hughes) (11:05): I am pleased to rise to support the motion of the member for Newcastle. I know from my experience at school that the girls were always much smarter than the boys and they were much more mature than the boys. But I see, as life has gone on and I go to school reunions, that more of the guys I went to school with have high-
profile jobs than do the women. That is something that we need to do everything we can to change in our society, because if we are going to achieve the maximum economic potential of this nation we must ensure that everyone can achieve their maximum potential. There are so many girls I went to school with who had so much talent, so much skill and so much ability. We have to make sure that girls are not denied some of the opportunities that they have been denied in the past. There are some things that we really need to look at, not just in Australia but also around the world, if we are going to make sure that all young girls have full opportunities.

The first issue is that of forced marriages. We hear in our country today of young girls being taken offshore and sent back to the Middle East to engage in forced marriages. That is something that we, as members of parliament, have an obligation to speak out against. Every person, irrespective of their sex, should be able to choose the partner that they wish to married. We must all rise and keep that voice going against forced marriages.

The second issue is that of female genital mutilation. Some people say this is akin to male circumcision, but we must say what it is—it is mutilation. It is a gross abuse of the rights of young girls and women. We have seen examples of it in the suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne; it is not something we see practised only in the Third World. Again, we, as parliamentarians, must speak out against that.

The third issue that I would like to raise is about how we can improve the wellbeing of and opportunities for women in our society. A fortnight ago, I had the pleasure of travelling to Azerbaijan, a former Soviet republic located between the Soviet Union and Iran. Azerbaijan is a majority Islamic country but its people are very proud of the rights they have given to women. In fact, there is a statue in the centre of Baku which celebrates women's suffrage. That is because Azerbaijan was the first Islamic country in the world to give women the right to vote. That statue has a woman removing her headscarf to show her face because if your face remains covered in any way so that you cannot make facial contact and your facial expression cannot be seen, you cannot make a full contribution to the society you are a part of. Although I do not want to see in this country any law that defines how people should be dressed, I do not want to see a situation where women are forced, against their will, to wear any garment that prevents them having the opportunity to become full participants in our society.

These are not just problems for around the world. These are problems that we have here in Australia. There is much that we can do to ensure that our girls have equal opportunity. I have a young daughter and I want to see her grow up. I want to see her have every opportunity that this great country offers. I want her to succeed on her merits and not be held back in any way because of her success. This motion is one way to help us to do that. I congratulate the member for bringing it to the House.

Ms O’TOOLE (Herbert) (11:10): This motion addresses one of the most critical issues of the modern day—that is, gender equality. Whilst we have moved some distance over the past decades, on average women in the labour market still earn 24 per cent less than men, globally. Girls are not receiving the same educational opportunities as their male counterparts. There is also a disparity in relation to health for women. For example, in Papua New Guinea—which Townsville, in my electorate, is closer to than it is to Brisbane—one in seven women die in childbirth. Added to the fact that women are still victims of relentless domestic violence, not
to mention the impact on global productivity and economic outcomes, this is simply unacceptable both nationally and internationally.

If we support the other 50 per cent of the population, our economy will prosper. As reported by the Australian Human Rights Commission, the average full-time weekly wage of a woman is 18.2 per cent less than that of a man. There is absolutely no legitimate reason for this difference. There should be equal pay for equal work.

The United Nations has set out goals for sustainable development by 2030. Goal No. 5 is to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. The empowerment of women must start in the cradle for our girl babies. Women represent 50 per cent of the world's population and, therefore, also half of its potential. Gender inequality persists everywhere and it is stagnating social progress. Gender equality is therefore critical to ensuring the advancement of women. Maybe the question for us to be consider is: what happens if we do not ensure gender equality?

Inequalities faced by girls can begin right at birth and follow them all of their lives. In some countries girls are deprived of access to health care or proper nutrition, leading to a higher mortality rate, as mentioned earlier. As girls move into adolescence, gender disparities widen. Child marriage affects girls far more than it affects boys. Globally, nearly 15 million girls under the age of 18 are married every year. To put that in context, it is 37,000 girls per day. Marrying young also affects a girl's education.

About one-third of developing countries have not achieved gender parity in primary education. In Sub-Saharan Africa, Oceania and western Asia, girls still face barriers entering both primary and secondary school. Disadvantages in education translate into lack of access to skills and limited opportunities in the labour market. Women's and girls' empowerment is essential to expanding economic growth and promoting social development. The full participation of women in labour forces would add percentage points to most national growth rates—double digits in many cases.

Worldwide, 35 per cent of women have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence. An estimated 133 million girls and women have experienced some form of female genital mutilation or cutting in 29 countries in Africa and in the Middle East, where the harmful practice is most common. There is a high risk of prolonged bleeding; infection, including HIV; childbirth complications; infertility; and death.

Addressing pay equality, for example here in Australia, we should look at the frontline workforce in both the aged care and early childhood education sectors, where we primarily see female workers, and where the rate of pay is probably one of the lowest of any of our industries—two sectors where the work should be valued and respected. At the last parliamentary sitting I met with some of our dedicated early childhood educators. I know the importance of their work in shaping our future generations and the heavy weight that this rests on their shoulders. This workforce must be recognised.

Girls can stay in school, help empower female classmates to do the same and fight for their rights to access sexual and reproductive health services. Women can address unconscious biases and implicit associations that can form an unintended and not-often-visible barrier to equal opportunity. Governments can fund campaigns to curb cultural practices like female genital mutilation and can change harmful laws that affect the rights of women and girls.
As the first female elected to the seat of Herbert, a Federation seat—which took 115 years—I give my commitment to my community and this place to always act on the advancement of gender equality. I am proud to live in a world where we see the possibility of a female being elected to represent one of the largest countries in the world.

Ms BANKS (Chisholm) (11:15): Tomorrow the world will recognise the fourth International Day of the Girl Child—an opportunity to raise the awareness about the rights of girls and the particular challenges they face. Girls face particular barriers and challenges which can restrict them from reaching their full potential and which do them harm. They hold the potential to become leaders and effect change, yet their empowerment can be hindered by factors such as unwanted pregnancy, forced early marriage, gender based violence and limited access to higher education and reproductive health services. It is my honour to join all Australians and our friends globally in celebrating the day and to take this opportunity to describe this issue of gender equality—an issue about which I have always been an advocate and to which I am deeply committed. Gender equality is vital to the ongoing prosperity of our country and to continued economic growth and development worldwide.

Australia continues to empower girls in its foreign policy agenda and aid program through: appointing an Ambassador for Women And Girls; creating a $55 million Gender Equality Fund; implementing Australia’s Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Strategy, a new $10 million gender action platform that will provide more opportunities to improve outcomes for women and girls in the Indo-Pacific region; and the government’s Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development program.

Despite making up half the population, in too many countries girls do not get an education if they are from a poor or rural family, are in an ethnic minority or have a disability. And no-one can forget the case of Malala, who was shot in the face by the Taliban merely for fighting for the basic right of young girls to get an education. Child marriages, early marriages and forced marriages are violations of human rights which have diverse consequences for the enjoyment of human rights such as the right to education and health care. According to UNICEF, every 10 minutes an adolescent girl dies somewhere in the world as a result of violence.

Under the women’s leadership and development strategy, the Turnbull government has provided funding to a number of organisations aimed at empowering young women and girls, especially in the areas in which they are most vulnerable. These include the Multicultural Centre for Women’s Health and Women With Disabilities Australia so that they can undertake the development of position statements, workshops and a national forum. I am proud of the investment that the Turnbull government has made to address this critical need to build the evidence base for gender indicators for culturally and linguistically diverse women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and women with a disability. Of course, there is also last month’s announcement of a $6½ million investment in the United Nations Women’s Making Every Woman and Girl Count program—a public-private partnership. These and other initiatives, as well as consistent, ongoing efforts, go a long way to achieving the targets for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls by 2030, as established by the United Nations sustainable development goals. Furthermore, they directly address the requirement that governments, national aid agencies, global companies and foundations all contribute their time, energy and resources to gender equality.
I have stated before that I believe that authentic feminism, practised by men and women alike and underpinned by structural mechanisms such as those the Turnbull government have implemented, will pave the way to address the complex and multidimensional issue of gender equality, where men support men and women and where women support men and women. It follows that men and women must support boys and girls in equal measure and that our boys and girls are actively encouraged to support each other from the outset. Achieving gender equality is indeed a continuous and long-term undertaking that requires the commitment of us all, for us all.

In Australia we are comparatively immune from the atrocities and crises that afflict girls in some other parts of the world. Child marriage, honour killings and trafficking are all alarmingly widespread practices which deprive girls of their most basic of human rights and entangle them in vicious and limiting cycles. However, the challenges faced by Australian girls are no less worthy of our attention and our action: poverty, discrimination, family violence and mental health concerns. It is paramount that we continue to actively invest in the health, safety, quality education and rights of our girls, not least to ensure that they enjoy the full breadth of their human rights and unlock their potential personally and in their families, communities and society.

Ms VAMVAKINOU (Calwell) (11:19): Firstly, I want to thank my colleague, the member for Newcastle, for bringing this motion before the House today to acknowledge the International Day of the Girl Child, which will be celebrated across the globe tomorrow. The International Day of the Girl Child was launched in 2012 in response to widespread youth advocacy demanding acknowledgement of the unequal experience of disadvantage borne by girls across the globe. The United Nations responded to this campaign by establishing the International Day of the Girl Child, which is celebrated annually on 11 October. The mission statement for the annual celebration is to:

... help galvanize worldwide enthusiasm for goals to better girls’ lives, providing an opportunity for them to show leadership and reach their full potential.

It is very unfortunate that here in the 21st century we need a day to highlight that, globally, women and girls continue to bear the greatest burden in society. In poverty, violence, disadvantage and access to educational services, girls are always affected the greatest and suffer the greatest. This reality should be an outrage to us all. Despite a century's worth of women's activism and the suffragette movement, girls still experience discrimination and disadvantage based on their gender. Most alarming are the issues around violence, forced marriage, poverty and access to education and to opportunity which exist globally and are rife in a number of developing countries. However, they are also present in the developed world, including Australia.

One of the most damaging sources of discrimination and disadvantage that girls face is that of access to education. Currently there are more than 60 million girls around the world who are not in school. Removing barriers to education is vitally important not only due to the positive flow-on effects a girl experiences once she is educated but also because education is a right for every human being, regardless of their gender. The evidence shows that educated women are generally healthier and are less vulnerable to diseases, including HIV and AIDS; are more likely to be employed and earn better incomes; are likely to marry later and have fewer children; and are better able to provide health care and education for their children and
for their families. All these factors create a better life for girls and for their families, and they also provide for the advancement of communities and future generations.

Another great source of concern for girls that often prohibits girls from receiving an education is the issue of forced marriage and becoming child brides. Over 100 million girls are predicted to become child brides over the next decade, with evidence suggesting that one-third of girls in the developing world are married before the age of 18 and one-third of women in the developing world will give birth before the age of 20. But it is not just in the developing world where incidences of child brides and forced marriages occur; it is also happening here in our country, in Australia. In 2013 the Australian parliament criminalised forced marriage but, to date, there have been no prosecutions. However, many cases of forced marriage have since come to light. In the past two years a child welfare hotline has received more than 70 calls relating to child brides and, in the past financial year, the Australian Federal Police has investigated 69 incidences of forced marriage—more than double the number for the previous year.

With the rising incidence of forced marriages, I was pleased to participate in a theatre workshop at a school in my electorate, Roxburgh Park College, that addressed these issues. The workshop, which took place last year, was conceptualised by Miss Thoiba Saeedh, who was an intern in my office, and formed part of the forced marriage pilot project run by the Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans. Issues relating to cultural identity, gender equality and the competing demands of family expectations with individual rights were raised during the workshop. I represent a very diverse migrant community with newly-arrived and emerging communities from Africa, the Middle East and South-East Asia, making my electorate an appropriate place for such a pilot program to have taken place.

I was very pleased to work with the Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans order. I work with them often, and have been doing so over the years. I was pleased that they were able to come into my electorate and conduct this workshop at a secondary school which is very diverse. I found the one-day experience to be very rewarding not just for those of us who were involved in conceptualising the workshop but also for the students who participated in it. The workshop allowed them to confront and come to terms with some of the issues that many of them were experiencing at home. Often it is fear, embarrassment and not wanting to get their parents into trouble. These are some of the reasons why these issues are not raised and perhaps why so many young women are forced into marriage.

Ms FLINT (Boothby) (11:25): I commend the member for Newcastle for presenting this motion today to recognise the International Day of the Girl Child, to inspire worldwide enthusiasm for goals to better girls' lives, providing an opportunity for them to show leadership and reach their full potential. We know we often do not have information on what is happening to women and girls. On many issues we lack agreed and resourced data collection and methodologies. Better data, as we know, always allows decision makers like us to set goals, develop policy and make a real difference for girls.

The Australian government has provided a total of $180,000 to the Australian Bureau of Statistics to build the evidence base for gender indicators for culturally and linguistically diverse women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and those women with a disability. Australia's decision to invest in helping to meet this critical need reflects the importance our government places on achieving real progress on gender equality and women's
empowerment. We want to be part of a coordinated international and cooperative effort to move us forward in this agenda.

Last month, I believe, we announced a $6.5 million investment in the United Nations Making Every Woman and Girl Count program, which is a public-private partnership aimed at closing the gender data gap. As I said, we know this is critical to help decision makers like us do our job and do our best in a public policy sense, which will then also help to progress gender equality.

I would like to mention the motion that I just moved in the main chamber on domestic violence, which is another issue that affects women everywhere in the world every day and on which Australia can provide a leadership role. The motion recognised the importance of changing the national culture to make disrespecting women 'un-Australian'. It acknowledged the Turnbull government's $100 million women's safety package, which was launched last September, to combat domestic violence. It encouraged the ongoing efforts within COAG to ensure that all levels of government and the broader community are cooperating on this shared national endeavour. It recorded concerns about the use of new technology to encourage or allow domestic violence against women and it encouraged governments to consider addressing this as part of their overall strategy to do what they can to protect women and children.

Australia is, and will continue to be, a strong and committed advocate for gender equality, for girls' empowerment and the advancement of girls nationally. We want to get to a place where girls around the world have access to the sorts of opportunities that my sister and I did when growing up, whether that is in health, in education or, just as importantly, in not being forced into marriage against their will, certainly when they are underage.

The United Nations facts on underage and forced marriage are incredibly concerning. Globally, one in seven adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 are currently married or in a union. In developing countries, excluding China, one in every three girls is married before reaching the age of 18. This means the futures of 47,700 girls are derailed every day. Girls who are married early often face a cascade of other human rights abuses. They are more vulnerable to physical and sexual violence. They are often pulled out of school to take on domestic responsibilities and thus are less able to advocate for themselves and their rights. Child marriage is often followed by pregnancy, even if girls are not physically or mentally ready. Across the globe, rates of child marriage are highest in sub-Saharan Africa, where around four in 10 girls marry before the age of 18.

I conclude by recommending a book that provides, to my mind, one of the best and most thought-provoking summaries of forced and arranged marriages, particularly of young women. The book is *Deranged Marriage*. It is memoir by Sushi Das. Chapter 8 does an excellent job of outlining the very serious problems that girls around the globe face and that we all need to focus on addressing.

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

Anti-Poverty Week

Mr TIM WILSON (Goldstein) (11:30): I move:
That this House:

(1) acknowledges that Australia is a prosperous nation with a high standard of living and low levels of poverty by international standards;
(2) recognises that despite our national prosperity, poverty remains an issue for some Australians;
(3) notes that 11 to 17 October is Anti-Poverty Week, a week where all Australians are encouraged to organise or take part in activities to highlight and overcome poverty in Australia and overseas;
(4) understands that the main aims of Anti-Poverty Week are to:
   (a) strengthen public understanding of the causes and consequences of poverty and hardship; and
   (b) encourage research, discussion and action to address these problems, including action by individuals, communities, organisations and governments; and
(5) commends the organisers and sponsors of Anti-Poverty Week for their ongoing efforts to raise awareness and take action to address poverty.

Every country on earth is on a journey to realise economic opportunity for all of its citizens. Through hard work and good policy, Australia is further on that journey than many other nations. But it does not mean that we do not face our own challenges. Australia's prosperity has delivered community wellbeing and social mobility. Yet, the curse of poverty remains real, even here today. Australians possess a deep sense of justice that recognises that people, through circumstances out of their own control, can sometimes fall through the cracks. To be lacking in the resources needed to meet basic needs prevents individuals from reaching their full potential.

A brief snapshot of poverty in Australia reveals the raw nature of the challenge that is before us. ABS data shows that in 2011-2012 11.8 per cent of Australians had a household after-tax income less than half of the median income of all households in Australia. In my own electorate, the seat of Goldstein, the city of Bayside includes an estimated 7,251 people living below this line. That figure includes 1,151 children aged between zero and 14. While poverty is a multidimensional issue and focusing on a single metric like income is problematic, this at least puts into perspective the proportion of society that is at risk of facing some form of hardship. Two point six million Australians, by this income-based measure, experience, or at risk of experiencing, some poverty. This week is about recognising those individuals.

Attention should be drawn to two key underlying causes of poverty—homelessness and unemployment. In Victoria, over 22,000 people were recorded as homeless on Census night in 2011. Almost half of those people were under the age of 25. A lack of affordable housing impacts on an individual's ability to find work and education and training. Over the past two decades house prices have risen steeply while incomes have only grown moderately. The undersupply of affordable housing is a key concern that needs to be addressed in order to ensure future generations are given a fair chance to secure their living arrangements. The best way to avoid risk of poverty, though, is to gain employment. Families with an individual who was employed full-time had only a three per cent poverty rate in 2011-12. This is where economic growth and job creation can have a serious impact on people's lives. Now, more than ever, we must remain firm against the growing anti-globalisation sentiment because protectionism will do little more than entrench poverty in Australia and around the world. The quality and quantity of jobs of the future rely on sustaining and enhancing economic openness and utilising technology.
The report card on youth unemployment is mixed. While there are stubbornly high classes of joblessness across the country, the overall rate is improving. But, at 12.2 per cent, there is a long way to go. Our national youth unemployment figures tell us we have more to do to ensure our young Australians are able to get ahead.

Anti-Poverty Week is also about acknowledging the researchers, community organisations, philanthropic ventures and charities which fight on the frontline for those who are disadvantaged. In particular, I note the hard work of Bentleigh Bayside Community Health, chaired by Marguerite Abbott and led on a daily basis by its CEO, Amanda Murphy. Bentleigh Bayside Community Health runs a program of innovative health services for homeless youth and has an outreach health worker for homeless young people in the cities of Bayside, Kingston, and Glen Eira. I also want to acknowledge the Grace Heart Community Church, located in Highett, as another exemplar of working with disadvantaged people. The church has been led by the Reverend Bruce Corben and works with local people to find stability and opportunity in their life. Institutions like these deliver accessible evidence-informed and innovative services by listening and responding to people in an inclusive and respectful way. We can do our best to help them take control of their lives.

On the world stage, we must also continue to play a role in tackling some of the human development challenges that face us in our region. The Turnbull coalition team is committed to delivering an affordable and effective aid program that reduces poverty and hardship around the world but, importantly, it is done by promoting sustainable economic growth. In 2016-17 the Turnbull coalition team will deliver around $3.8 billion in development assistance, making Australia the 12th-largest donor in the OECD.

Our commitment to reducing poverty and hardship is advanced by promoting human development to overcome some of the immediate challenges faced by people in the Asia-Pacific region, and by promoting sustainable economic development to promote economic opportunities for those who seek it to be able to get ahead. That is the Liberal way, and that is why we are proud to stand up and to fight poverty in Anti-Poverty Week. (Time expired)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Vamvakinou): Do I have a seconder for the motion?

Mr Craig Kelly: I second the motion.

Mr THISTLETHWAITE (Kingsford Smith) (11:35): Next week is Anti-Poverty Week, a week in which all Australians come together and are encouraged to organise or take part in activities to highlight and overcome poverty in Australia and overseas. By international standards, Australia is certainly one of the best nations in the world in which to live and, in terms of quality of life, last year the United Nations ranked Australia second only to Norway.

However, Australia is becoming more unequal and poverty is, unfortunately, on the increase. This is not a phenomenon that is unique to Australia. Despite the fact that progress has been made throughout the world, the number of people living in extreme poverty globally remains unacceptably high. According to the most recent estimates of 2013, 767 million people live on less than $1.90 per day. To do our bit, when Labor was in government Australia’s overseas foreign aid budget increased from 28c in every hundred dollars in 2007-08 to 37c in 2013-14. Had Labor been returned at that election, aid was budgeted to rise to 50c in every hundred dollars in 2017-18.
We all know what occurred after the 2013 election—Australia's foreign aid budget was cut dramatically, to record low levels. It was cut in anti-poverty programs and programs aimed at drawing people in developing countries out of poverty. Today, thanks to this coalition government's irresponsible approach, Australia spends just 23c per hundred dollars on overseas aid. There is little doubt that this 'madness of endless aid cuts' as described by the World Vision CEO, Tim Costello, has damaged our reputation as a responsible global citizen and put Australians at risk by cutting public health, education, infrastructure and biodiversity projects.

Domestically, Australia unfortunately is moving backwards when it comes to poverty and inequality. After 20 years of economic growth, our nation is going backwards in the number of people falling into poverty. A report released by ACOSS in 2014 showed that poverty was growing in Australia, with an estimated 2½ million people, or 13.9 per cent of all people, living below the poverty line that is accepted internationally. This included 603,000 children.

Australia is becoming more unequal, as well. The distribution of wealth and income is becoming less, even in Australia, and the World Wealth and Income Database demonstrates that the share of income going to the top one per cent of Australians has nearly doubled since the 1980s to 8.3 per cent. In terms of wealth, the top 10 per cent of wealthy Australians own 50 per cent of the nation's wealth and, of course, inequality is a key determinant of poverty in Australia. This is reflected in the data in the ACOSS report.

The policies of this government have not made the situation much better at all. In fact, they have made it worse. Cutting pensions and cutting family payments does not help people who are struggling to make ends meet. Watering down Medicare and the universality of our healthcare system is not going to be good for cutting poverty in Australia. Attacking penalty rates—the payments that people use to ensure that they have a good quality of life and a liveable wage—is not going to see poverty reduced in Australia. The groups that tend to be at greatest risk of poverty in Australia include women, sole parents, people with a disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people—the key groups that have been attacked by this government's budgetary policies over recent years. Our First Australians continue to be massively disadvantaged, with a life expectancy 10 years less than the rest of Australia and an unemployment rate of 48 per cent. We are in danger of losing our claim of being the nation of the fair go.

I would like to thank and acknowledge the organisers and sponsors of Anti-Poverty Week: the Australian Red Cross, the Brotherhood of St Laurence, St Vincent de Paul and the University of New South Wales in the constituency I am fortunate to represent. I urge everyone to get online at antipovertyweek.org.au and take part in organised activities that help highlight and bring together the understanding of this urgent cause. (Time expired)

Mr FALINSKI (Mackellar) (11:41): It is with great honour that I stand here today and support the member for Goldstein's motion on Anti-Poverty Week. Mr Wilson has spent a lifetime trying to improve people's lives, not just in a material sense but in a real sense, in our community. It is appropriate that he has moved this motion today to recognise so many community groups who have been involved in trying to solve the problem of poverty in our nation.

We live in one of the richest countries in the history of humanity. Yet we cannot feed all those people who are hungry, we cannot house all those people who are homeless and we still
cannot educate all those people who are illiterate. We have spent hundreds of millions of dollars—billions of dollars—on trying to reduce poverty. The fact is that over our lifetime we have not shifted the needle on this problem in our society. This motion reminds us that poverty is not just a matter of money. Poverty is a matter of much, much more. As Roger Wilkins has said, 'Measuring poverty is a task fraught with controversy.' If we cannot even agree on how to measure the problem, then it is a demonstration of the fact that it is very difficult to agree on how to solve the problem.

We are reminded that poverty is about opportunity. It is about opportunity to access both education and a stable community. A lot of research in the United States has shown that children from poor inner-city households have great difficulty breaking away from the poverty which they are born into because they find it difficult to deal with stress later in life. This is a fact of the communities in which they grow up—the problems that they face with high crime levels and the ability that they have to deal with stress. If we cannot provide stable communities for children, then it is very difficult for them to move out of the poverty to which they have found themselves subjected. Therefore, it is appropriate that we recognise the role of community groups as part of the solution and the progress that can be made into the future.

We live in a modern and dynamic society. Our solutions to this problem need to be modern and dynamic. We cannot simply rely on increased government funding to resolve poverty. Government spending on the welfare bill will increase to $4.8 trillion over our lifetimes. Spending must be about improving lives, not just spending. The most critical part of the reforms recently announced by Minister Porter was the Try, Test and Learn Fund of $96 million. The language that he used was very similar to that which Franklin Roosevelt used when he was seeking election in 1932, when he said that the one philosophy that would drive his administration would be bold experimentation.

The Try, Test and Learn Fund will be more about trying to divert people from ending up in the tyranny of continuing poverty throughout their lifetimes, diverting people away from programs that ensure that they will be entrenched in the poverty to which they have been born. It is important that we continue as a government to invest in these sorts of programs, because the answer is not one size fits all. The answer must be to continue to experiment and to find different ways that we can resolve this problem. Over our generation, we have massively increased the amount of money that we have spent on social spending, yet, as the previous speaker pointed out, income inequality has increased. It must be that spending is not the only answer to reducing poverty and income inequality but, most importantly, opportunity in our society. I commend this motion and congratulate the mover.

Mr HILL (Bruce) (11:45): I support the motion and am pleased to be addressing this chamber on such an important issue in advance of Anti-Poverty Week. I will focus my remarks on Australia although we could, of course, spend much time talking more broadly about the global poverty issues.

The motion is fine as far as it goes, but it seriously understates the issue. The member for Goldstein is not known nationally for his modesty or understatement or indeed his care for inequality—not that I have heard in many of his public remarks—so in that sense the motion is progress, or an achievement. It is true that Australia is prosperous and has a high standard of living, but to say that poverty remains an issue for some people seriously understates the
problem. I am going to allow myself a brief Mayor Quimby moment—one of my favourite characters from *The Simpsons*—and quote myself. In my first speech I said,

I worry that the language of social justice has become too soft, that we must speak more clearly about poverty and stark, indefensible and growing inequality.

...  ...  ...

Despite 25 years of continuous economic growth, inequality in Australia is at a 75-year high, and ... More than 2.5 million of our fellow Australians live below the poverty line

2.5 million Australians are more than just 'some people'. I heard you quote the 2012 report, and I had a look also at the 2014 report by ACOSS, which regrettably showed that, in fact, the percentage of Australians living in income poverty—at less than half the median income—had increased from 11.8 per cent to 13.9 per cent. It understates the issue globally to say we have low levels of poverty by international standards. If you have a look at the 2013 chart of 35 OECD countries, you will see that Australia is, in fact, 26th highest at 14 per cent, well above the OECD average of 11.2 per cent. In my view, the OECD comparators are far more appropriate for a country like Australia than looking at a long list of developing countries around the world. As the member for Kingsford Smith observed, there is disturbing evidence that child poverty mirrors broader poverty levels in Australia. The 2014 UNICEF report into child wellbeing found 13 per cent of Australian children live in poverty—these are just numbers, but behind them there are kids going hungry every night in Australia, without the basics to be well and to succeed.

As has been said, you cannot really talk of poverty without talking about inequality, because poverty is one end of the spectrum, albeit an arbitrary line. Growing inequality is one of the most important macro issues in the world at present. These are not just fuzzy notions of equality or fairness; it is an economic issue because economic exclusion fuels social disharmony and alienation can lead to anger. This is recognised as a priority economic issue by those left wing radicals at the World Bank, The Davos forum, the IMF and the OECD. Consensus is growing that inequality has a significant negative impact on growth and, conversely, that reducing inequality can enhance growth.

The motion does not acknowledge the impact that this government's policies are having on poverty and inequality. You can search this government's election platform on the web and there is no mention of poverty—you hear the Prime Minister talking about it in response to a few transcripts. There is no mention of inequality that I can find. We have heard about housing affordability, which I agree is a primary driving cause of poverty. There are so many families in Australia effectively living in poverty due to housing stress. Unfortunately, the government has nothing to say on this: no minister, no plan and no certainty for the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness, whose funding expires next year—it is limping along from year to year, cut after cut. If I had to pick one of the cruellest cuts that I have seen from the Abbott-Turnbull government, it would be those to benevolent societies. I understand and can buy into, to some degree, a view that welfare does not solve poverty. You have to get people into employment. I accept that, but, if you were to pick the cruellest cuts, they would have to be those which were made in the 2014 budget to benevolent societies: the $100,000 that the Springvale Benevolent Society or the Dandenong District Benevolent Society got to feed the poorest in our community, people who had literally nothing—no blankets, no saucepans. The government absented the field.
The final point I would make is: just recently the Minister for Social Services announced plans to force some young jobseekers into poverty, to force them to wait four weeks to be eligible for Newstart. This is disgraceful. Poverty is not a personal choice. For most people, unemployment is not their preference. For most people, unemployment is a failure of the market or governments, not the individual. Labor does not support making life harder for those who are struggling. Living in poverty is not a crime or a sickness. Listening to some people on the right of politics—not the rhetoric we have heard today—and their relentless quasi-religious focus on economic efficiency and letting the market rip, I cannot help getting the feeling that they would seriously consider ploughing poor people into the fields for fertiliser if it were a more economically efficient use of their carbon, not that many of them believe in carbon. But I commend the motion. It is a platform on which to have a discussion.

Mr CRAIG KELLY (Hughes) (11:50): I feel as though I should make some response to that comment but I think it was just so disgraceful that I am going to let it go. But I would like to mention some of the matters that the member for Kingsford Smith raised. He talked about wanting to spend more money on foreign aid. That is very nice, but where is this money going to come from? If Labor has these wonderful plans and these wonderful ideas to spend more money on foreign aid, where is the money going to come from? What programs are you going to cut, what schools are going to go with less, what hospitals will go with less, what aged-care centres will go with less so we can afford more money for foreign aid? The money has to come from somewhere. Or is the alternative plan simply to borrow more money? Is the plan to borrow more money from overseas to loan it back overseas in the form of foreign aid? If we are going to come into this parliament and be fair dinkum, if we are going to complain about cuts to budgets and things, we must say where the money is coming from.

When it comes to foreign aid, there is a quote from a guy called Bono that sings in some band called U2. His quote is—I think this is worth members of the Labor Party noting—‘Commerce, entrepreneurial capitalism, takes more people out of poverty than aid.’ That is not a comment from the member for Goldstein or a comment from me; that is a quote from Bono, the lead singer of U2. We see it time and time again—the best antidote to poverty is free markets, free trade and capitalism. That is what history shows to us. During the last 20 years we have seen one billion people lifted out of poverty across the world not through foreign aid but through capitalism and free markets, and we should say that unashamedly.

But we do have areas of poverty in this country. We need to all work together to try and raise people out of poverty, and the best way to do that is to increase wealth, to create wealth in our society, because before you can distribute wealth you have to create it. Sadly, what we see from so many policies on the Labor side and on the Green side is that they destroy wealth. If you destroy wealth, you have less to distribute, and the people that are harmed the most are those that we wish to help the most.

One area where we see this is in South Australia. South Australia, perhaps coincidentally with the highest renewable energy target in the country, has the highest electricity prices in the country. What does that lead to? It also has the highest proportion of customers that have had their electricity cut off. If you want to put people in poverty, I cannot think of anything worse than a family having their electricity cut off—to have it disconnected so you cannot cook your dinner on the stove at night, you cannot turn the heater on when it is cold in winter, you cannot have a hot shower in the morning and, yet we have policies from Labor
governments that are increasing their costs of electricity in this country, pushing people into energy poverty, and we are seeing people having their electricity cut.

This is unacceptable. And, what do we see from the Labor Party? Instead of learning from the disaster that is the South Australian economy, instead of learning from where we see a record number of Australians having their electricity cut off—South Australia, the highest number electricity disconnections—instead of learning from that, what do we see? We see the Labor Party, not only wanting to copy South Australia's renewable energy target, but increasing it. Renewable energy is important but it cannot be done at the expense of the poor and those less well off in our society that will pay the ultimate thing when they have their electricity cut off. I thank the member for Goldstein for this motion. Poverty is a serious issue which we should take seriously in this country. *(Time expired)*

Mr JOSH WILSON *(Fremantle)* (11:59): I thank the member for Goldstein for bringing this motion and other members for participating in the debate. While Australia is, broadly speaking, peaceful and prosperous, we cannot forget that many Australians live a very different kind of life and that poverty levels here are relatively high by OECD standards. What is more, the proportion of people living in poverty is growing as inequality grows and, of course, our region comprises of some of the poorest and least developed nations.

It was two years ago that the Australian Council of Social Service launched a report titled *Poverty in Australia*, which showed that one in seven people were living on less than 50 per cent of median income, a third of all sole parent households exist in poverty and the rate of poverty is one and a half times greater for Indigenous Australians and more than double for people with disability. Let us remember that the maximum rate for Newstart allowance, Youth allowance and the single parenting payment are below the poverty line.

But statistics can be numbing, so let us also consider some of the things whose absence defines deprivation and social exclusion: warm clothes and bedding, medical treatment when needed, a substantial meal at least once a day, a decent and secure home, the ability of children to participate in school activities and outings, a yearly dental check-up for kids and a separate bed for each child. It is not hard really to imagine how much anxiety, alienation and suffering is involved when you cannot depend on those things or provide them for your kids.

Absolute or extreme poverty is rare but not unknown in this country. Extreme poverty has been described by Robert McNamara, the former president of the World Bank as 'a condition so limited by malnutrition, illiteracy, disease, squalid surroundings, high infant mortality and low life expectancy as to be beneath any reasonable definition of human decency'. It is very difficult to accept that such conditions exist in a country like Australia but they do. The *Closing the Gap* report from earlier this year shows we are off-track in relation to life expectancy, with Indigenous men and women dying on average 10 years younger than non-Indigenous Australians. The cancer mortality rate is rising for Indigenous people and the rate of diabetes is three times the non-Indigenous rate.

Across our region, extreme poverty is not uncommon. Only two Pacific Island nations managed to achieve their poverty targets under the Millennium Development Goals, yet across the Asia Pacific we have seen aid cuts of 40 per cent to many country programs. Meanwhile, in Timor Leste, our close neighbour, fully half of all children suffer from stunting and the impairment of brain development as a result of malnutrition, yet under this government our aid budget has been savaged. In 2015-16, despite being told that our aid
policy would be more about Jakarta than Geneva, we spent $200 million less in the Asia Pacific to reduce aching disadvantage than in the final year of the previous Labor government.

As the motion states, it is very important that we stop and recognise what poverty means, and Anti-Poverty Week provides that opportunity. But we will get nowhere if this year and next year and the year after that we merely pause and reflect on poverty in Australia, show our sympathy, say a few serious things and a few not so serious things about Bono and other views, storms in South Australia, and move on. There are things that can and should be done.

I am glad that Labor's first priority in approaching the government's omnibus bill was to preserve the supplement payments for a range of welfare recipients. I think it is ridiculous that funding is being cut to community legal centres next year when those services function to pull people back from the brink. I think it is essential that we remove the funding uncertainty for the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness beyond next June. When there is no clarity in relation to funding as at October 2016, damage is already being done. Organisations cannot plan for the future, staff members begin to look for other work and lose morale, and the fragile but essential bonds of trust and knowledge are put under stress or broken altogether.

Last week I visited a crisis housing service in my electorate, called The Sisters’ Place, which operates under the auspices of the St Patrick's Community Care Centre to provide women with a safe place to spend the night. St Patrick's is one of hundreds of community organisations in the dark about funding next year. I call on the government to pull out all the stops and deliver funding clarity and continuity to these services.

Inequality is not just a social ill but a symptom of wider economic malaise, and reducing poverty should be the first measure by which we judge our progress towards a fair and inclusive Australia.

Mr VAN MANEN (Forde—Government Whip) (12:00): I would like to thank the member for Goldstein for putting this motion to the House. It is important that we use this opportunity to reflect on the wealth that we have as a nation. We should be very proud of the fact that, over the past several hundred years, our country has worked extraordinarily hard to achieve that wealth and prosperity, that high standard of living, and that we have low levels of poverty by international standards. Yet—as many have observed in this debate—there are those in our society who still find life difficult every single day and struggle below the poverty line. It remains an issue for many Australians.

It is interesting to note—and I think this is where this motion has much relevance—that there are many organisations in our community that do a tremendous amount of work in this space. It is an opportunity for me today to reflect on some of the wonderful work that some of those organisations do in the electorate of Forde. They do these things out of a genuine love for the people in our community. They want to see them lifted up and see them be able to achieve the opportunities that most other Australians have achieved. They want to see these people lifted up from a place where they are just subsisting from day to day; sometimes they struggle to even get through a day.

There are consequences of poverty. There is much research which shows that people in dire economic circumstances have issues around drugs, poor health and poor educational
outcomes for their children. If we can deal with the issue of poverty and lift these people up from the situation that they are in, we are going to see enormous benefits to their kids, to their family in the longer term and also to the broader community. All of these people have tremendous skills, talents and abilities. Getting them out of their situation of poverty and allowing them to utilise those skills, talents and abilities for the betterment of our communities is of enormous value and enormous importance.

I look at terrific organisations such as Lighthouse Care at Loganholme, who provide trolleys of groceries worth $25 for families and, more generally, discounted groceries in their store. The number of people going through there each week whom they provide these trolleys of groceries worth $25 to is growing by the day. Not only do they do that in our local community, but they do it in a large area of South-East Queensland. Interestingly, not all of these people are from areas that you would view as low-socioeconomic areas. There are people who live in what would be considered wealthier areas who are also struggling financially. There are organisations, such as NightLight, who go out into the streets of our community to feed and care for the homeless. Not only do they feed and care for the homeless but they will go into a street, get the neighbours out of their houses and into the street, have a cup of coffee and serve them some hot food and actually get people talking to their neighbours.

That is one of the things that I think we can all recognise in this place: we lead such busy lives that sometimes we do not spend the time to get to know our neighbours and we do not have those community bonds and relationships. They have told me stories about people in those streets who did not know of the struggles that their neighbours were going through, but as a result of getting to know their neighbours, through the work that NightLight does, people have been able to reach out and help their neighbours get through some very difficult circumstances.

It is these organisations—which not only are reflected in my communities but also, I have no doubt, are reflected in the communities of all of the members in this House and the senators as well—that do this basic grassroots work that make our communities so much better. I thank the member for Goldstein for bringing this motion to the House.

Mr FEENEY (Batman) (12:06): I thank the member for Goldstein for putting forward this motion recognising Anti-Poverty Week and its aims. We are fortunate in Australia; in many ways we live up to our name of the Lucky Country. We have levels of prosperity that many other nations desire and we have a welfare system which acts as a safety net to catch those who are doing it tough. However, these things do not disguise the fact that poverty remains a stark reality for millions of Australians and that inequality is higher than it has been in many decades.

The last poverty report by the Australian Council of Social Service revealed that there are over 2.5 million Australians living below the poverty line. Over 600,000 of these Australians are children; this means that over 17 per cent of all children in Australia are living in households that are below the poverty line—a staggering statistic. At the same time, inequality has reached a 75-year high, with hundreds of thousands of Australians unemployed, over one million underemployed and many more facing the challenges of insecure work. For perhaps the first time in our history, we cannot be confident that the next generation will be better off than we are.
Our most vulnerable are most affected by poverty—women, children, seniors, sole parents, the unemployed, adults born overseas and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The consequences of poverty for individuals are heartbreaking, but poverty and inequality also have broader social consequences: they reduce social cohesion and undermine economic participation. Poverty costs the individual, the community, the economy and the nation.

We all have a responsibility to care about this issue and to do what we can to help those in need. However, I believe the greatest responsibility by far belongs to us, the parliament. We have a responsibility to put tackling inequality, inclusive growth and social investment at the heart of the agenda for government. At the very least, this means not increasing the burden on those who are already disproportionately vulnerable to poverty, as those opposite have sought to do. You cannot seriously speak about addressing poverty while at the same time attacking pensions, increasing the cost of health care, attacking pay and conditions and increasing the burden on Newstart recipients.

There is no doubt that budget repair is important, but it must be fair. I believe it must be used as an opportunity to increase systemic fairness, not to foster even greater inequality. Instead, we must put jobs first. We must invest in education that fosters opportunity. We must improve universal access to healthcare and build stronger, more resilient communities so that we can tackle social exclusion. This goes to the heart of Labor values and our mission as a political movement.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the organisations in my own electorate, Batman, who dedicate their time, energy and passion to addressing the causes and consequences of poverty in our local community every single day. We are fortunate to have over half-a-dozen neighbourhood and community houses in Batman. These hubs bring us together and build community capacity through training, early education and support for a very diverse range of local groups and needs. Many of them also provide much needed food parcels, fuel vouchers, crisis support and hygiene packs. We are also home to some great philanthropic organisations such as the Inner North Community Foundation, which works with local organisations to create programs that help move people into employment and to build philanthropy across our community.

There are far too many organisations such as these to mention them all by name. But the fact that there are so many food banks and the fact that this work is being undertaken by such a diverse miscellany of groups speaks to the fact that these issues of inequality and poverty are growing, not receding, both in my community and more broadly. While the work of these organisations is something our community can be, and is, immensely proud of, it speaks to the incredible and increasing need for these services.

Finally, I thank all of those locals who have given so generously to my Anti-Poverty Week non-perishable food drive that I undertook in conjunction with the Salvation Army.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Vamvakinou): 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.

National Police Remembrance Day

Mr HAYES (Fowler—Chief Opposition Whip) (12:10): I move:
That this House:
(1) notes that National Police Remembrance Day is observed on 29 September;
(2) acknowledges the significant role police make to our local communities and the high degree of risk and personal sacrifice that comes with their duty;
(3) honours the courage and commitment of the men and women who serve in our state and territory police forces together with the Australian Federal Police, and who dedicate their careers to protecting and serving our community;
(4) remembers the ultimate sacrifice that has been made by police officers who have been killed in the course of their duty, and honours their lives;
(5) commends the good work of Police Legacy, who look after the loved ones of police who have died as a result of their duties; and
(6) reaffirms our support for the nation's 56,000 police officers, and honours their efforts to make a difference, defend our way of life and safeguard the peace and security of our communities.

Each year, 29 September is a significant date for Australian police. It is the feast day of Saint Michael, the Patron Saint of Peacekeepers, and the day nationally adopted to commemorate police remembrance. Next year will mark the 30th year of National Police Remembrance Day service being commemorated.

This year it takes on particular significance for police, as they celebrate the 10th anniversary of the National Police Memorial here in Canberra. There was a large turnout at Kings Park and the service was preceded by police from every jurisdiction marching from the Australian Federal Police headquarters across Kings Avenue Bridge to the memorial in Kings Park. The ceremony at the National Police Memorial was attended by the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Bill Shorten, and Justice Minister Michael Keenan.

There were seven new names added to the memorial this year, five of them of an historical nature. That brings the total number of names on the wall to 764—from the first death that was recorded, being Constable Joseph Luker in Sydney Town on 26 August 1803, to the most recent death of Sergeant Geoffrey Richardson who died in a police motor vehicle accident while en route to assist colleagues in a police pursuit on 5 March 2016 at Allandale in the Hunter Valley, New South Wales.

For the first time, the memorial now holds the name of a non-service, unsworn employee of New South Wales Police, Curtis Cheng, who was killed on 2 October 2015 in a terrorist incident outside the New South Wales Police headquarters in Parramatta.

Another very important event occurred at the National Police Memorial on 17 September this year. This was the seventh Wall to Wall Ride for Remembrance. I was pleased to ride from Sydney with New South Wales Police Commissioner Andrew Scipione, together with Western Australian Police Commissioner Karl O'Callaghan, Queensland Police Commissioner Ian Stewart and Northern Territory Police Commissioner Reece Kershaw. This was my seventh ride in this event.

This year saw 2,080 police officers and their supporters riding motorcycles en masse from EPIC on the northern entrance to Canberra, down to Northbourne Avenue, across Commonwealth Avenue Bridge, up to Parliament House, down Kings Avenue and, finally, finishing at the National Police Memorial.
In the first six years of this ride, the PFA, who organise the event each year, has donated $500,000 to Police Legacy, an organisation that does such a wonderful job in looking after the dependants of deceased police officers across the country.

In a very moving speech at the memorial by PFA president Mark Carroll, he summed up the feeling when he said:

Australian police have been sacrificing their lives in the line of duty for more than two centuries. And we've all seen and felt for ourselves just how heartrending those losses are, to shattered families, to grieving friends, to stunned colleagues, even sometimes to strangers.

Of course, when violence and hate and cowardice are behind the loss of our mates, the grief is made all the worse.

Acts of barbarism add so many layers of pain and anger and infuriation. Ultimately, it becomes such an important task to keep every fallen member in the consciousness and the hearts of the living.

I know that through the wall-to-wall ride for remembrance you as a collective are determined to do that.

The Western Australian police commissioner, Karl O'Callaghan, who also took part in the ride, said this at the service:

This place has become the spiritual home of police in Australia. It is here that we are all reminded of the magnitude and gravity of what we are called to do on a day to day basis. This place means so much to those who have been called to the vocation of policing. We are here because we know it could happen to any one of us.

I say of all those police who have given their lives in the course of their duties: may they rest in peace. We are forever grateful for their service.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Vamvakinou): Is the motion seconded?

Mr Watts: I second the motion.

Mr WOOD (La Trobe) (12:16): I congratulate the member for Fowler on all he has done for police men and women right across this country. We have worked previously together on committee and he has always put the thoughts and the views of police members first. That is why I am standing here to support this motion. The motion 'notes that National Police Remembrance Day is observed on 29 September' and 'acknowledges the significant role police make to our local communities and the high degree of risk and personal sacrifice that comes with their duty'. In modern times, sadly that has only gotten worse. The motion 'commends the good work of Police Legacy, who look after the loved ones of police who have died as a result of their duties', and I have attended a number of those events.

I rise to speak on the importance of National Police Remembrance Day. The previous speakers to this motion have touched on this, but I would like to reiterate that our state, territory and Australian police members have, and always will have, the utmost respect of members of parliament for the work they do. The work of police is different to most other jobs. You never know what is going to happen next on your patrol. As a former police officer for 18 years, I know that you could wake up in the morning, go to work and by the end of the day have seen the worst side of life. A lot of members do suffer stress, especially those who have seen horrific incidents. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the police associations and unions in Australia were in the vanguard of moves to establish a memorial to all police officers killed on duty. This process was a long and arduous one, with many discussions
between different levels and sections of government and all sorts of stakeholders. Questions such as what would constitute 'killed in the line of duty', whether all emergency services workers would be honoured at the same memorial and who would pay for the memorial were all bounced back and forth for many years. Full police association and union involvement was critical to the success, along with the unanimous support of various, state, territory and Commonwealth governments and police services.

The National Police Memorial commemorates those who have been killed on duty or have died as a result of their duties and recognises the police contribution to the Australian community. The memorial should capture a range of policing elements, including courage, duty and integrity; the perpetual need to serve the community; the unpredictable nature of policing; the strength and common purpose of police; and local, national and international aspects. The memorial itself was opened on 29 September 2006, and I am very proud to say I was there on the day.

I think it is important, though, at this point to highlight the parameters around who is included in the memorial, particularly what it means to say that someone died as a result of their duties. The determination as it currently stands states that this includes:

… a police officer has died as a direct and conclusive link to a personal injury causing or substantially contributing to the death. An illness or disease may be classed as an injury if arising from an external physical cause or contracted in the course of duty.

Obviously there are some holes in this ruling in the sense that mental health issues are often difficult to see in an outwardly manifested way. You cannot see the mental effect of working in the police force in the same way you can see a bullet wound or a broken arm.

I would like to briefly touch on a police member who sadly and tragically took his life. I will refer to him as Paul. I knew him personally. He had an outstanding career, including receiving the Victorian Police Star, National Medal; National Police Service Medal, Second Class; National Medal, First Class; and National Police Service Medal, Third Class. He had an incredible career with Victoria Police, including duxing as a recruit. He was also one of my detective training school instructors. I was very sad to hear — my chief of staff, Gary, also worked with this gentleman. We have been in contact with his sister. We believe it is high time that when members have tragically taken their lives they are included in the memorial, because they also have served the community for year after year. Thank you.

Ms CHESTERS (Bendigo) (12:21): Firstly I would like to acknowledge and congratulate the member for bringing forward this very important motion. These days we do have lots of remembrance days throughout our calendar, and it is one of the roles of being an elected representative to attend these services on behalf of our community. Police National Remembrance Day is important. In reflecting on the remarks made by the previous speaker, I too wish to highlight in this speech mental health and how mental health should be at front of mind for all police officers.

I acknowledge the work that our police services are doing around the country—and the AFP—to start having the conversation. The conversation around mental health and suicide is difficult in any workplace, but even more so in the police. and I will outline that in a few moments.
At the Bendigo service we actually had the former superintendent for Bendigo, Peter Bull, as the guest speaker. He had recently completed some work on this issue for the Victoria Police. He spoke about what is happening and what his study actually found. In his speech he highlighted to the room and to the people who had attended the service that police officers were four times more likely to die as a result of their own actions than all other causes combined.

It is an alarming and heartbreaking statistic and I congratulate Peter Bull for talking about this tough topic. As he said, today of all days we must remember these individuals; we must do better as a community and as a force to support all men and women of Victoria Police—in fact all police forces around the country—to make sure that we have proper debriefing, to make sure that we are reaching out and checking in on each other, so that that statistic can come down.

In Victoria we acknowledged 22 serving Victorian police officers who had lost their lives in the last 12 months. Whilst none of those were from my electorate, there were many families who attended on that day who were still mourning the loss of their loved ones. This day allows families who have lost loved ones who have served as police a chance to respect and to remember. I spoke to one mother who still speaks about the pain of losing her son. She speaks about how much he loved his job. He did it to serve his community. Days like today allowed her to talk about his role and about his work and helped her with the grieving process.

When community and social cohesion start to fracture, it is our emergency services who are at the front line. Whether they be police, whether they be ambulance officers, whether they be our firefighters or our social workers, they are at the front line. And we know that we are experiencing increased rates of social community and family cohesion breakdown which is resulting in increased crime, and our police are at the front line of that.

In my part of the world, in Bendigo in central Victoria, we are seeing spikes of family violence. It is our police that are at the front line of that. We are seeing an increase in aggravated assault and burglary. Our police and emergency services are at the front line of that. So on remembrance day, whilst we stop to remember respect and reflect on those who have lost their lives, we also took a moment to stop and reflect on those who are still working and still serving and the challenges that they face today and every day.

It is important that we reach out and ensure that men and women working in the police force know that they do have services and support to turn to. It is important that this place acknowledge their hard work and the increasing dangers that they place themselves in. There is more that we can do in this place, not just to remember, through motions like this, but to ensure that they are adequately funded and resourced, that they have the programs when people reach out for support. I support the motion and commend it to the House.

Mr CREWThER (Dunkley) (12:26): Today I rise and acknowledge my support of the Hayes motion on National Police Remembrance Day. It is an opportunity to honour the memory of those who have given their lives in the service of our community.

National Police Remembrance Day service is significant and it is a significant date on the policing calendar. This year it is marked on 29 September. At this year's service I was honoured to be invited to participate in a Blue Ribbon Day memorial service at the Frankston RSL in Dunkley and to lay a wreath in honour of those who had served and lost their lives in
the line of duty in our local community. I was joined by my state and local government counterparts, Acting Superintendent Simon Humphrey, members of the local police force, family and friends of Victorian police officers and members of the community.

Importantly, a Victorian Police Star medal was posthumously awarded to First Constable Edward Keith Simmons, who died while serving on duty on Olivers Hill in Frankston on 24 September 1957, at the age of just 33. First Constable Simmons had two children: Cathy, aged four years, who has now passed away, and Andrew Keith Simmons, who was two years old at the date of his father's death. Andrew was there to accept the award on his father's behalf at the event, and it was a very moving ceremony.

This memorial service has offered the opportunity to provide solemn reflection and a space for serving and retired police officers and their families, along with members of the Dunkley community, to honour the memory of police officers who gave their lives in the service of our community. Personally I have two cousins—my cousin Jason McKenzie and his wife Melissa—who serve as police officers in Melbourne. Melissa is about to have their third child.

So it is particularly important that members of the police force are respected and that we remember the significant service of those who lost their lives. We have to keep working to ensure that police officers are protected and respected in the line of duty. The total number of police officers now listed in the national police memorial is now 764, following the addition of seven new names to the wall.

In Dunkley, for example, there are in excess of 100 police members as well as detectives and support staff who are working in Dunkley. Recently raised with me by Councillor Darrell Taylor, formerly the Mayor of the City of Frankston and now standing again as a councillor in the upcoming elections—was the idea of installing a formal police memorial at the new Frankston war memorial site in Frankston. Darrel was instrumental in securing these funds to begin with for the new memorial. I thought this was a terrific idea that should be supported. It is an idea that would honour those police officers who have served and who may have lost their lives in duty in Dunkley, but also it respects those across Victoria who have gone through a similar circumstance.

I would also like to thank and honour the men and women of the police force in Dunkley who put their lives on the line all the time. They do a significant job. I have experienced the work of the police force and been to a number of events in Dunkley to hear from members of the police force about what they have done and what they continue to do in protecting our community. Frankston in Dunkley, like many other communities across Victoria, is not precluded from having issues around crime and violence, particularly domestic violence. Being the father of a one-year-old daughter and the husband of my wife for over seven years, I believe it is quite significant that we need to support police officers in their work in protecting, in particular, women, children, the elderly and others from the impacts of domestic violence. National Police Remembrance Day goes to the heart of what the police force do, and we really need to make sure that we support them in Dunkley and beyond.

Mrs ELLIOT (Richmond) (12:31): I am very pleased to be speaking on this important motion about National Police Remembrance Day. I commend the member for Fowler for moving the motion and note the contributions by other members, all of whom have shown very strong support for our police services and for recognising National Police Remembrance
Day, which falls on 29 September. It is very significant that our federal parliament regularly acknowledges the service and sacrifice of our police officers throughout the nation.

I am particularly pleased to speak on this motion for a number of reasons. Firstly, as a former police officer myself I always want to take the opportunity to commend the work of our police services right across the country. My husband is also a former police officer, so we know firsthand the challenges that our frontline police officers face. I also want to take this opportunity to thank the local police in my electorate of Richmond. This is the Tweed-Byron Local Area Command. They do an incredible job, often under very difficult circumstances, so I put on record my appreciation for their hard work. The Tweed-Byron Local Area Command cover a very diverse region with sometimes very differing challenges. The New South Wales North Coast is a growing population with very busy tourist areas, which of course creates its own issues when the population greatly increases at peak times.

For many reasons, policing can be a very difficult job, and recognition from the broader community is very important. As I have said, with National Police Remembrance Day falling on 29 September each year, it provides an occasion for all of us to honour those officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty. The first remembrance day was held in September 1989. Since that time the commemorations and awareness have really increased within our community. This year services were held right across the country to mark this very significant day. My husband and I were police officers in Queensland. I would like to note that there were many very well-attended candlelight vigils, marches and memorial services held right throughout the state.

Today I would like to focus a bit on the New South Wales police. Since the inception of the New South Wales police in 1862, 254 members of the New South Wales Police Force have died in the line of duty. This year on remembrance day, New South Wales Police Commissioner Andrew Scipione said that National Police Remembrance Day is a time for everyone in the policing family to come together and honour those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. He further said:

National Police Remembrance Day is about recognising the incredible courage of those officers who've lost their lives while serving the community of New South Wales. It is with great sorrow that we pause to remember two of our beloved policing colleagues; Curtis Cheng and Sergeant Geoffrey Richardson. … The tragedy of their passing is a sober reminder of the continued dangers that thousands of brave men and women face each day in service to the community, where there's no way of knowing what potential risk they may face. Our deepest sympathies go out to the Cheng and Richardson families; today we honour the memory of their loved ones and reflect on the dedicated service and bravery of all police officers. These are very appropriate words by Commissioner Scipione. I echo his condolences and sympathies to the Cheng and Richardson families. Our greatest sympathies go to all in those families.

We see a number of police monuments through various states. We have our national police monument as well. It is located here in Canberra and was completed in 2006, with the names of 719 fallen officers who have given their lives in the line of duty. Their names are inscribed on a wall of brass touch stones. These touch stones include the officers' ranks, names jurisdictions, places and dates of death.
This year's service saw those two names added as well as another five historic nominations. The addition of these seven names brings the total number of officers listed on the National Police Memorial to 764. It is important to note that this year, 2016, marked the 10th anniversary of the National Police Memorial in Canberra. The day is also important because it provides a time to remember police officers who lost their lives through illness or other circumstances, and a day for the general community to pause and thank those who serve in the police services.

I would also like to touch on the contribution of Police Legacy and acknowledge the outstanding job that they do throughout the country. They were originally founded to help bereaved families fighting the loss of their loved ones, but their support now extends to include police officers and their families experiencing challenging and difficult times in their lives. So I thank Police Legacy for the outstanding work that they continue to do. It is highly valued and respected.

I am pleased to speak on this motion in relation to National Police Remembrance Day, particularly as a former police officer. It is an opportunity for all of us to remember not only those police officers who died whilst serving but also the sacrifices that police officers and their families make. I would like to thank all police officers and their families right across the country, particularly in my electorate and those in the Tweed Byron local area command. Thank you for your service and also thank you to your families for the sacrifices we know that they make.

Mr DRUM (Murray) (12:36): I am grateful to have the opportunity to speak on this motion on National Police Remembrance Day. Like all other members of parliament, I am sure, I spent a portion of my day on 29 September at a local service commemorating the sacrifice of fallen policemen. I was able to do that at St Pauls Lutheran Church in Shepparton. It was the most amazing service and amongst those there was a range of new Australians from the African council who were able to join in the singing and the celebration of the lives that have been lost.

The concept of Police Remembrance Day takes on a special significance when you go to Shepparton due to a very high profile case, still unsolved—that is, the gutless murder of Damian Eyre and Steven Tynan. Those killings took place in 1988. Being a Shepparton boy, Damian's death was felt very strongly. His dad, Frank, served 45 years in the Victoria Police and Frank's two boys, Damian and Daryl, followed in his footsteps in the force. So it was an absolute tragedy when Damian was murdered.

Out of absolute tragedy some positives can arise. The Blue Ribbon Foundation was formed, in a sense, with these killings very fresh in their minds. The Blue Ribbon Foundation do a huge amount of good work right around Australia and certainly around Victoria. It is a positive that has come out of these senseless killings. Also, some memorial scholarships are now embedded in Victoria Police and the Tynan Eyre emergency unit has been built at Shepparton hospital. All of these memorials and tributes to Damian Eyre and Steven Tynan are very real, but do not take away from the fact that so many of our police men and women on the beat today and everyday are putting their lives in danger.

As the previous speaker—whose husband is a policeman—happened to note, we need to acknowledge the families that accept the risk associated with their loved ones' roles. Certainly, they make an ongoing sacrifice every day by knowingly sending their loved ones
out to work on the beat, knowing that they deal with trouble and incredibly difficult issues every day. This is something that we need to occasionally reflect on; that we have high expectations of our police force—our police men and women. We need to be very aware of the dangers.

At the moment the police sector in Victoria has a very significant issue coming out of the former state coalition government. I must acknowledge the former police minister, Peter Ryan, who went to a 2010 election with a pledge to introduce 940 additional police. The then Labor Party opposition said it could not be done. He spent four years proving that it could be done and brought 1,940 additional police into the sector. He also introduced the PSOs—930 additional protective services officers to man every train station from dark through to the last train. Again, this has been a policy that has had a tremendous impact.

So, we just need more police. We need to acknowledge the risk that they put themselves in every day, and the mainstream public need to acknowledge and respect that police are doing this work and protecting the community. (Time expired)

Mr Gosling (Solomon) (12:41): I am very pleased to be speaking on this important motion today. I commend the member for Fowler for moving this motion—he is a good man. I note the contributions made by previous speakers acknowledging the significant contribution of police, supported by their families and mates, to our local communities, and the high degree of risk and personal sacrifice that comes with carrying out their duty.

I was talking with some Afghanistan veterans recently about awareness-raising around the issue of PTSD. I said to them I wanted to include emergency services and police officers in some of that awareness-raising work, and one of these combat veterans said, 'Bloody oath, they are on the tools dealing with stuff every day'—that is a policeman he is talking about. Now, policing is difficult and the environments are often complex and dangerous. Often there are near misses. Sometimes there are injuries and sometimes officers are killed. As the opening quote from our Darwin Police Remembrance Day booklet reminded us, 'Greater love hath no one than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.'

National Police Remembrance Day is held on 29 September as this is the feast day of Saint Michael, the archangel and patron saint of police. Interestingly, Saint Michael is considered a defender of good against evil by all three of the great monotheistic religions of the world: Christianity, Judaism and Islam, and all three faiths hold Saint Michael in great esteem.

Police are not the only ones who are said to have Saint Michael's patronage, as he also watches over grocers, mariners and paratroopers—I had forgotten this, but then remembered that a mate of mine at the 3rd Battalion always jumped with a Saint Michael necklace around his neck for protection and I am pretty sure it always worked. St Michael is also the patron of hat makers, Papua New Guinea, emergency medical technicians, radiologists, ambulance drivers and bakers.

In my electorate of Solomon, we commemorated National Police Remembrance Day at a humbling service at my parish, Saint Mary's Star of the Sea Cathedral, in Smith Street, Darwin. Alongside serving and retired police, military personnel and their beloved families and friends, I was moved by a very powerful homily by the Bishop of the NT, the Most Reverend Eugene Hurley. Bishop Hurley spoke about his pride that generally speaking, we, as
people, can tell right from wrong and about how we try our best to act on the highest good. But, sadly and often tragically, this is not always the case.

Bishop Hurley highlighted that police hold great positions of trust within society and communities and as the keepers of peace and maintainers of order. He expressed that this should never replace the responsibility of the individual to do the right thing of their own volition, particularly to act in good faith to maintain peace and respectful relationships within families.

This year's service was also poignant, as Curtis Cheng's name was added to the national memorial as a result of his tragic death, which occurred during his service for the New South Wales Police last year.

As you know, it is important that we politicians are measured in our debate in this place. I would like it recorded in the Hansard that Curtis Cheng's son, Alpha Cheng, who is a teacher here in Canberra, recently used an open letter to call on Senator Hanson to stop linking his father's death and the Sydney Lindt Cafe siege to comments about the Muslim community that promote fear and exclusion within the community. I believe our police forces have a good culture of promoting multiculturalism and tolerance, and this should be commended and continued. I also believe making such connections for base political purposes actually makes the jobs of officers working in those communities much more difficult.

I personally know so many good police officers. They are stand-up people. I want to particularly acknowledge some of the Territory's officers, including Sean Parnell for his decades of solid work and his assistance with this statement, and my friend Geoff Bahnert, as well as Paul McCue from the Police Association for his work to achieve better conditions for officers and his provision of policy advice to government that will assist with the conduct of safer and more successful community policing. I also want to acknowledge the NT chapter of Police Legacy. They do a great job supporting the families.

As we have heard, nine police officers from Australia, New Zealand and the south-west Pacific are known to have passed away in the last 12 months. I want to pass on my respect and gratitude to their families. May they all rest in peace and with honour. (Time expired)

Dr McVEIGH (Groom) (12:46): It is an honour to rise in support of this motion. Our electorate of Groom, like many other regional communities across this country, deals with challenges that, if unchecked, can affect the wellbeing and safety of our entire community. In our case, our city of Toowoomba sits at the intersection of three major highways—the Warrego, Gore and New England—which link us to the north, south, east and west. Whilst this infrastructure provides exciting opportunities for the Darling Downs community, it does present issues with, for example, the scourge of drugs, which are either transported or traded in our region. It is our Queensland Police Service that investigates, curtails and stamps out this despicable trade where possible—more often than not, placing themselves in danger in doing so.

Similarly, such infrastructure presents road safety challenges, and we should never forget it is our fine serving women and men of the Queensland Police Service who are often the first respondents to tragedies on our roads, who manage accident investigation sites, and of course, at times deliver sad news to the loved ones of those involved.
We must always prioritise the necessary support for serving and retired police officers, who provide such service to all of us. Whether it is tragedy, major crime, natural disaster or petty theft, it is our police service that is always there on the front line to serve and protect us all. Certainly, my community of Groom, in and around Toowoomba, has seen its fair share of all of those issues.

It was my great pleasure, and in particular my great honour, on 28 and 29 December to join with Deputy Commissioner Steven Gollschewski, Assistant Commissioner Tony Wright, District Superintendent Mark Kelly and many other serving and retired members of the Queensland Police Service in our southern Queensland police region to remember those fine officers we have lost over the decades. It was moving to hear my good mate, Inspector Michael Curtin, recite the names of those officers we have lost, from Constable Matthew Connely in 1861, right through to Constable Damien Gerard Acutt in 2005.

As our police chaplain, the Reverend Jeff Baills, quite rightly said: ‘We remember the lives of these police officers and we honour their sacrifice. We regard the lives of these police officers as we value their commitment and efforts in protecting our community. We respond to the lives of these police officers for the greatest gratitude of a community is to recognise the price that has been paid to uphold its freedom.’

The Reverend Jeff Baills went on to say: ‘We gather not only to raise awareness of those police officers who have gone before us; we also stand alongside our current sworn officers, where on the badge they wear every day is written the statement ‘With honour we serve’. As a community, we come together to honour your commitment and to stand with you as we honour those who have gone before you.’

These are the words with which he concluded, and no truer words could be said about those fine men and women of the Queensland Police Service as examples of similar officers right across the country who do protect and serve all of us.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Irons): 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.

Defence Personnel

Mr HASTIE (Canning) (12:51): I move:

That this House:
(1) acknowledges and supports the deployed Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel currently serving overseas;
(2) recognises that:
   (a) there are currently well over 2,000 ADF personnel serving overseas; and
   (b) these men and women are playing a critical role in supporting Australia's national interests by contributing to international security operations; and
(3) notes the Government's ongoing support for our deployed ADF personnel and the $910.7 million provided in the 2015 budget to support major overseas operations including Okra, Highroad, Manitou, Accordion and Resolute.

After a decade and a half of war, conflict in the Middle East is an abstraction for many Australians. Their understanding is largely shaped by fragmented media images. One of the themes common to western democracies over the last 15 years of war is a growing distance
between the military who serve overseas and the citizenry who send them. We, as members of parliament, must always strive to close that gap by clearly articulating the reasons why we send Australians to war and ensuring they are supported both morally and materially. This should especially be the case when we share a bipartisan resolve. We are at war with Islamic State, or Daesh. We will defeat IS and free the Syrian and Iraqi people held captive by that evil regime, and that future victory is being made possible by the contribution of the deployed ADF personnel. These men and women are bringing stability to that region and safety to this nation.

In 2014, IS burst on to the international scene. It proclaimed its caliphate across territory in Iraq and Syria. From that position, it has launched attacks across the world. It has wrought horror, destruction and fear. An effective response needed to be clear, decisive and overwhelming. From the outset, this government has provided the framework for the fight against IS. Our framework remains to disrupt, degrade and defeat IS. Our sailors, soldiers and airmen, working as part of a global coalition, needed to have the space and time to execute that plan. Almost a year on since I last spoke on this subject, we can see the government's resolve and confidence in that strategy is paying dividends. The ADF have performed magnificently in degrading Islamic State and we are trending towards victory.

In the fight against IS, we are not combating a group of mindless violent thugs. What motivates them is a coherent ideology with its own rules and goals. Theology is the cornerstone of their strategic framework, but it is also the key to their downfall. This is a contest of ideas and IS ideology requires external validation. Put simply, territory and expansion are key components of Islamic State's theology. A caliphate is territory; a caliph its leader. A caliph requires territory from which to wage war and implement sharia. Every victory we have, every metre of ground IS loses, undermines their legitimacy and authority. Unlike al-Qaeda, a caliphate cannot exist underground. Take away its territory and you take away its capacity to exist. The longer a caliph goes without making offensive jihad, as Islamic State refer it, the weaker his authority becomes. There is a strict criterion to be caliph. A shrinking caliphate will lose the allegiance of its fighters.

IS have not had a major battlefield success in Iraq in over a year. Their strategic aims, so closely linked to their world view, are crumbling before them. Every material defeat is a victory for the coalition, a raid against it. They are now facing an existential crisis both material and, more importantly, ideological. Fighter desertions are increasing. That is why the ADF's contribution in the region is so significant. Our troops involved in Task Group Taji have assisted in the training of more than 30,000 Iraqi security forces. These forces have spearheaded the recapture of more than 45 per cent of IS territory in Iraq. They have liberated major centres like Ramadi, Hit and Fallujah, and scores of villages and communities are now free of IS barbarism. They are on track to liberate Mosul. Our air task group has also had considerable success. Its contribution to the 13,500 strikes in Iraq and Syria has helped to contain, impede and cripple IS.

Much of IS's critical infrastructure has been destroyed and its financial support reduced. Over 10,000 square kilometres in Syria has been reclaimed. A special operations task force is also in the region, providing advice and assistance to the Iraqi counterterrorism service. Right now, coalition forces are staging to retake the Syrian village of Dabiq, which occupies a significant place in IS's theology and strategy. According to IS, the armies of Islam will
supposedly win a decisive victory over Western forces here. To lose Dabiq would be a blow from which IS might never recover, as it would prove false one of their central ideas. Indeed, Dabiq is the name of their e-magazine, a key component of their propaganda arm that is used to recruit and radicalise young Australians.

The men and women of the ADF are crushing IS. Their contribution is keeping the people of Australia safe. They are protecting our way of life and securing the future of our children. Today we acknowledge their service to Australia, the sacrifice their families endure in their lengthy absences and their vital role in what will be the historic and enduring defeat of Islamic State.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Irons): Is there a seconder for the motion?

Mr SNOWDON (Lingiari) (12:56): I second the motion moved by the member for Canning. Firstly, I thank the member for Canning for bringing this matter to our attention, and also say to him, ‘Thank you for your service in uniform for this country and for the role you have played’. I also acknowledge my friend, the member for Solomon, who is a former Army officer, and the member for Eden-Monaro for their service to this country of ours.

We can be very proud of our men and women in uniform and should never forget what they do for us. Last week I had the great privilege of attending the launch of Afghanistan: the Australian story at the Australian War Memorial. This documentary comprises two DVDs, produced by Chris Masters in partnership with the Australian War Memorial and Luscious International, that tell the story, through their own eyes and with their own words, of Australian serving personnel—Air Force, Navy, Army—telling what their service entailed, what was involved and what sacrifices they made. The documentary also talks about those who were lost—the 41 Australians whose lives passed so tragically—through interviews with the survivors, their partners, their families. I know one family in particular from the Northern Territory—the family of Scott Palmer. Since his passing, his mum, Pam, and Ray, her husband, have been great advocates for the need to address the concerns of Australian defence personnel once they have come back home.

I commend this documentary. I hope we can have it distributed widely, seen in the parliament and on public television, because it tells us very graphically about the sacrifices that were referred to by the member for Canning. It gives us great clarity about the sacrifices that are made and the contributions that are being made on our behalf by those brave men and women in uniform. It shows women at the front line in a way we have not seen so graphically previously, even though, today—as a result of work which I, in fact, was involved in with the Department of Defence—effectively all jobs in the Defence Force are open to women, should they be able to achieve the physical standards that are required and provided they have the psychological aptitude et cetera.

What I have come to see, over the many years that I have been in this place and over the number of times I have been to the Middle East since the early 2000s, is that we cannot underestimate the role our Defence Force personnel play. The member for Canning referred to the fight against ISIS. I have great faith in the leadership of our defence community. I have great faith not only in the Chief of the Defence Force and the seniors but also in the platoon commanders: those young men and women whose job it is to lead young Australian men and women at war. When you contemplate their bravery—the need for them to be creative, to be
decision makers—and see how well they perform, is it any wonder we should have nothing but praise for them?

At the same time, I do not think we have due regard to the trauma that they are witness to and that they are forced to endure: to see mates lost in battle. There is a very graphic illustration of this on the back of the *Afghanistan: The Australian Story* DVD cover. It shows sappers Darren Smith and Jacob Moreland and their bomb-detection dog, Herbie. All three were killed by an improvised explosive device on 7 June 2010. This is a graphic illustration of what war means. This image—of two vital, brave young men and their dog—says to us that, when we ask our men and women to go away for us, we potentially expect them to make the ultimate sacrifice. What is left behind is not only their heritage—the heritage of all men and women in uniform—but also the suffering of their families, their friends and their comrades. So, when we are thinking today about Australian men and women in uniform, let us also think about those who are left behind when those who pay the ultimate sacrifice do not come back to us. *(Time expired)*

Mr FALINSKI (Mackellar) (13:01): It is a great honour to rise to speak in favour of this motion on Australian Defence Force personnel. I would like to recognise the military service of the member for Canning and thank him for being here and moving this motion. This motion recognises the importance of our nation's contribution to international peace, but, more importantly, it recognises the important role that our service personnel play in maintaining that peace globally. Their sacrifice, their dedication, makes this world a more secure one and a better one. Security overseas means security at home. When we talk about a world free from terror, we are also talking about the service of so many of our fellow Australians who are in our military. As the member for Warringah has been heard to say, they have served. We are honoured by their service. Our military is currently one of the best in the world. It is better trained and better resourced than so many others globally. It plays a critical role in promoting peace in the Middle East, under Operations Accordion and Okra, and in Afghanistan under Operation Highroad. In Fiji, our armed forces have been critical in helping rebuild that nation after tropical Cyclone Winston.

It is important to note that so often in the past we have won the war but we have lost the peace. These operations are about ensuring that we continue to win the peace so we do not have to go to war so often. The ADF's longest operation is Mazurka, which is the peacemaking operation in the Sinai Desert following the war between Egypt and Israel in 1967. This operation has been complicated more recently due to the changing security situation in that area, yet our armed forces continue to provide security in the Sinai Desert.

My electorate of Mackellar is home to many serving officers, especially from the 101st commando squad, who recently celebrated their 60th anniversary in Sydney in the presence of the Governor-General, His Excellency Sir Peter Cosgrove. Their commanding officer, Matt Stevens, is a credit to our nation and to his unit. Pittwater House in my electorate continues its tradition of having one of the most active cadet units in Australia. Recently I attended their
annual parade and I can certainly say that the enthusiasm that the students have for their cadet unit has only increased over time. At every commemoration on the northern beaches, you can find Pittwater House cadets forming a catafalque party and doing our community proud.

The veterans centre at Dee Why RSL is one of the most dynamic in the country. It is experimenting with new programs to help our veterans transition from the military to civilian life. Under Ben Webb, progress is being made on new database tools, coordination and practical programs that help make that transition easier. As Ben has explained to me, many people who serve in the military find that they come out of the military and have to do things that they are not used to doing—for example, simple things like budgeting for their day-to-day lives. His centre at Dee Why RSL is helping serving officers transition to civilian life in a more practical and seamless fashion.

I do not want to forget Tamara Sloper, who somehow hoodwinked me into doing 22 push-ups every day to assist veterans make the transition as well. Mackellar has numerous active RSL clubs. Their contributions to our community are priceless and ongoing. They remind us that their service is broader than combat exercises in many parts of the world. Our military keep the peace, rebuild broken communities, ensure a safer world and then continue to make contributions when they return. I am honoured to represent so many of those in my community who have served.

Mr GOSLING (Solomon) (13:25): I address my remarks to the men and women of the Australian Defence Force, their families and our grateful nation in support of the member for Canning's motion to acknowledge the deployed Australian Defence Force men and women currently serving overseas.

Members of the three armed services—Navy, Army and Airforce—continue to be proud ambassadors for our country overseas. ADF members are currently serving in the Middle East, Sudan, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, Afghanistan, the seas to our north, the Southern Indian Ocean and as part of multilateral actions elsewhere around the globe.

For my electorate of Solomon, we are the tip of the spear of the Australian Defence Force with all three arms of the Defence Force operating in the defence of Australia and our interests. We have major bases including naval bases 1st Brigade at Robertson Barracks, NORCOM, NORFORCE, Larrakeyah Barracks, and of course the Royal Australian Air Force at RAAF Base Darwin. From these bases thousands of Australian service personnel have been deployed on operations and are currently deployed on operations, including 50 Darwin based soldiers currently serving in Iraq with Task Group Taji.

I want to associate myself with the words of the member for Canning in relation to the absolute professionalism of those members of Task Group Taji. That task group has been particularly well led. The training task unit, TTU, whose mission is to train the Iraqi army to defeat the Daesh terrorist threat is doing a sterling job. The Unit has adopted 'persevere' as its motto in honour of the legendary Australian Army Training Team Vietnam, AATTV, and, by all accounts, is living up to these exceedingly high standards. Darwin based soldiers are also deployed in other theatres of operation, and I want to acknowledge the sacrifices made by the families of these Defence Force members whilst they are overseas deployed in our name.

It is of course essential that our deployed Defence Force men and women are well supported in the execution of their jobs for our country, and I know the Australian Defence
Force community ensures that that occurs. To everyone who is playing a role in supporting our ADF members overseas, thank you.

The ADF is extremely well led, as the member for Lingiari mentioned earlier, and I am very proud of my association and of my family's association with this marvellous cornerstone of our nation. Just as important as the support needed on operations is the support those service men and women receive on their return to Australia and to their homes, and, indeed, through the transition when they ultimately leave the Defence Force to rejoin civilian life.

Of course, the work of our Australian Defence Force is very dangerous. We have had members of our Australian Defence Force seriously injured and killed during training and on operations including those from the Top End who have been killed in Afghanistan such as Scott Palmer who served with the 2nd Commando Regiment.

Scott's parents, Ray and Pam Palmer, are working in the Top End to assist veterans. They recently attended a ceremony in Melbourne at the Shrine of Remembrance put on by the Commando Association. Pam, Ray and I want to acknowledge the master of ceremonies, an old commando friend of mine, Mark Preston, and the organisers of that event which was very much appreciated by Ray and Pam.

I wish to finish with a message from Ray and Pam Palmer to our Defence Force personnel currently serving overseas in our name:

We would like to let them know that they are doing an outstanding job and that they are certainly making us proud of them. It really doesn't matter what their jobs are; we can honestly say we are so proud of them. They are a true credit not only to their parents here at home but also to all Australians.

Over the past 6 years, we have certainly met many of our young defence personnel. They certainly have always shown us so much respect, and we would like to thank them for that indeed. We are not only talking about us, but we can certainly mention other families that have lost their sons over in Afghanistan, and they all say the same.

It is an honour to be able to read these words on behalf of Ray and Pam Palmer. To our deployed troops, thank you for your service. Stay safe and God bless.

(Time expired)

The DEPUTY 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.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Indi Electorate: Lake Hume

Ms McGOWAN (Indi) (16:00): I would like to bring to the attention of this chamber a serious problem we are experiencing in north-east Victoria and southern New South Wales, and it is to do with the floods below the Hume weir. Our problem is linked to communication with the Murray-Darling Basin Authority. I bring before the House an editorial from The Border Mail from 8 September, over a month ago, where The Border Mail states:

… there has been a lack of clear communication about the rate of outflows from the Murray-Darling Basin Authority, the body responsible for deciding the rate of outflows from Lake Hume.

The Canberra-based institution declines to predict its day-to-day release levels from Lake Hume, saying they can vary and the forecasts may not match reality.
This is a month ago.

The MDBA has on its website a live river data section, but it is retrospective and has been criticised by the Murray River Community Action Group's president Richard Sargood, who represents the low-lying property owners. The MDBA Twitter account has not tweeted about release levels from Lake Hume. This is a month ago. We knew we had a problem; the MDBA knew they had a problem and over the last month they have seriously failed to address the communication issues of people in north-east Victoria and southern New South Wales. Who is responsible? The minister for water is responsible. So I absolutely call on the minister for water to come to north-east Victoria, face the people of my electorate and explain what is going on. (Time expired)

**Mental Health Week**

*Mrs WICKS* (Robertson) (16:01): Mental Health Week is a vital opportunity to consider the social and emotional wellbeing of ourselves, our families, our loved ones and our community. It is particularly important because, for many people, mental illness is still the elephant in the room. In my electorate on the Central Coast, many local organisations will be out and about during Mental Health Week. Brisbane Waters Private Hospital is holding a mental health expo at Deepwater Plaza in Woy Woy on Thursday. The hospital CEO Kathy Beverley told me it will be mainly about kick-starting conversations. So what better way to tackle the elephant in the room than with an eight-foot inflatable elephant. I am not sure the elephant has a name yet, but I cannot think of a much better way to get people talking.

There are similar conversations happening at headspace in Gosford. Headspace is a fantastic organisation which works to reduce the impact of mental health and substance abuse for people aged between 12 and 25. Tomorrow is the first headspace day, marking a decade since this vital service was first funded by the federal government. Ten years on, I am pleased to see that mental health remains a top priority for the government, driven through our mental health reform package. We have guaranteed funding for headspace and will fund an additional 10 centres. Our reforms are aimed at providing a better targeted, accessible and effective service, strengthening care and suicide prevention with $192 million over the next four years. This is a bold, once-in-a-generation reform and I commend the government for highlighting this policy. (Time expired)

**Calwell Electorate: Ford Australia**

*Ms VAMVAKINOU* (Calwell) (16:03): Last Friday was a very emotional day for the people of Broadmeadows in my electorate, as it marked the end of 91 years of Ford Australia manufacturing cars in Australia. Ford has been a major employer in Broadmeadows and other suburbs in Melbourne's north since it was established in 1959. Generations of different migration waves were reflected in the composition of the Ford factory floor. Many families in Calwell built their new Australian lives on the basis of jobs at Ford. They learnt English, they developed working skills, they made lifelong friendships and they experienced a sense of pride and achievement in their work. They even had their children cared for at the on-site, multicultural childcare centre, which was an innovation ahead of its time.

While some staff will continue to have jobs in Ford's engineering and design centres in Broadmeadows, Geelong and Lara, up to a third of Ford workers will struggle to find other jobs. Part of the challenge is that there is a lack of local manufacturing jobs altogether.
Another challenge is that, for many of the workers, English is a second or even a third language and it will be difficult, at a very difficult period, for the transition for the entire community.

We have much to be hopeful about in Broadmeadows, including a burgeoning food-manufacturing sector and a dedicated economic development team at the City of Hume. We have a community of cultural diversity, multilingualism and many skills and qualifications. Broadmeadows has moved far beyond a one-company town, but there is no doubt that the closure of an iconic employer like Ford has made and will continue to make a huge impact upon our community.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Broadbent): I thank the member for Calwell, and I can identify with everything she just said.

Grains Industry

Mr RICK WILSON (O'Connor) (16:05): I have a prepared speech here which was prepared a few weeks ago and which talked about a prospective 17-million-tonne grain crop for Western Australia. Certainly it has been one of the best seasons that I have experienced in my 50 years. As a farmer at Katanning, I have seen a few, and it certainly has been a fantastic year, with early rains and crops going in early.

But Mother Nature is a very cruel taskmaster, and early in September we had a series of frosts just as the crops in the eastern Wheatbelt, in my electorate, were flowering. That has been followed up by some more frosts in late September, and we are forecast to have more frosts this week. Early estimates of the damage to the crops run between two million and four million tonnes, so that is around 30 per cent of the Western Australian grain crop, but of course in some areas it could be 100 per cent of an individual grower's return this year. It is very heartbreaking: a year's hard work can go up in smoke overnight.

So I have taken the opportunity today to raise this issue with the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, the Deputy Prime Minister, and he is very much aware of the situation. There have been calls for a system of multiperil crop insurance. The government has put $5,000 on the table for growers to have a full audit of their crop production records so that that crop insurance can be put into play through commercial players. I just commiserate with those growers in my electorate who have been so badly damaged.

Stay Smart Online Week

Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (16:06): Today is the start of Stay Smart Online Week. So why is this important? It is important because last year the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission received 15,000 reports of phishing scams for the 12 months of 2015. It is concerning, because this year the ACCC has already received more than 18,000, including more than 600 here in the ACT.

Thankfully, there are a few simple things that we can all do to improve our cybersecurity and our cybersafety and to empower ourselves online. We can start by using complex passwords that combine upper-case and lower-case letters, numerals and special characters. Remember: your password might look strange, but if you cannot pronounce it they cannot guess it. We also need to be careful about how much personal information we share on social media sites. Many websites help verify your identity through personal security questions such
as the name of a school that you attended, but we need to be careful about how much personal information we put into those sites.

Australians have lost $55 million to online scams this year. It is money that will not go to mortgages, school uniforms, groceries or car repayments. So I encourage Canberrans and Canberra small business to get online to staySMARTonline.gov.au and to learn how to protect themselves. *(Time expired)*

**North Sydney Electorate: Lane Cove Village Fair**

Mr Zimmermann (North Sydney) (16:08): Yesterday I had the enormous pleasure of attending the Lane Cove Village Fair in my electorate. This is a major annual event which attracts thousands of people from the Lower North Shore to come together to reinforce and reflect on the incredible sense of community that exists in the Lane Cove municipality. In fact, there were something like 100 stalls representing community groups and local businesses, and 22,000 people attended on a glorious spring day in Sydney.

The event is organised by Lane Cove Rotary in conjunction with Lane Cove Council, and I want to pay tribute to the Mayor of Lane Cove, Deborah Hutchens, and all her team for the support that they give to Rotary. But I particularly want to congratulate Lane Cove Rotary on the outstanding job that they do in organising such a major event in our community. I should acknowledge the joint presidents of Lane Cove Rotary, Tania Mace and Margaret Silink, for their extraordinary leadership in organising an event such as this. For me it reflects the best of Rotary, which is an organisation that I have been proud to be part of for many years, including for the last 12 months as the president of my own local Rotary club.

In my own electorate, we have 10 Rotary clubs. All of them have a unique character, but they are all united by the spirit of service that reflects Rotary's history over the last 110 years. I commend Rotary as an organisation that plays such a vital role in supporting our community and I encourage residents in my own electorate to get involved in an organisation that is about serving others.

**Indi Electorate: Wangaratta Show**

Ms McGowan (Indi) (16:10): Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to bring to your attention the wonderful success of the Wangaratta Show, which took place on Friday and Saturday. Despite the rain and despite the problems with the levee bank, people turned out in huge numbers to have a wonderful day at the Wang show. So I particularly want to congratulate the organising committee. To Bernie and Fiona, thank you for your hospitality. I had the absolute pleasure of sitting next to Brian Kensington, who is on the committee. What a magnificent achievement he has had over the many, many years that he has been part of the committee. I thank the Wangaratta Girl Guides for the wonderful work they do, and I particularly thank Zoe Goodger for handling us and waiting on our table and your mother, Stephanie, for the great work that she does. I would like to acknowledge the Dwyer family, and particularly Greta—those eggs! Greta won the first prize for her dozen eggs at the Wangaratta show, and you have to go a long way to do that. And her sister came second in the prize for the novelty cake—great work! I would also like to acknowledge the work of the north-east sustainability team and the Wangaratta group, Rowan O'Hagan and all the people who keep us on track at shows and give their time.
But I would particularly like to thank the community of Wangaratta. They have had such a hard time with the floods, we have been surrounded by water and yet they turn out in their numbers and support their community. They get involved with the animals and the rides. Wangaratta is a fantastic community. I am so pleased to be your representative and thank you for your great spirit.

La Trobe Electorate: South Belgrave Football Club

Mr WOOD (La Trobe) (16:11): I rise to speak on the LED lighting of the Belgrave South football ground, which I recently opened with councillors and the state representative. I would first of all like to thank Ian Bakens, the project officer, Ron Pearce, the project manager, the South Belgrave Football Club committee, including the president and office bearers, and the club supporters and volunteers. This has all happened because of them. We committed $20,000 under federal funding for the installation of LED lighting at the ground. The club really needed this. They have 110 Auskick youngsters between the ages of four and 10 years. They have seven junior teams, three senior teams and one veteran team. The great news now is that the cricket players can actually play and practise cricket at night. The great thing about LED lighting compared to the lighting they had previously is that it saves 40 per cent on electricity bills, which simply means they are able to put more money back into the club. The LED bulbs consume less power per unit of light emitted and reduce greenhouse emissions from power plants. So, overall, this is fantastic news for Belgrave South. I again congratulate Ian Bakens and his team for making this a reality.

El-Iman, Sheikh Fehmi Naji

Ms VAMVAKINOU (Calwell) (16:13): On 24 September, the former Grand Mufti of Australia, Sheikh Fehmi Naji El-Imam, passed away aged 88. During his 65 years in this country, Sheikh Fehmi was confronted by the challenges of misunderstanding and intolerance, worked tirelessly for multiculturalism, community and inclusion and has left a lasting impact on the face of our nation.

Sheikh Fehmi studied theology in Lebanon and arrived in Australia in 1951. Aged 23, he had travelled by boat and arrived amidst our country's White Australia policy. From the very beginning, he was faced with Melbourne's staunch conservatism and soon began working to develop a place for Muslims within Australia's community. He was undeterred in his mission to fully realise the ideals of the country he saw as a bastion of hope and a society of freedom and harmony. Always promoting tolerance, harmony and dialogue, six years after arriving he and a small group of Muslim Australians founded the Islamic Society in Victoria to foster a greater sense of community among the newly arrived Muslims and to help aid inclusion into the new country. He was instrumental in building Melbourne's first mosque, in Carlton North, and in 1976 personally knocked on his community's doors asking for donations to build the Islamic centre in Preston.

Familiar with facing significant challenges to practising his faith, a challenge shared by many, Sheikh Fehmi spoke of having to convince the Attorney-General at the time, Mr Snedden, to allow imams the ability to perform marriages for Muslim Australians. Similarly, barriers were faced in performing burials according to the Muslim faith, on which Sheikh Fehmi also engaged with the department of health to advocate for changes to the law.
Goldstein Electorate: Sailing

Mr TIM WILSON (Goldstein) (16:14): It is, of course, a great pleasure to stand up on behalf of the Goldstein community and celebrate the beginning of the sailing season. If you know the federal electorate of Goldstein, Mr Deputy Speaker Broadbent, you will know that it is hugged by a coastline where sailing clubs are a very important part of our social infrastructure. On 1 October we had the opening of the Sandringham Yacht Club sailing season. On 2 October it was the commencement of the Royal Brighton Yacht Club sailing season. In the next couple of weeks we have the Beaumaris Motor Yacht Squadron and the Black Rock Yacht Club starting on 16 October and 23 October, respectively.

It is really important to acknowledge the contribution of these clubs in the community. What they do by providing a point of social infrastructure is not just provide an opportunity for individuals to participate, exercise and engage in sport but bring together family and, ultimately, community organisations, which are the foundations for building a great country. These family clubs have consistently brought people together to engage in important social activity.

Congratulations to all of the commodores and committees of these sailing clubs for the contribution that they make. But, more importantly, let us remind ourselves at the beginning of the sailing season that it is a pursuit which comes with risk. We wish everybody involved a safe sailing season for them and for all of their families.

Myrtleford Farmers Market

Ms McGOWAN (Indi) (16:16): Colleagues, I would like to tell you about north-east Victoria and our food and wine. I know some of you have been there, and you know how wonderful it is. I had the great pleasure on Saturday, 24 September of being at the first ever Myrtleford Farmers Market. It was a fantastic day. Over 500 people packed the heart of the plaza. The heart of Myrtleford was just abuzz with markets, people and wonderful food. The sun shone, and we had a really wonderful day.

I would particularly like to acknowledge Regional Development Victoria. Thanks for the support that you give us right across the farmers markets, particularly in Indi. To the Alpine Shire, we could not do it without your support and all of your staff. To the Myrtleford Chamber of Commerce and Industry, you make things happen. We really appreciate what you do. To the philanthropy section—to the Into Our Hands Foundation—that little bit of money goes such a long way and makes such a difference. To all of the agriculture businesses and businesses in the Ovens Valley for turning up in such numbers. I would particularly like to acknowledge and pay homage to Kerry Murphy. Through your work with TAFCO, we know that you are the heart and soul of so much that happens in the Ovens Valley. Thank you for the work.

Also, I would like to acknowledge and bring to the attention of my colleagues some of the fantastic cooks that we have in north-east Victoria. There is very special person from Bright's Simones. To Patrizia Simone, thank you for coming on the day, thank you for doing the cooking demonstrations and thank you for inspiring us to know what wonderful food we have in the north-east. (Time expired)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Broadbent): Is there a plaza in Myrtleford?

Ms McGowan: Absolutely.
**Emergency Services**

Mr ANDREWS (Menzies) (16:17): I was delighted this morning to join with so many Victorian Liberal and National Party colleagues, including yourself, Mr Deputy Speaker Broadbent, the member for Murray and the member for Mallee, who are in the chamber, and the member for La Trobe, who was previously in the chamber, to welcome a number of emergency service representatives who are visiting Parliament House today on the occasion of an important debate in the other place concerning the amendments to the Fair Work legislation.

I understand that those amendments, which are there to protect emergency service workers, such as the people who were involved in the Country Fire Authority in Victoria, the SES and similar organisations around the country, have passed the second reading stage in the Senate. This is important for my constituents who live to the east of my electorate in a combination of urban and rural areas in Warrandyte, in South Warrandyte and in Wonga Park, where there are CFA stations. The reality is that, with the very wet spring that we are having in Melbourne at the present time and with the prospects of a hot summer, the combination of factors means a very dangerous prospect in terms of a bushfire season this year. The work of the CFA and like organisations is valued. That is why this legislation should pass the parliament.

**Doar, Mr Manni**

Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (16:19):

Waiting and
Time, what are they? What do they mean? They are a lot alike but they are different. They are like an hourglass and a clock, both represent time, and both can represent waiting. Waiting and time can be represented by a person as well, the older they are, the longer they've lived and the more they've waited. Waiting and time, they are the start and the end of everything. Forever the spectator of life.

That is a poem called *Waiting* that was written by 10-year-old Manni Doar, a Yarralumla Primary School student in my electorate. This poem won Manni the very prestigious Assisted Learning Primary division at the national Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards just recently. This is a highly prestigious award and I commend Manni for such a beautiful piece of work here. It is an incredibly sophisticated piece of work and the fact that a 10-year-old has written it is quite extraordinary.

When the judges judged Manni's fabulous poem, they wrote that it was a:
Very clever poem, original both in form and language, philosophical and well-observed. Congratulations Manni!

I say congratulations on behalf of the people of Canberra, Manni, for such an extraordinary composition, well above your years.

Moore Electorate: YouthCARE

Mr GOODENOUGH (Moore) (16:20): I wish to acknowledge the work of YouthCARE in delivering school based chaplaincy programs, providing the necessary pastoral care to keep students engaged in learning by increasing school attendance and reducing absenteeism. Over the past year, 30 chaplains based at 35 public schools in my electorate of Moore conducted approximately 4,000 counselling sessions with students, their parents, carers and the school staff. These counselling sessions related to family relationships, behavioural concerns, peer relationships and mental health. Young people face a range of pressures in our community with issues such as bullying, depression and drug use commonly encountered. YouthCARE chaplains assisted at-risk students with limited family support to overcome the obstacles to furthering their education by serving more than 1,000 meals at breakfast clubs, conducting social, emotional and physical programs and providing mentoring with some 2,045 students attending lunchtime groups.

Adequate resourcing is required to deliver these valuable services into the future. Security of tenure is also important to chaplains in terms of their employment contracts. I strongly advocate for continued government funding of YouthCARE. Immeasurable benefits to society are achieved when at-risk youth are constructively engaged in learning and complete their education.

Asylum Seekers

Ms VAMVAKINOU (Calwell) (16:22): On Thursday last week, I welcomed into my electorate the shadow minister for immigration, the member for Blair. We had a meeting with a large number of my constituents and members of the local Chaldeans, an Assyrian Christian community.

I would like to begin by thinking Father Maher Gurges for allowing the meeting to take place in St George Chaldean Centre in Cooper Street, Campbellfield. This was an opportunity for my community to raise issues and some were about the new 12,000 intake of refugees. There is a little angst around the inconsistency and uncertainty of the processing period. The minister may be aware of this as well, but it is something that I am lobbied about extensively in my electorate, given that I have a very large Iraqi Chaldean Christian community.

On a very positive note, we have already started receiving families from Syria in the new intake. I want to congratulate my community, especially the churches of Our Lady Guardian of Plants, St Yacoub Syrian Orthodox Church, St Mary's Ancient Church of the East and St George Chaldean Centre for the incredible amount of voluntary work that they are doing in embracing the refugees and helping them. This is a wonderful community. We are getting people who are highly educated and who will make a good contribution to Australia.

Mallee Electorate

Mr BROAD (Mallee) (16:24): There was a saying that when you bought a new utility vehicle in the electorate of Mallee, the dealer would tune it into the ABC Radio. For the whole time you had that vehicle, you would not touch that dial and when you traded it in it
would still be tuned into the ABC. Even though they listen to that left-leaning ABC, they still vote National Party. It just shows that the people who live in the Wimmera Mallee are very wise.

However, in the south-west Mallee, you cannot get Triple J. The farmers in my patch are saying, 'We want to be able to listen to Triple J around Hopetoun. We want to be able to listen to it on our tractors. We want to listen to it in our trucks, on our harvesters and in our kitchens.' They cannot get Triple J. This is an injustice that needs to be fixed. We have written to the ABC, and they have said, 'You can stream it.' That would be good if we had internet access and if we could actually get the mobile internet to stream it. I am here to mount the case that it is inequitable for the people around Hopetoun and the people of south-west Mallee to miss out on Triple J. These are the farmers of the new generation. It is a good program. It is a public broadcaster. The response from the ABC is, 'You can put up your own tower. You can pay for it yourself.' It might come to that point, but I think there is an equity argument that the farmers do not just want to listen to Radio National on the ABC. They want to listen to Triple J, so let's bring it to the south-west Mallee.

Parramatta Electorate: Australian Goalball Championships

Ms OWENS (Parramatta) (16:25): Over the Labour Day long weekend, the best Australian goalball athletes came together with teams from America and Korea for the 36th Australian Goalball Championships, held at the King's School at North Parramatta.

Goalball was one of the surprise hits of the Paralympics. It is a sport designed specifically for the blind and visually impaired. It is played three a side—on a court quite a bit bigger than a volleyball court but not as big as a soccer field—with blackout goggles, so that everyone has the same complete lack of vision. They roll the ball, with a bell inside it, incredibly fast and throw themselves onto the ground to stop it from going across the line at the end. If it goes across the line, a goal is scored. It is one of the sports where the crowd is not allowed to say a word. Because the players have to hear the bell, any noise by the people watching is forbidden until the referee tells them that it is all over and they can cheer. So we watched the game in extraordinary silence.

The local Wentworthville father and son players, Troy and Isaac King, represented New South Wales—father Troy in the open seniors side and Isaac in the under-14s side. They are part of a family tradition, having both represented Australia, as has Isaac's mother, Kerry-Ann. It is a goalball family from Wentworthville. Their respective teams won silver medals for their efforts, with the open side losing to Queensland and the juniors to Victoria in the finals. But the women won the gold. I congratulate them in silence.

Dawson Electorate: Mental Health Week

Mr CHRISTENSEN (Dawson—Chief Nationals Whip) (16:27): I rise in recognition of Mental Health Week, which starts today, and to highlight the important work that is undertaken by individuals and organisations within my electorate of Dawson.

After extensive lobbying to get a headspace youth mental health centre in Mackay, that facility is now up and running and supporting young people in our community. But headspace on its own is not enough, and I want to acknowledge important volunteer organisations that have tackled this difficult issue with genuine commitment and compassion—organisations
like the Grapevine Group in Mackay and CORES Queensland in the Burdekin region and elsewhere. They have built strong links and support networks in the communities.

In those major centres, we now have suicide prevention networks that draw together the different local groups and stakeholders with a view to uniting and coordinating their efforts. In addition, the Liberal-National government has committed $24 million over three years to fund a further eight suicide prevention regional trial sites, which will bring the total to 12. I am pleased to see that two of those new sites have been determined, and one of those is going to be Townsville—again, in my electorate, which takes in a lot of the suburbs of Townsville.

We must now make the most of this opportunity by highlighting services available and encouraging friends and families with mental health issues to seek support. It is important for all of us, whatever our background, whatever our age and whatever our circumstances, to help each other identify mental health issues and seek support.

Fremantle Electorate: Infrastructure

Mr JOSH WILSON (Fremantle) (16:29): It was disappointing to learn that only three out of 78 new road and bridge projects announced by the government during the 2016 election campaign are to be located in Western Australia. It is a statistic that confirms the growing sense that the coalition takes WA for granted.

In my electorate, there is a severe congestion issue at Cockburn Central, with a clear and well-planned solution to that problem in the form of the Armadale Road-North Lake Road bridge and road duplication works. Cockburn is one of the fastest-developing outer urban areas in Australia. It has benefitted from the brilliant Perth-Mandurah rail line and it has a local government in the City of Cockburn that is working hard to develop a transit oriented community with matching local and regional facilities. But at the moment people in suburbs like Atwell and Success can find themselves caught in a traffic snarl for 40 minutes, even if they are simply trying to exit the Cockburn train station car park.

During the campaign, I was glad to secure a commitment from Labor to provide $80 million for the federal share of the bridge project, which is called Community Connect South. My Liberal opponent would not match that commitment, but was quoted in the local paper saying she was confident she could secure the funding if elected. Again, that begs the question of whether road projects are funded by this government on the basis of need or on the basis of politics alone.

I call on the government to give WA a fair look-in, to address the ridiculous disparity in road and bridge project funding, to abandon the ridiculous Perth Freight Link debacle and to support the much needed Community Connect South project in my electorate.

World Mental Health Day

Mr CREWTHER (Dunkley) (16:30): Today, Monday 10 October, is World Mental Health Day, a day where Mental Health Australia encourage all Australians to make a personal promise to improve their own health. I would also like to add my encouragement to all Australians, particularly the residents of Dunkley, to remember to focus on their personal health, which can improve their mental health over time.

Last Thursday, as part of Mental Health Week, I had the privilege of being involved in the Mentis Assist 2016 Mental Health Week peninsula art exhibition at the Frankston Arts Centre. Mentis Assist is one of the vital community-managed mental healthcare service providers...
providers working in my electorate to provide specialised mental health support for people aged 16-plus living in Frankston and the Mornington Peninsula. Their art exhibitions showcased an incredible array of work by artists who have lived, experienced or been affected by mental illness.

During my recent campaign, I was glad to provide extra assistance for Mentis Assist to provide their important services, as well as to provide funding support through the local PHN for headspace to be a lead site in the area. There was incredible art work on display and it demonstrated the work of so many residents who have encountered mental illness. I was very happy to award the people's choice award to Andrea Kilburn, who was joined by so many wonderful artist entries. I ask everyone here today to recognise and support World Mental Health Day.

**Indi Electorate: Ben Dean**

Ms McGOWAN (Indi) (16:32): I would like to say that there is one very lucky young man in Beechworth: Ben Dean. Recently Ben went missing and was lost in the forests around Beechworth. As the local paper said, it was a cold, dark rainy night. The family quickly called the police who immediately established a command centre and headquarters in the family kitchen. Communications were severely hampered by the lack of mobile service in the area, so the centre was then transferred to the police station in Beechworth, six kilometres away. But it was all good news. Over 300 of the Beechworth community gathered together. The SES, the police and over 1,000 vehicles went out searching for Ben, and he was found safe and well.

To John McLennan and Ben Hill, thank you very, very much for being the people on the spot. Thank you to all the community who gathered around so well to show that the values of community, connectedness and responsibility are alive and well in Indi. To Ben's mum and dad, Nadia and Charles, and to his sister Elena, what a fantastic welcome to our community. We are so grateful that you were able to put on a thank you barbeque, invite the community and we had such good news.

To all those people who are newcomers to our communities who move from the cities, we give you a huge welcome to our community. You have to pay a little bit of attention. The bush can be very, very dangerous. It is very, very easy to get lost. We are so glad that Ben was found.

**Banks Electorate: Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre**

Mr COLEMAN (Banks) (16:33): Recently, in fact last Friday, I had the privilege to attend the Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre's 50th anniversary celebration. It was a great day and it was great to reflect on all of the achievements of the Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre over those five decades. It was a terrific event with performances from talented local groups, including the Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre Chinese activity and opera group, the St George and Kingsgrove music school and the Kingsgrove line dancing group.

I would like to thank all of the staff of the centre for putting together the event—in particular, Ms Anne Farah-Hill for her hospitality and for leading the centre's important work. Anne's longstanding commitment to the centre is a great example of the importance of leadership in local community organisations. She is a genuine leader and has made the Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre into one of the most important organisations anywhere in
our community. The range of services provided at the Kingsgrove centre includes allied health, family support, mental health and disability support services. There are a wide range of people employed at the centre and also a lot of volunteers as well, who help out with all the different activities. So, congratulations again on a great 50th anniversary celebration, and look forward to many successful years ahead.

**Canberra Electorate: Bisonhome**

Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (16:35): Many years ago Brian Tunks started Bison homewares here in the capital region. He had very humble beginnings in a modest and basic warehouse in Queanbeyan. Now Bisonhome has grown into an empire that sells throughout the world and it is in far more glamorous digs in Pialligo, and it also has an outlet down in Little Collins Street in Melbourne. Bison is a Canberra, and a capital region, institution. Like all great institutions in this great city, it is a business that gives back to the community in spades.

On the weekend, Bison's Brian Tunks held the first Botanica bake off to raise funds for Karinya House. Karinya House is also a great Canberra institution that provides 24/7 support to pregnant and parenting women and their families who are in crisis. There was a huge turnout for this Botanica bake off. The cakes were extraordinarily glamorous, and that is coming from someone who got a 'highly commended' in the Canberra Show for her French teacake. The cakes were judged by the CWA and we all know that they are a pretty tough crowd to please, but I understand it was a great day. Unfortunately, I could not attend. Congratulations and thanks to Bison. Congratulations to everyone who participated in the event.

**Wright Electorate: Beaudesert Show**

Mr BUCHHOLZ (Wright) (16:36): The first weekend of September in the township of Beaudesert is always marked by the local show or, as the locals call it, the country Ekka. This year, they proudly celebrated their 121st birthday—a remarkable achievement. I had the opportunity to go to the show, and one of the first pavilions I walked into was the pavilion which probably takes dominance in front and centre of the show. It is the horticultural pavilion and is donned with roses, orchids and different types of flowers. There are an enormous number of youths who send in these creative horticultural inventions that they put together that can look like animals. It is quite remarkable. But at the centre of the horticultural pavilion is a lady by the name of Elva West. In talking to Elva I found out she has been the head steward in the horticultural pavilion for no less than 20 years—a remarkable contribution. When I had the opportunity to speak to Elva at length and congratulate her on her 20 years achievement, she was very quick to inform me: 'Oh, no, I have been the head steward for 20 years. I had served for another 20 years before that in this pavilion as an assistant.' I said, 'So 40 years contribution?' and she said, 'Yes, and prior to that my father was a steward here but he wasn't in the horticultural pavilion; he looked after the pigs.'

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Broadbent): Well done!

Patsikatheodorou, Councillor Helen

Ms VAMVAKINOU (Calwell) (16:38): I want to take this opportunity to thank, on behalf of our local community, our outgoing Mayor of the City of Hume, Councillor Helen Patsikatheodorou, who has served our constituency in her capacity as councillor for the last
eight years. Helen has been a force of nature—there is no other way to describe her commitment and her passion for serving her community. She has been an incredibly hardworking and affectionate councillor. She has served twice as mayor, and I am sure that I echo the sentiments of all members of our community in expressing our gratitude to Helen for her wonderful work and commitment. She retires because she says it is time to look after herself, and that is a familiar sentiment, I think, for a lot of people who serve in public office. We will certainly miss her energy and her commitment. She is someone who was your quintessential public office holder. She believed in community, she came from the community and she was there to serve the community. There is no-one's life that she did not touch. They were left feeling that they had been listened to and that they had been assisted in whichever way they could be assisted. I just want to thank Helen and wish her all the very best. I am sure she will remain an active member of our community, but I just want to convey our gratitude and appreciation.

Murray Electorate: Dairy Farmers' Big Day Out

Mr DRUM (Murray) (16:40): I spent yesterday at Rochester, where they put on a dairy farmers' big day out. Certainly, we are all aware of the crisis facing the dairy industry at the moment, and of the need for all of us to help those in that industry who might need a little bit of a hand-up every now and again.

The event was run by St Vincent de Paul, the Rochester and Elmore District Health Service, the Lions Club and the business network, as well as a few others. I want to thank Gavin Houlihan and Mark Naley in particular for the work that they did in organising the event. There was a great turnout, with over 200 people attending and, in line with what has happened with Murray Goulburn suppliers and also Fonterra suppliers, all of those farmers will be given a $200 gift pack, with this money effectively coming from St Vincent de Paul. As a guest speaker they had Kevin Sheedy, the legendary football coach. Kevin probably knows very little about agriculture, but he certainly knows a lot about how to be positive, how to make the most of your opportunities and about understanding that tough times usually do not last but positive people normally end up being successful.

It was also great to see the leader of the National Party in the Victorian parliament, Peter Walsh, there supporting his electorate as well. Late in the day Peter Walsh and I went halves in a 'team of the century' print which we were then able to donate back to the Rochester community so that they can do some more fundraising with St Vincent de Paul to try and help some more people as the rollercoaster goes around. With those things, I certainly wish them all the very best.

Forde Electorate: Football

Mr VAN MANEN (Forde—Government Whip) (16:41): As we stand on the cusp of a new A-league season, I think it is important to acknowledge that the world game goes from strength to strength, and that strength is built on the wonderful work of our local clubs, who have just finished the season. These local clubs—Loganholme football club, Ormeau All Stars Football Club, Park Ridge Panthers and Bethania Rams—with over 1,500 players, are a cornerstone of our football community. They are part of a growing football family which has reached nearly $1.2 million players in 2015, with over 100,000 of those players being young girls and women. When you include the volunteers, referees, coaches and managers, the
The number of people involved in football is nearly two million, making it the largest participation sport in Australia.

I would like to thank all of those players, coaches, managers and volunteers for the terrific work that they do during the season to make these clubs the success they are, and the strength that they provide in our community. I would also like to wish all the teams and participants in the new A-league season every success as we look forward to a terrific season of professional football built on the foundation of terrific local football clubs.

**Brisbane 2022 New World City Action Plan**

Mr EVANS (Brisbane) (16:43): I rise to speak in support of the Brisbane City Council's vision for the future of the city of Brisbane. The Brisbane 2022 New World City Action Plan aims to define the priorities that will drive the city's economic growth for the next seven years and beyond. It was compiled by the Lord Mayor's economic development steering committee and handed to the Lord Mayor, Graham Quirk, last year, following huge amounts of consultation and with more than 1,000 people representing more than 500 different community groups, organisations, clubs, volunteers and community citizens. The economic blueprint presents the opportunity for Brisbane to become the leader of a new world city by following the formula for urban success used elsewhere.

I want to take the opportunity to say how proud I am to work with a number of Brisbane city councillors right across the federal division of Brisbane. Councillor David McLachlan, Councillor Vicki Howard, Councillor Fiona King, Councillor Peter Matic, Councillor Steve Toomey, Councillor Norm Wyndham and Councillor Andrew Wines all represent areas that coincide within the boundaries of the federal division of Brisbane. It has been fantastic to work so collaboratively with them so far in my short journey as an MP. I look forward to achieving many more things with them, collaboratively, into the future.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Broadbent): In accordance with standing order 43, the time for members' statements has concluded.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

Victims of Family Violence and Court Proceedings

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this House:

(1) notes that Women's Legal Services Australia and 90 other organisations concerned with family violence wrote to all political leaders in May 2016 calling on them to put safety first in family law;

(2) recognises that:

(a) unrepresented litigants have been an increasing feature of the Family Court of Australia and Federal Circuit Court of Australia for many years;

(b) due to the cuts made to Legal Aid funding by the Government, the number of unrepresented litigants continues to increase;

(c) unrepresented litigants are entitled to cross-examine the other party to test their evidence in a trial; and

(d) where a victim of family violence is subjected to direct cross-examination by their abuser, the:

(i) victim can be severely traumatised;

(ii) quality of the evidence given to the court can be compromised;
(iii) perpetrator can use the court process to further abuse the victim; and
(iv) victim may discontinue the proceedings because they are unable to endure the cross-examination;
(3) further notes that the Opposition took to the election a commitment to protect victims and survivors from being personally cross-examined by alleged perpetrators; and
(4) calls on the Government to immediately act to protect victims of family violence by introducing amendments to the *Family Law Act 1975* to ensure that victims of family violence are not directly cross-examined by their abusers during court proceedings.

Mr DREYFUS (Isaacs—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (16:45): I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Moreton and thank him for his continued commitment to improving Australia's family law system and ensuring appropriate protections for victims of family violence. As shadow Attorney-General, I am deeply concerned by the government's harsh cuts to Commonwealth-funded community legal assistance. The number of unrepresented litigants in the Family Court and in the Federal Circuit Court—which, of course, deals with most of the family law work in Australia—has increased under this government as a result of those cuts to legal assistance.

Commonwealth funding for both legal aid services and legal assistance services ensures that everyone has access to legal representation. It is this assistance which ensures that victims of family violence are not forced to attend court without proper legal representation. The provision of legal assistance also ensures that victims of family violence are not subjected to vicious attacks from their abuser within the courtroom. Regrettably, our current family law system does allow this to occur. A self-represented perpetrator of family violence is currently entitled to cross-examine the other party—a victim of family violence—and any other witnesses called by them in order to test their evidence. There is, of course, a judicial discretion to prevent the very worst forms of abuse, but, otherwise, our family law system currently allows perpetrators of family violence to personally cross-examine their victims within the courtroom. This is unacceptable because it can amount to a continuation of the abuse. Labor would not allow this to continue were we in government and our election policy stated just that.

Labor would ensure that no victims of family violence have to choose between either seeking a resolution through the courts and facing their abuser or accepting a lower property settlement out of court. These victims may sometimes even be forced to accept childcare arrangements which are not in the best interests of the child because they are making a choice not to go to court, where a judge would determine those questions, in fear of the potential for cross-examination by their abuser. It is unacceptable that victims of physical, emotional or psychological abuse should have to risk experiencing a continuation of that abuse through the Family Court system just to be able to finally move on with their lives. The fear of confronting the perpetrator of the abuse in court may prevent some victims of family violence from seeking the assistance that they need from the court system.

In September 2015, Women's Legal Services Australia conducted a survey on the experience of female survivors of violence being personally cross-examined by their abusers in the family law courts. That survey found that 45 per cent of the participants who had settled their family law matter before trial said that the prospect of being personally cross-examined by their abuser was a significant factor in their decision to settle. Women's Legal Services
Australia says that the experience of being cross-examined by an abuser can retraumatise the victim and allow the perpetrator to use the court proceedings to further inflict abuse on their victim.

The family law system is able to be used as a tool by manipulative, controlling, domineering and abusive people to exercise power over their victims. During cross-examination, a perpetrator is given a platform for engaging in emotional abuse. Perpetrators can ask ostensibly valid questions which are deliberately or strategically loaded with hidden meanings or threats. A perpetrator of family violence also has intimate knowledge of the victim, and subtle reminders of this can act as a deterrent to the victim giving proper evidence. At the same time the government, this government, is cutting funding to the very services that could provide assistance.

On 30 June 2017 funding to community legal centres under the existing agreement will drop by 30 per cent. This is despite the Productivity Commission, in an excellent inquiry and report, recommending that funding for civil legal assistance services 'should be increased by around $200 million', and that recommendation was made in 2014.

Family Violence Prevention Legal Services, which serve Indigenous women, have been cut from the Attorney-General's Department entirely and they have been forced to tender for the entirety of their Commonwealth funding. Many centres have missed out on the funding rounds altogether.

If the government reversed their harsh and unfair cuts to community legal assistance then victims would—

Ms Henderson interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Broadbent): His time must be up, is it?

Ms Henderson: That is right.

Mr DREYFUS: Could I be permitted to finish my sentence before I am rudely interrupted by Ms Henderson?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can the member sit down. I think the tradition has been—

Ms Henderson: Excuse me, I was not interrupting.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Alright, can the member please take her seat.

Mr DREYFUS: Wait for the call next time—might be a good idea.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Both members take your seats, please.

Ms Henderson interjecting—

Mr DREYFUS: You are the one that is being rude. You did not wait for the call.

Ms Henderson: Do not speak to me like—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The tradition is that when a member is opening up—

Mr Dreyfus interjecting—

Ms Henderson interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please sit down and please be quiet. When a member is opening a debate, as we are in this forum here, they are usually given latitude and time to open that debate, and that has been the tradition in this House. Now it has not been followed
Mr DREYFUS: If it is of assistance, I had almost completed my remarks. If the government reversed their harsh and unfair cuts to community legal assistance then victims of family violence who access the court system would be able to do so with the confidence that their vulnerabilities would not be exploited through the process. They will be able to seek safe and effective orders based on high-quality evidence.

We have seen the Family Court system undergo years of progress in terms of the equal treatment of women. We still have work to do to ensure that our system does not disadvantage women, especially victims of family violence, when it comes to property settlements and child custody battles, and I would urge the government to again look at repeated recommendations by the Family Law Council, repeated recommendations by the Law Council of Australia, repeated recommendations from family law practitioners to again look at this vexed area of cross examination—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I would not push it too hard.

Mr DREYFUS: of victims of family violence by their perpetrators. *(Time expired)*

Ms HENDERSON *(Corangamite)* *(16:52)*: I welcome this debate in this chamber today on this very important issue, the issue of protecting all people who are the victims of family violence. But while of course some men are victims of family violence, the government recognise that the vast majority of victims are women and children. Over the last three years the government are incredibly proud of the many ways in which we are supporting the victims of family violence with our very significant investments in our women safety packages and in the approximately $1.62 billion that has been provided over five years to legal assistance services, including $1.3 billion to legal aid commissions and community legal centres through the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services.

I take issue with the shadow Attorney-General's comments in relation to cuts to legal aid funding. There have been no cuts to legal aid funding. In fact I also want to make the comment that a recent audit by National Legal Aid found that 79 per cent of grants paid were for family law matters, including issues of family violence, and that legal aid funding increases by $11.99 million over the life of the national partnership agreement.

I do agree that in one of the main components of this motion a very important point has been raised—that is, the cross-examination of victims by perpetrators. The Family Law Act makes a number of provisions in relation to providing better protections for vulnerable people in family law proceedings. For instance, vulnerable persons can give testimony via video in a closed court. The Family Violence Plan makes it clear that the family law courts have an obligation to identify at a very early stage those who are at risk of violence. That is a very important principle—along with the fairly broad discretion that the Family Court has and that judges have about the way proceedings are run. But I do want to concur with this motion; I think there is more that the government can do in this respect.

I do want to take issue though with the shadow Attorney-General's comments in relation to the provision of legal aid, because he has actually got it wrong. Any person appearing before the Family Court has an inherent right to appear as a self-represented litigant. Many people choose to do that, I think, motivated by ill-will, to cause even more grief to their partner or
their ex-partner in Family Court proceedings. So the shadow Attorney-General has not got it correct when he says that funding availability for legal aid means that there are more self-represented litigants. It is one factor, but getting legal aid is not particularly easy; there are very stringent requirements in relation to who can access legal aid.

But certainly I am very pleased that the Attorney-General has already indicated that the government is open to new ways we can better protect victims. I would certainly like to see the absolute maximum protection, so that this practice does not continue. It is something that I have raised in my capacity as a member of the backbench policy committee on legal affairs. It is something I have expressed a number of concerns about.

I also want to commend the government on the very significant work that is being done with other complementary measures aimed at addressing family violence, such as the bench book. In August of last year, the first part of the Commonwealth-funded National Domestic and Family Violence Bench Book was released by the Australasian Institute of judicial administration. One of the most common concerns we hear is that judges get it wrong and they do not appreciate some of the incredible issues that confront those who suffer family violence. This bench book is very important.

I had the great pleasure of meeting with Rosie Batty and the Women's Legal Services Australia representatives. They have a very important platform about safety first in family law. I do want to commend Rosie and Women's Legal Services Australia for their five-step plan, which includes developing a specialist pathway for DV cases in family courts and ways we can reduce trauma and support those who are most at risk of future violence and death.

The other three points—if I can just indulge you for a moment, Mr Deputy Speaker—are: intervention early and providing effective legal help for those who are most disadvantaged; the fourth point is to support women and children to financially recover from domestic violence; and the last point is to improve education of family law professionals dealing with domestic violence and trauma.

So I do want to commend the report of Rosie Batty the Luke Batty Foundation and Women's Legal Services Australia. I think that really takes this issue forward, and I am looking forward to how we can act to protect women and children, and some men, from domestic violence in the context of family law proceedings.

Ms BURNEY (Barton) (16:58): I thank the member for Morton for this motion. I join with the shadow Attorney-General and endorse his comments thoroughly. Family and domestic violence are growing problems in our community and it is good to see that these issues are being discussed in this place today.

It is a shocking phenomenon. Domestic violence affects one in four women and is the most likely form of preventable death for women under the age of 45. That is a breathtaking reality. For the Aboriginal community things are even worse: 34 times more likely to be hospitalised as a result of domestic violence and 10 times more likely to be killed.

I come to this debate with extensive experience, both personal experience and professional experience, both within the community sector and in my past roles as minister in the New South Wales government. In my first speech, I spoke about rhetoric having to be matched by action. And the simple reality is that, come 30 June, this government will defund to a large degree many, many legal services.
More than a million women have experienced physical or sexual assault by their male current or ex-partner since the age of 15. Some women may be counted twice if they experience both physical and sexual assault. Thirty seven point eight per cent of women who experienced physical assault in the 12 months before the survey said the perpetrator was a current or previous male partner, and 34.4 per cent said the perpetrator was a male family member or friend. Most incidents of physical assault against women in the 12 months prior to 2005 were committed at home.

This is a very important point to understand. Community legal centres give women the capacity to take back control, through the legal processes that are already in place, but so often women are not able to access the courts system. They do not know how or they are scared to confront their attackers. Community legal centres can help close that gap. But, as the motion before this place also points out, cuts to legal aid mean that the perpetrators of violence are increasingly representing themselves, and this means they may personally cross-examine their victims. This cannot be allowed to happen. Victims are already traumatised. By the time they have made it into the courts system, they have already displayed bravery beyond what should be required. In communities in which there is already immense pressure on women to stay silent, this will provide yet another barrier.

There has been much discussion of domestic violence in the Aboriginal community over the last few days. I have been part of that discussion. Some have suggested that Aboriginal people are silent, and I want to repeat that this is not the case. I will have more to say on this as the days pass by. But it is true to say that some people in communities, families and friends of perpetrators, can and do exert pressure on women to stay silent—but stay silent they do not.

It is also important in this debate to understand what domestic and family violence is. It is not limited to physical assault. We know that there are women who live in fear who are emotionally abused or financially abused by their partners. As local members, many of us will have heard these stories—women left with no money to pay bills, often in the most desperate of situations, women for whom access to the legal system is limited by their lack of control over their finances and for whom the emotional abuse has made fleeing all the more difficult.

The opposition's proposal which sees perpetrators prevented from cross-examining their victims is a sensible one and would go some way to combating this issue. So would restoring cuts to legal aid, community legal centres and women's legal services. It just seems incredible to me that there is so much rhetoric, so much talk, about domestic violence but the very things that assist women in pursuing justice through the legal system are going to be ripped away by this government, despite what the member for Corangamite said. It is a reality that 30 June will bring to fruition. I implore the government to adopt these changes and to reverse its stinging cuts to vital services. Safety must come first in family law. I commend this motion to the House.

Mr RAMSEY (Grey—Government Whip) (17:03): There are thousands of families across Australia whose lives are at threat in their own homes at the hands of family members. There are children who witness violence on a daily basis. There are children who are subjected to violence. Let me say from the outset that I recognise that not all domestic violence is committed by men against women and that men too can be victims. However, it is also true to say that the very large majority of cases are thus and that dangerous, abusive and violent
behaviour is a daily occurrence in some families. At least one woman a week is killed by a partner or former partner in Australia.

I am appalled at the prevalence of violence in the home, and that is why, as a White Ribbon Ambassador, I attempt to send a message to men that violence is simply unacceptable. This topic raises many challenging issues for the Australian parliament. Why do so many relationships end in violence? Are the levels of violence, and particularly domestic violence, rising or is it just being reported more often? What on earth is happening to our society that so many families are so dysfunctional? How do seemingly normal people ever arrive at the point where they believe that violence against anyone, and most particularly life partners, is an acceptable outcome?

There are far too many issues and the set of issues is too complex to be properly covered in the limited time available to us here today, but the drivers of the breakdown of family values in this, the first quarter of the 21st century, should be considered by all of us in this place when we contemplate change—whether that be to family support, the availability of unsuitable material on a whole range of media and communication platforms, changes to our social institutions and, of course, as we are considering today, the suitability of our legal system.

Family violence can involve men, women and children as victims. There is elder abuse and even adolescent violence against parents. It imparts a profound and long-term toll on the victims' health and wellbeing, on families and communities and on society as a whole. It is the single largest cause of homelessness for women and it results in police call outs once every two minutes, on average. Thankfully, we have come a long way since the days when it was assumed that a woman must have provoked her partner in some way, almost deserving a beating, or when police would dismissively refer to a call out as 'just a domestic'. While legal sanctions cannot bring an end to family violence, the law is an essential component of any response to domestic and family violence.

The motion of the member for Moreton raises the issues of victims being forced to face perpetrators of violence in court. He makes a good point, but he would also be aware that courts bend over backwards to avoid that circumstance and that if such a circumstance is likely to cause stress a video appearance is provided. We should also not lose sight of the fact that, without due process, we elevate the chance of a severe miscarriage of justice. In short, everyone must be heard fairly in our legal system. The legal process can be an emotional and difficult time for victims of family, domestic and sexual violence. Many cases of domestic violence go unreported through perceived loyalty to the perpetrator, shame and fear. The combined health, administration and social welfare costs of violence against women has been estimated at $21.7 billion a year.

Contrary to one of the points made in this motion, however, the Australian government is not cutting funds dedicated to addressing this important issue. In fact, we are committed to reducing the unacceptable levels of domestic, family and sexual violence in our community. That is why we have allocated an additional $100 million in the 2016-17 budget to implement a third action plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children.

I turn to those points where the government has been accused of terminating funding. In fact, one of the tranches of funding was the $6.8 million that the shadow Attorney-General, in
fact, implemented back in 2013. It was a finite amount of money, and the Attorney-General at that time made that point clearly—that it was a one-off funding arrangement—so the extra $100 million is coming in to build ongoing funding around the $27 million a year that underpins the 12-year national plan. It also supports ongoing services like 1800RESPECT and primary prevention organisations like Our Watch and Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety.

On 1 April, COAG agreed to support in principle the six areas for action and the 28 recommendations of the COAG Advisory Panel on Reducing Violence Against Women and their Children. The advisory panel's report is informing the development of the third action plan. I have run out of time, but I applaud the government's commitment. (Time expired)

Mr Watts (Gellibrand) (17:08): I rise to support the motion moved today by the member for Moreton, and thank him for his commitment to shining a light on yet another way that our system is currently letting down victims and survivors of domestic and family violence. I am pleased that Labor has been pushing for changes to the family law system in this area. We made it our election policy to ensure that no victim of family violence need be crossed-examined by their abuser in a courtroom. We will continue to push for these changes because it is unacceptable that a victim of physical or emotional abuse at the hands of a partner, or former partner, should have to continue to experience that abuse simply to seek a resolution.

The matters that are heard by the Family Court or the Federal Circuit Court often involve the most extreme cases of abuse. When non-abusive relationships break down, those people are more likely to be able to come to an agreement themselves about how to amicably terminate a relationship—how to sort out property issues and child care arrangements—without involving the courts. What we are seeing play out in the Family Court is often the other end of the spectrum. One party to a family law matter may have suffered such a severe level of ongoing abuse to the point that they might choose to receive no property settlement or lose care and responsibility for their child simply to avoid having to face their abuser in court, or maybe even just to avoid being in the same courtroom as their abuser. But our current system means that victims of family violence not only have to be in the same courtroom as their abuser but can, indeed, be cross-examined by their abuser. They can be questioned about the most intimate parts of their lives, have personal experiences used against them and be subjected to the subtle tactics of emotional abuse throughout this process.

I once heard a story about a perpetrator of family violence who would wear the same piece of clothing every time he physically assaulted his wife and children. Over time she developed an instant emotional reaction to seeing that piece of clothing. That man wore that piece of clothing in the courtroom when dealing with the end of their relationship. Needless to say, she was terrified and unable to give proper evidence on the day. It is horrific that our court system would allow someone to be put in such a vulnerable position and be forced to endure that kind of emotional abuse. She was re-traumatised from that experience.

Women’s Legal Services Australia conducted a survey in September 2015 that tells us that this experience is common amongst victims of family violence going through the court system. Many victims of family violence experienced further violence in the courtroom. Perpetrators use the family law system as a tool and an opportunity for them to continue to exercise power and control over their victims. The fear of confronting their perpetrator means
that victims do not proceed to trial. Instead, they reach out-of-court settlements or agreement to consent orders that are often not in their best interest or in the best interest of their children.

Victims of family violence are likely to receive less than 40 per cent of a property pool at the dissolution of a relationship. That is why Labor is pushing for these protections. We believe in putting appropriate safeguards in place so that victims can enforce their legal rights and have a greater chance of becoming financially independent and live a life free of a cycle of violence. To make these protections possible, the government, in addition to legislative reform, need to reconsider their unfair cuts to legal assistance. This is one of the first issue that I spoke about in this parliament—the cuts in the first Abbott budget to Community Legal Centres support. Indeed, it was in this very room.

When I was asking questions about that first Abbott budget, it was very clear to me that, at the time that those cuts were made, there was very little appreciation within the government or among parliamentarians of the volume of work that Community Legal Centres do in addressing family violence. They are on the front line of this scourge. The cuts particularly from that first budget had a real-world consequence on women seeking protection from the courts and fleeing violent partners. In addition, Legal Aid makes it possible for perpetrators of family violence to always have access to legal representation, so that proper evidence can be obtained without direct cross examination. That is why Labor committed $43.2 million over four years to avoid the re-traumatisation of victims and survivors from being cross-examined by alleged perpetrators personally and, instead, provide for both parties to be legally represented. In March last year, Labor committed over $40 million to frontline legal services to assist victims of family violence. Instead, the government has continued with their unfair cuts of millions of dollars.

If the government are truly committed to ending the scourge of family violence—and I believe the will of those opposite—they need to match this will with funding and they need to end their unfair cuts that reduce access to justice for Australia's most vulnerable people. No-one should have to go through the court system seeking either the protection of their interests or the protection of their physical safety alone. People need representation.

Mr O'DOWD (Flynn) (17:13): While it has certainly been an issue, family violence has brought the whole subject from the shadows into the bright lights of public awareness. The number of victims is escalating at an alarming rate. Many in the community, including myself, have been shocked by the many outrageous violent acts perpetrated by spouses against those who they have sworn to care, love and protect—their partners. Read the daily papers; it is in just about every paper you would like to pick up. The majority of victims are women, but, as mentioned before in the debate, some of them are, sadly, men. More than one woman per week is murdered in Australia. That is a shocking statistic.

While the nation is going through a discussion about how to deal with the destruction of families by violence, regions like Central Queensland are grappling with some of the nation's highest rates of family violence. While our society generally wishes to protect the victims, we still see too many reactions to family violence doing little more than protecting the perpetrator of these acts—yes, the perpetrator first, the victim second. Sadly, children are used as a lever in these bitter battles within the Family Court system or outside the Family Court. We get many cases through our doors, as federal politicians, on a weekly basis and some victims come to us for help who must be referred on.
Even our media outlets are very keen to cover criminal activities which do not often involve domestic violence or brutality. They prefer to leave that alone. They do not want to bring it to the front, to protect the victim. However, are they protecting future victims from such violence? It only validates that victims should feel ashamed and keep the issue swept under the rug. I think we should be bringing these cases out into the open more often to make people aware of this alarming rate. It is escalating at a very quick rate and it has changed over the last 10 years. The stats are horrifying. The first step to get the nation to discuss the topic openly will take a long time because of the culture of denial that surrounds this domestic issue and abuse of women.

One of the great achievements of this coalition government for the victims of family violence is the permanent appointment of a Federal Circuit Court judge in Rockhampton. Since March this year, Judge Anne Demack, herself a Central Queenslander, has presided over the Family Court disputes in the region. Based in Rockhampton, she travels to Gladstone, Emerald and Mackay on a regular basis. Having a judge permanently in Central Queensland means that those utilising the service are not left behind. The victims do not have to travel to far away places like Brisbane to have a judge look at their case, which costs travel time, money and accommodation. Quite often the victims have not had the funds to actually have their case heard, or they might have travelled that distance to be turned down by the court, saying that the judge is sick and cannot hear the court case that day. What does she do? What does he do in that case? That is why the federal government has committed a further $100 million to help the cause of the victims. We, as a society, have a long way to go to see these dreadful crimes minimalised—a great service for victims. I hope we can see a turnaround in these dreadful statistics.

Ms OWENS (Parramatta) (17:18): I met with one of my constituents a couple of months ago and when I saw this motion I was reminded of her. She was nearly 75 years old, fearful that her ex-husband was about to be released from jail again. He had been in and out of jail since he was first jailed for assaulting her when she was around 30. And every time he gets out of jail, he finds her, somehow, in spite of her name changes, and then ends up back in jail for assaulting her. This went on, for this woman, for 45 years and was still continuing on the day I met her. So we had seriously let this woman down as a community. She had nowhere to hide and lived her life in fear. So this is for her and many other women—even though she is perhaps an extreme example—who have spent significant periods of their life in fear and have been permanently damaged by their experience of domestic violence. In New South Wales alone, the recorded crime statistics for July 2015 to 2016 for domestic-violence-related assault was 29,200 people, and they are the reported incidences. We know that there would have been many, many more that were not reported. This is a major area of crime in our community and one that deserves serious attention by this place.

Most members of parliament would have received representations from Women's Legal Services Australia and 90 other organisations back in May this year calling on us all to put safety first in family law. In response to that, the Labor Party went to the election with a commitment that no victim should be cross-examined by their abuser. We need to be clear that in our courts at the moment victims are being cross-examined by their abusers. The abuse continues in the court itself and through the court processes. Because an unrepresented litigant has the right to cross-examine the victim to test their evidence in a trial, unrepresented
perpetrators of violence can continue to put fear into the hearts of the abused even as the court case continues.

Cuts to legal aid exacerbate that situation, as will the cuts to the community legal centres which will take place in 2017, which will see 30 per cent of the funding go from our incredibly effective community legal centres. This is something that we really do have to address.

The processes in our courts affect victims of violence perhaps more than they affect relationship breakdowns where there isn't violence. Where the relationship break-up is civil we often find couples finding their own agreements, but if violence is involved it is very, very likely that the case will end up in court.

In the Parramatta court, which is one of the busiest in the country, we have had incredible delays over the last couple of years. We have 12 great new courts, which were built very recently. In the 2013 elections we had eight judges in Parramatta and by March this year we had four. We lost four and they have not been replaced. One went to Melbourne. After another judge retired it took 560 days before the Attorney-General replaced that judge. In the Family Court in Parramatta, we have had delays of up to 2½ to three years, and sometimes longer, before final orders. Lawyers were increasingly encouraging their clients to go to mediation. Mediation is not necessarily possible in a situation where there has been domestic violence. It is not necessarily possible to put the two people in the one room and find a mediated solution. Those cases were taking incredibly long periods of time in court. We had situations where custody cases were taking three and four years before final judgements were made, causing incredible stress for families and for the children.

I would like to thank the member for Moreton for moving this motion. It is an incredibly important one. We know that far too many people live in fear. There are far too many instances of violence perpetrated, quite often in the home, and we as a community and as a parliament are obliged to support victims of violence in whatever way we can.

Ms LANDRY (Capricornia—Deputy Nationals Whip) (17:23): I thank the member for Moreton for raising the issue of domestic violence. I agree with the sentiments that victims of domestic violence need to be protected against further trauma when seeking justice.

There are few places in Queensland that witness higher rates of domestic violence than in my electorate of Capricornia. The Capricornia police district reports the highest rate of domestic violence in Queensland. One of the most shameful areas is north Rockhampton. According to Rockhampton police the rate of domestic violence attacks there is 141 per cent higher than the state average.

Adults must accept responsibility for their own actions. Under no circumstances are domestic violence acceptable. Practices that advance the plight of victims—families and children—caught up in the cycle of family abuse are worthwhile discussing at a political level. However, I find the Labor Party's sudden interest in the subject of domestic violence to be hypocritical. Last year, to assist families in trauma that were caught up in the cycle of domestic violence and other Family Court matters, the Turnbull-Joyce government took a bold and positive step to appoint a permanent Federal Circuit Court judge to be based in Rockhampton. Judge Anne Demack held her first sitting on 7 March, presided over by the Chief Judge of the Federal Circuit Court, His Honour Judge John Pascoe. I lobbied hard for
the Commonwealth Attorney-General to make this appointment in a city where family violence is out of control. This appointment was both supported and hailed by the Central Queensland Law Association as the most significant decision for the legal industry in Capricornia in over 40 years. It directly helps some of the most disadvantaged families that are caught up in the cycle of domestic violence and subsequent custody and family law disputes.

The new permanent Federal Circuit Court judge services all of Central Queensland, including Rockhampton, Mackay, Gladstone and Emerald. But the Labor Party were against this appointment. They actually criticised it. Queensland's state Labor Attorney-General, Yvette D'Ath, and the federal shadow Attorney-General both denigrated the appointment of the new judge in Rockhampton. D'Ath threatened to stop the judge operating out of Rockhampton's court precinct unless the federal government built an entire new courthouse. This ignorant and backward approach was egged on in Canberra by federal Labor. The shadow Attorney-General has no regard for the victims of domestic violence in Rockhampton, otherwise he would have supported this appointment. After all, Rockhampton is rattled by the highest rates of domestic violence outside of Brisbane.

We know that Labor fails to care for Central Queensland, because in the recent federal election the federal Labor candidate and the Leader of the Opposition failed to back job-creating projects like Rookwood weir or the construction of a five- to six-storey car park at Rockhampton Base Hospital. Estimates suggest that Rookwood weir would have created up to 2,500 new jobs for the region, while the hospital board informed me only last week that the construction of a new car park—an investment of at least $21 million—would create many further jobs.

We know that stress in any family facing tough financial times is one of the catalysts for domestic violence. Today the people of Capricornia can clearly see that the Labor Party have failed to support both the appointment of a Federal Circuit Court judge to Rockhampton and big infrastructure. They have failed to back initiatives that would lead to more jobs for our community and thereby possibly help alleviate family financial stress, which is a catalyst for domestic violence. In the so-called Labor heartland that is Rockhampton city, the Labor Party have failed the most vulnerable families at a time when they need jobs and Federal Circuit Court time the most. High-profile lawyers and barristers tell me that both Labor's state Attorney-General and federal Labor's shadow Attorney-General were offensive and out of order. Labor would rather that nothing happened in the city of Rockhampton than give credit to the coalition's positive steps to appoint a permanent Federal Circuit Court judge to help families in crisis.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hogan): 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.

Bruce Highway

Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (17:28): I move:

That this House:

(1) recognises the vital role the Bruce Highway plays in connecting communities all the way from Brisbane to Cairns;
(2) acknowledges that the Australian Government is investing $6.7 billion into upgrading the Bruce Highway;

(3) notes that:
   (a) the Australian Government has approved $6.4 million to fund a planning study into upgrading the Bruce Highway between Pine Rivers and Caloundra Road; and
   (b) the Queensland Government is not planning to finalise the planning study until the middle of 2018;

(4) calls on the Queensland Government to expedite its work on the planning study so that much needed upgrade works to the Bruce Highway can start as soon as possible; and

(5) congratulates the Australian Government for approving the supplementary study into upgrading the Bruce Highway between the Sunshine Motorway and the Maroochydore Interchange.

Mr Deputy Speaker, you will be happy to know my mum gave me a call on Saturday afternoon. It was not to have a chat to her son. Along with probably hundreds of others, she was stuck on the Bruce Highway—southbound, Sunshine Coast to Brisbane. After a quick Google search, I was able to assure my mum it was due to yet another accident. This time it was not a fatal one, thank God. Almost on a daily basis, there is an accident on the Bruce Highway. The local *Sunshine Coast Daily* ran a headline story about a month ago entitled 'Breaking news: no accident on the Bruce today'.

There is no piece of infrastructure more critical to the life and productivity of the Sunshine Coast region than the Bruce Highway. What our region needs is a modern, integrated transport solution—road, rail and air—and among that mix there is nothing more important than the Bruce Highway. It is a piece of infrastructure to which the coalition has committed a considerable amount of money. Only recently, a tender was announced for a $929 million upgrade with an additional lane in each direction between the Caloundra Road turn-off and the Sunshine Motorway. In addition, the minister recently announced the bringing forward of a $187 million upgrade of the Maroochydore interchange. Put together, that is over $1 billion of works planned for the Sunshine Coast stretch of the Bruce Highway. To make the case for further lanes of the highway between Caboolture and Caloundra, a joint Commonwealth-state study is getting underway, and I call on the Queensland government to progress that study as a matter of urgency.

I feel that for too long people have looked at the Bruce Highway upgrades only in the context of solving problems—safety, congestion and flooding. All of these are absolutely key factors to address, but I believe we also need to talk about the upside, the aspirational side—that upgrading vital infrastructure like the Bruce Highway is just as much about unleashing the economic capacity of the region. It is why I am so happy, too, that the minister recently announced, to supplement the study for extra lanes between Caboolture and Caloundra, another study that will look north of the Sunshine Motorway to the Nambour Connection Road and Maroochydore Road turn-offs for additional lanes. This means more economic growth for our region. If you take tourism as an example, outside Brisbane the Sunshine Coast continues to be the most visited holiday destination in Queensland by other Queenslanders. Can you imagine, therefore, the impact that additional lanes on the Bruce Highway, already an overly utilised asset, would have on just that one sector alone, let alone the other sectors covered within our diversified region?
These commitments have been long fought for and, as the new member for Fairfax, I am very grateful for them. But, quite frankly, it is not enough. That is why my colleagues within the Sunshine Coast region, in Fisher and Wide Bay, together with me and also our colleagues further north and further south, will continue to campaign for further upgrades to the Bruce Highway, and we will be doing so as a unity ticket.

In that spirit of unity, I am delighted to see that the shadow minister has turned up today to speak to the motion. Indeed, there is nothing more heartening than a unity ticket on the Bruce Highway. I am sure that is the spirit of cooperation that the shadow minister will bring to this discussion. I have to say I was somewhat bemused recently with the shadow minister visiting the Sunshine Coast region and taking credit for the upgrades within the region, when he was referring to a time when the Labor Party actually committed $4.1 billion for upgrades to the Bruce Highway, compared to $6.7 billion by the coalition. But that is okay. If we can have a united purpose here, I will be delighted. First and foremost, I would reach out to any member of the opposition to make a phone call to the Premier of Queensland and her colleagues and call for them to hurry up. Let's get on with these studies for more lanes for the Bruce Highway.

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

An honourable member: I second the motion and reserve my right to speak.

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler) (17:34): It is indeed always gratifying when a political opponent is happy to acknowledge your work, and that happened on 5 March 2011, when the former Liberal member for Herbert, Ewen Jones, told the Townsville Bulletin: 'I'll give Labor a pat on the back and say that they have spent more in their four to five years on the Bruce Highway than we did before.' And, of course, that is the case. The Howard government, in office for almost 12 long years of infrastructure neglect, invested $1.3 billion on the Bruce Highway. We were in office for six years and we invested $5.7 billion so four times the amount in half the time. It is not hard to work out why Ewen Jones and other people who have actually examined the Bruce Highway acknowledge the fact that, before the election of the Labor government, there simply was not delivery.

I note that this motion asks us to accept that the government is investing $6.7 billion on upgrading the Bruce Highway. The budget figures show that more than $3 billion of that is not being spent this decade. So why say $6.7 billion? Why not say $50 billion, $100 billion, in 2030? You know, it is just quite farcical. Indeed in this year's budget, the government cut the Bruce Highway spending by $118 million for this financial year over what it said in last year's budget papers it would spend. If you look at the coalition government's last year's papers and then you look at the budget papers for this year, there is $118 million less. Of course that is not surprising given that infrastructure investment tumbled by 20 per cent under this government in its first two years. But of course that has not stopped the government pretending somehow that they have been responsible for a lot of the work that is being done including of course the Cooroy to Curra upgrade that was in the electorate of the minister for transport and Deputy Prime Minister at the time. It took us to fix it up.

The Minister for Infrastructure and Transport issued a media release in April this year where he listed 24 projects that he claimed to have been delivered or commenced by the coalition government. Unfortunately for him, 23 of them were begun under the former Labor government—23 or 24, I will give some credit. The Arnot Creek Bridge near Ingham
announced in February—$10 million—was a part of the pot of funds that we put into the budget that was not allocated. It had not specifically had its funding cut.

The member for Fairfax is new and has got the new wheels on, on the new roads that Labor built. But I say to him what he should do is examine the facts on this matter and should truly advocate for additional funding because that has not happened under this government. Under this government, what we have had is essentially a magical infrastructure announcement tour in places like Rockhampton, the member for Capricornia's electorate. For projects that were well underway, the member for Capricornia has pretended that somehow there is something new to them.

This is a vital road not only for the interests of productivity for the nation but also for the interests of road safety. I have driven on parts of the Bruce Highway that have been quite clearly unsafe and that is why, for a number of the projects that are being done, road safety is absolutely critical.

I wish the member for Fairfax and other members well in getting additional money. But getting money off into the never never is not a win. The fact is, of the $5.7 billion we had in six years, $4.1 billion was additional investment that we promised moving forward under nation building 2 and the total there for this decade is the commitment that we had. I am very proud of our record on both the Bruce Highway and the Pacific Highway and it is a pity that it has gone back to go-slow since the change of office in 2013.

Ms LANDRY (Capricornia—Deputy Nationals Whip) (17:39): I would like to reply to the funding that Labor supposedly put into the Bruce Highway outside of Rockhampton because they did stage 1; we did stage 2. And as I say, it is taxpayers' dollars, not Labor or Liberal dollars.

I relish this opportunity to address the chamber on the subject of the Bruce Highway. The Bruce Highway is an important freight and transport corridor up the entire Queensland coast. It is effectively a lifeline between Brisbane and the rest of the state, especially for places like Rockhampton, Marlborough, Yeppoon, Sarina and Mackay. With huge freight trucks, livestock carriers and general motor traffic, the issue of road safety on the Bruce is a very important one. As you have heard today, after much lobbying by the National Party, the federal government has a $6.7 billion long-term plan to 'spruce the Bruce'. This equates to the biggest project agenda in Australia's history. For this, I acknowledge my retired colleague, and former Deputy Prime Minister, Warren Truss, who did tremendous work around lobbying for the Bruce Highway.

My electorate of Capricornia is our nation's official gateway to northern Australia and, already, $700 million of work linked to the Bruce has either been completed, is underway or will soon start in my region alone. I am delighted to inform the chamber of what work has been officially opened or is starting in the three short years that I have been the federal member. In Capricornia, on the southern side of Rockhampton, the Australian government has invested more than $210 million at the entrance to Australia's beef capital—the true beef capital of Australia! The aim of this was to improve traffic flow and road safety and ensure that the city remains open to freight and traffic movement during floods.

I am proud that the Liberal-National coalition funded the lion's share of stage 2 of this project—the biggest part of this reconstruction program—known as Yeppen South stage 2.
Here, the coalition contributed $136 million towards stage 2, which was one of my 2013 election promises. The Yeppen South stage 2 roadworks have resulted in the longest bridge on the Bruce Highway in Queensland and improved access into the city significantly. The Deputy Prime Minister officially opened this section in December last year.

There has been significant spending also on other parts of the Bruce Highway in Capricornia in recent times, including: $8.5 million to engineer two new overtaking lanes to make the Bruce Highway safer between Koumala and Sarina; $9.2 million to realign truck access and improve the flow of traffic on the Bruce Highway in the city of Rockhampton, specifically at the George and Albert streets intersection; $7.9 million for new northbound and southbound overtaking lanes on the Bruce Highway south of Marlborough; $15 million to fix up the Hay Point Road turnoff near Sarina under our Black Spot Program; and $1.2 million to Mackay Regional Council to fix the intersection of Horse and Jockey Road and Landsdowne Road at Racecourse. During the federal election, we also announced $60 million for a four-lane highway between Gracemere and Rockhampton. This section connects the Capricorn Highway to the Bruce Highway at a notoriously busy intersection on the outskirts of Rockhampton, where 20,000 commuters, on top of freight and livestock trucks, attempt to enter the city at peak times each day.

Further north in Capricornia, the Bruce Highway is undergoing major reconstruction to make way for the Mackay Ring Road—$360 million has been provided by the federal government. But, as they say in the TV ads, 'But wait, there's more!' I am pleased to inform the chamber that the Turnbull-Joyce government is spending a further $96.8 million to create a four-lane section on the Bruce Highway on the northern outskirts of Rockhampton. Construction was originally due to commence mid-2018 and scheduled for completion by late-2019, weather permitting. However, the first $13.8 million of the Turnbull-Joyce federal government funding has been brought forward to fast-track stage 1. Work is already underway to generate economic activity in the city. This is strong evidence that our coalition government is delivering real improvements to the Bruce Highway.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hogan): I thank the member for Capricornia, but I do ask her to stop incorrectly referring to Rockhampton as the beef capital!

Mr PERRETT (Moreton—Opposition Whip) (17:44): I rise to speak on the motion put forward by the member for Fairfax about the Bruce Highway. I know the Bruce Highway very well, not so much as a member of parliament but for a number of reasons: (1) because I am married to someone from Cairns, so I make the journey up to Cairns for Christmas pretty regularly and (2) because I was a union organiser working in private schools—all the private schools in Capricornia, Wide Bay and Fairfax. I lived on the Bruce Highway for many, many years.

To put up a motion asking for more work on the Bruce Highway, as the member for Fairfax has done—seen through the prism of the fact that his government has committed 118 million fewer dollars to the Bruce Highway since the previous budget—is obviously a bit embarrassing. I wish the transport minister, the member for Gippsland, was here so that we could talk to him and ask him to explain how he let this motion come through. I hope he did not do it to embarrass a Queenslander—I know he would not do that. But obviously, as a member of the Labor Party, I am very proud of those 24 projects that are taking place on the Bruce, because I know they will benefit the Queensland economy—it would be better if 23 of...
them had not been funded by Labor, and we actually had some additional money coming in. But we know that there is more to be done on the Bruce Highway, particularly from Fairfax through to the Brisbane CBD.

The Bruce Highway is an essential link. I know of the traffic accident that the member for Fairfax referred to, as my next-door neighbours were in the backlog behind it. We need to get it right—particularly that connection between the Pine River and the Caloundra Road interchange, where there has been a number of safety issues and flood immunity issues. We need to get the infrastructure right so that we meet those expected future traffic volumes. Any time you head south between the Boundary Road interchange and the Pine River bridge on weekdays, and between the Caboolture River Bridge and the Pine River bridge on weekends, you know that it is snarled up. This is creating frustration and difficulty for Queensland commuters. We know that there are more houses being built in there all the time; I have a brother in the construction industry who is working around that northern part of Brisbane and the Pine Rivers area. In relation to the upgrade to this section of the highway—this $8 million project—we need to get it right, and the Queensland government needs to plan thoroughly and carefully so that the right engineering decisions are made.

Planning on this scale is no small task. The preliminary evaluations and project proposal reports must be created in order to determine how best to improve this crucial national highway. During the global financial crisis we had some very immediate attempts to get money out into the economy—some short-term, some medium-term and some longer term. The highway did receive a lot of injections of funds under the Labor Party during the global financial crisis. Obviously, with a tighter budget we just cannot pump money into it in the way that we would like to. I know that the Bruce Highway has been inundated during these major rain events; I know it affected Moreton back in 2011. We need to get this important transport corridor right, and we need to get the flood mitigation right when we construct it, rather than coming back to repair it after the floods.

I am hoping that the LNP members who are attempting to politicise the Bruce Highway remember in their speeches that we need to get the planning phase right. But it would help if the federal Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development actually had some extra funds for these projects. They are a substantial undertaking. Perhaps the Queensland government would benefit from the federal government reimbursing the $1.1 billion that has been spent on natural disaster repairs, including the flood and cyclone recovery works in Bundaberg after the damage from Cyclone Oswald, and the repairs to Brisbane's river ferry terminals. If that money flowed into the Queensland government from the Turnbull government, perhaps that could help Queensland roll out these repairs to the Bruce. That might be a better use of funds, rather than engaging in these cheap politics.

Mr WALLACE (Fisher) (17:49): The Bruce Highway is indeed the very backbone of our growing region of the Sunshine Coast.

Families, farmers small businesses owners and students all rely on the Bruce as the one and only direct link between the coast and Brisbane. The Turnbull coalition government believes in the Bruce Highway and understands its importance to the Sunshine Coast and to all Queenslanders. In fact, the coalition has already provided $6.7 billion for the Bruce Highway, and it makes me proud that I am part of a government that is committed to fixing this most vital infrastructure lifeline.
Let me give you an example of our steadfast commitment. On 16 September we announced the successful tender for the long-awaited upgrade to a section of the Bruce Highway vital to the Sunshine Coast, the stretch between Caloundra Road interchange and the Sunshine Motorway. This $929.3 million project funded, 80 per cent by the federal government, involves widening the highway to six lanes, as well as a major upgrade to the Sunshine Motorway interchange and reconfiguring the Caloundra Road interchange.

This section is used by around 60,000 vehicles each day, travelling north and south between Brisbane and Gympie, and east and west between the coast and the Hinterland. This upgrade has been a long time coming and is the result of many years of lobbying by the coast's federal and state LNP members. Indeed, it is a great win for the tens of thousands of local motorists who rely on this section of the Bruce Highway every day to get to work, operate their business or simply get the kids to school.

As the member for Fisher the vast majority of people in my electorate will directly benefit from this upgrade through reduced congestion, better safety measures and improved travel times. However, now that we are in the process of delivering this vital piece of infrastructure for the Sunshine Coast, we cannot rest on our laurels. To the contrary, my local LNP colleagues, the member for Fairfax and the member for Wide Bay, are now more determined than ever to supercharge our 'Boost the Bruce' campaign and ensure work to widen the highway between the Sunshine Coast and Caboolture from four lanes to six, including flood proofing the highway between Caboolture and Steve Irwin Way, and that begins as soon as possible.

Let me assure you this is not a pie-in-the-sky dream; this is a serious goal that must be realised, because the people of the Sunshine Coast cannot wait any longer. In fact, an upgrade of this scale is long overdue. The almost daily accidents and Sydney-like traffic jams are testament to that. To this end, the Bruce Highway planning study was announced on 3 July 2015, following a $6.4 million contribution from the federal government and $1.6 million from the state. Again, we put up the bulk of the money because we believe in the Bruce Highway and know only too well that the Bruce is the Sunshine Coast's most vital transport artery. To date, our calls for the Queensland government to fast-track the planning study have fallen on deaf ears. In response to a question on notice from LNP main roads spokesperson, Andrew Powell, earlier this year, the Queensland government advised the planning study is not due to be released until mid-2018.

The Sunshine Coast is one of the fastest-growing regions in Australia. It is an area blessed with smart people with great ideas and business acumen. The coast is growing as a hotbed for innovation and start-up companies. Our farmers and fishers are responsible for delivering some of the best quality produce money can buy. The people of the Sunshine Coast simply cannot wait nearly another two years for the completion of a planning study. We need it fast tracked and we need it now. I do not think any fair-minded person would think it is unreasonable to insist that the study be completed by the middle of next year. By doing so, we can allocate funding and get the machinery rolling to deliver this most vital project, one that we on the Sunshine Coast believe is a project of national importance, essential to our future prosperity.
The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hogan): There being no further speakers, debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Penalty Rates

Ms CHESTERS (Bendigo) (17:54): I move:

That this House:
(1) notes that:
   (a) penalty rates:
      (i) continue to be a fundamental part of a strong safety net for Australian workers, enabling those in low income and highly casualised industries to share in the nation's economic prosperity; and
      (ii) are not a luxury—they pay the bills and put food on the table for up to 4.5 million Australians relying on them; and
   (b) reducing the penalty rates of low-paid workers will negatively impact the economy as a whole;
(2) acknowledges that:
   (a) hospitality workers are in the bottom 30 per cent of Australian income earners;
   (b) along with hospitality and food services, retail has the largest proportion of low paid workers in Australia; and
   (c) women comprise a disproportionate share of workers in both the retail and hospitality sectors, accounting for 55 per cent of all employed;
(3) condemns the Government's failure to protect penalty rates, particularly given continued record low wage growth; and
(4) calls on the Government to protect penalty rates by joining with the Opposition in making a submission to the Fair Work Commission, arguing strongly that penalty rates should not be cut.

If penalty rates are cut, it is entirely the fault of this government. This government, in the last term and this term, have failed. They have failed to stand up for working people and they have failed to protect penalty rates for some of the most vulnerable people in our community.

I note the members opposite have already started to giggle and laugh. The 4.5 million Australians who rely on penalty rates are not laughing. They are not laughing that this government have failed to join the Labor opposition and make a submission to the Fair Work review into penalty rates, arguing strongly that they should not be cut. These 4.5 million Australians who rely on penalty rates are low-paid workers, the majority of whom are women. Particularly under the gun and targeted at the moment are hospitality and retail workers. Hospitality workers are at the bottom 30 per cent of Australian income earners. Hospitality and retail workers have the largest proportion of low-paid workers in Australia, and 55 per cent of these workers are women. Why on earth would the government not stand with these hardworking Australians?

I will put it into context for government members about what it means for somebody earning penalty rates. Last year I had the great privilege of meeting many of these workers and learning firsthand about their experiences and about what they actually spend their wages on. These people said that earning penalty rates is how they pay their rent. It is how they pay their rates notice. It is how they pay for their children's basketball or ballet lessons. These are not luxuries; these are the realities of life.
A critical point that government ministers and government members have forgotten is that people on penalty rates are quite often our low-paid workers. So, when you cut their penalty rates, you cut their take-home pay—and the reality is that this is what is being proposed. Why the government is to blame is because, during the last term, we had several backbenchers standing up advocating a cut in penalty rates. The former Prime Minister and the current Prime Minister declared that the weekend was dead and advocated a cut in penalty rates, ignoring the research, ignoring what is being suggested and ignoring the voices of ordinary workers who are saying, 'If you cut my penalty rates, I'll slide into poverty."

There is no economic analysis that proves that cutting penalty rates will in fact increase jobs. This is just some rhetoric that the government like to throw out there. It will not increase jobs. For the few businesses that may open on a Sunday, if penalty rates are cut, it may create some extra work for one person on a Sunday—but it does not create jobs. Anyone who suggests that is either kidding themselves or misleading their own constituencies and this parliament. Cutting penalty rates will not increase jobs, and there is no study that has proven that to be otherwise.

A research report from the McKell Institute demonstrated that, if you cut penalty rates, you take money out of the local economy, in areas like my own electorate of Bendigo. This research said that millions of dollars would be cut from local economies. As one small business owner—who does open seven days a week—said to me:

If you cut penalty rates then people won't come into my store. The very people that I serve in my restaurant are the very people who also earn penalty rates. So therefore they have the disposable income to come into my restaurant.

The government are narrow sighted and are only listening to one side of the debate. In the last parliament and in this parliament we have seen time and time again the government ignoring the voices of workers and listening to their mates in big business. They are not listening to the people who will be most affected by a cut in penalty rates.

Again we call on the government to do all they can to protect penalty rates. Again we call on the government to join the opposition and make a submission to the Fair Work Commission and argue strongly for protecting penalty rates and arguing strongly that penalty rates not be cut. The Fair Work Commission have again put off releasing their report, calling for more submissions to be made. So, clearly, they are not convinced by the government's rhetoric that cutting penalty rates will be good for workers. The government need to drop their case against the lowest paid workers, support our lowest paid workers and defend their penalty rates.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the motion seconded?

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

Mr HOWARTH (Petrie) (17:59): I rise today to talk about this motion on penalty rates with great pleasure. We just heard the member for Bendigo, who raised this motion, talk on this issue. I believe that the member for Bendigo has absolutely no credibility on this issue whatsoever.

In her maiden speech I heard the member for Bendigo get up and say:

I believe that it is the role of government to reduce the number of employees who are being forced to become contractors instead of working for a boss.
This is what the member for Bendigo said in her first speech to parliament. Well, member for Bendigo, that is not the role of government. It is not your role to tell employees, or those people on Newstart, how they should be employed and under what conditions. It just goes to show that this member, who is now the shadow assistant minister for workplace relations, is totally out of her depth, and she should resign from that position. If the Labor Party came back into government one day, God help us if she is appointed as the workplace relations minister because she does not have a clue as to what is going on—and that is evident from her maiden speech.

We in the coalition have said right from the beginning that it is not up to us individual members, like the member for Bendigo, the member for Petrie or anyone else here, to decide on penalty rates. It is actually up to the Fair Work Commission. Of course we know that when Bill Shorten was the Minister for Workplace Relations he put that into law. As the minister, Bill Shorten established the 2012 review of the Fair Work Act which considered penalty rates and even recommended that arrangements for penalty rates on certain public holidays be reformed. They changed the way penalty rates were set. Bill Shorten as minister amended the Fair Work Act to require the Fair Work Commission to specifically review penalty rates. The member opposite says that we need to be making submissions or that we have not made a submission and that we need to join their submission. Quite frankly, it is not up to government to bully the Fair Work Commission into your way of thinking. You are saying that we had a particular issue, or that employers are bullying people; you are actually bullying the Fair Work Commission and you cannot open your mind to look at where some of these issues need to change.

If you particularly want to stand up for workers rights then you need to look at some of the unions, perhaps, that are bartering away penalty rates. And what for? For their own benefit—to line their own pockets. You need not look any further, member for Bendigo, than your own leader, Bill Shorten, when he was head of the AWU. We all know what he did with Cleanevent and for cleaners. If you want to talk about how you can stick up for cleaners in your electorate, then think about what Mr Shorten, Leader of the Opposition, did when he was with the AWU. He said, 'Sure. Don't worry, Cleanevent. You don't have to pay penalty rates. You don't have to pay any penalty rates. Just slip us a lazy 25k a year into the Australian Workers' Union, and we'll turn a blind eye.' You have the audacity to come in here and say the government is responsible! If you got into government and if you had your way, employment would go right through the roof.

Ms Chester: interjecting—

Mr HOWARTH: Unemployment! Unemployment would go through the roof—sorry. You got me there, member for Bendigo. I hope employment does go through the roof because that is what we are here for. As the member for Petrie, the member for Bendigo, the member for Lily and everyone else in this chamber, we want to create an environment in which business can employ, not create an environment where you tell workers how they should be employed.

There are specific examples—I will give you one right now if you are listening, member for Bendigo and member for Lily. When I was growing up, young people would often work on a Thursday night and a Saturday morning. They would be in year 10, 11 and 12. They would often do a part-time job. Now, of course, we have supermarkets open Monday to
Friday. But I know examples where young people in year 11 would work on a Saturday. They would start on a Saturday and do eight hours work, and they would get paid. But what happened when the Fair Work Commission came in at some point? Now, even without doing any hours during the week, on a Saturday they start on time and a quarter from the very first hour—nine o'clock, eight o'clock in the morning. Then it goes to time and a half; then after 12.30 it goes to double time. So a student that was getting an eight-hour shift on a Saturday is now only getting a four-hour shift because a small business closes after four hours. The small businesses that you spoke about in your maiden speech, member for Bendigo, with your parents and so forth, where you had to work on a Saturday, you would not be able to employ a student if you were paying them double time on a Saturday.

I will say straight up: we believe in penalty rates, I believe that on a Sunday you should be paid penalty rates, I believe that on 38 hours or more a week you should be paid penalty rates. But we are here to provide jobs and growth. You need to open your eyes and learn a bit. (Time expired)

Mr SWAN (Lilley) (18:04): I want to say a few words on penalty rates, because I think this issue is emblematic of wider issues where there is a stark difference between those on this side of the House and those on the other side of the House. On this side of the House, we believe that it is not only good for the individual but good for the economy if we pay people fairly. We also believe that if people work unsociable hours then they should be paid a penalty. But what we have seen in this parliament over a long period of time—and it never changes—is that the Liberals want to get rid of penalty rates. There are many of them who are game to say that very openly. The member for Petrie is not because he knows that that position is rejected by his electorate, as indeed it is rejected by people in my electorate. What has happened in our country is that we have avoided going down the American road, where the middle class has been hollowed out and an army of working poor has been created, because we have had a strong industrial relations system which has paid people fairly and recognised that unsociable hours should be the subject of penalty rates.

The member spoke before about various deals that have been put in place by various unions. I am proud of the fact that there are unions that have rolled penalty rates into higher base rates of pay. The member of Petrie is so stupid that he does not understand that if you are cutting penalty rates—which is the objective of many in the government—you are effectively cutting that permanent rate as well. So an attack on penalty rates is an attack on higher permanent rates of pay rolled into particular packages for particular groups in the workforce.

So he is not only advocating a cut to penalty rates at a point in time for people who are irregular workers; what he and they actually advocating is a cut to permanent rates of pay which have been built into agreements for large classes of workers, particularly in retail but also in health.

In my area this has happened in a number of industries, and people are receiving higher rates of pay through penalty rates rolled into their permanent pay, which gives them a higher standard of living. But the trickle-down brigade on the other side of the House have one solution for all of their economic gains. Their one solution for jobs and growth is to cut pay and to cut tax for the rich. This is what trickle-down economics is all about. It says, 'If you give people lower pay, if you deregulate the system and you give tax cuts to the rich, then suddenly all the economic activity from that will trickle down, and people will automatically
be paid higher wages. It is crap, it does not work and it is now rejected by the great bastion of trickle-down economics, the International Monetary Fund, which now argues a very nuanced argument that simply says, 'A strong middle class and good wages and working conditions are themselves a cause of growth, not just a consequence of growth.'

What we are witnessing here is the age-old debate. The Liberals are in here with all of their old Work Choices preferences hidden in new language about how they suddenly stand for penalty rates. They do not, their party room does not and, when they get the chance, what we will be seeing from them is Work Choices yet again. That is what the penalty rates issue is all about. They went to the wall for it in 2007 and they keep going to the wall for it, because what they are really about in our economy is wealth concentration. They are not actually about wealth creation; they are about wealth concentration. In their world, if you reduce the labour share of the economy and increase the profit share of the economy, the economy magically grows. That of course is the theory behind the absurd proposition that they took to the last election of a $50 billion corporate tax cut, just about all of which was going to go to multinational companies and $7 billion of which was going to go to our four biggest banks. Somehow that was the panacea to produce jobs and growth—a classic trickle-down prescription of the kind rejected by the IMF which has led to gross inequality around the world, most particularly in the United States. But the modern Liberals do not get it. They take this proposition, as discredited as it is and was even by the Treasury modelling, and stand up and say: 'We've got this magic elixir for growth. We'll just give the very rich a tax cut, and you'll get jobs and growth.' It is rubbish, it does not work and the leading edge of that argument is to cut wages by attacking penalty rates.

Mr VAN MANEN (Forde—Government Whip) (18:09): It has been interesting to sit here and listen to the contributions from the member for Bendigo and the member for Lilley to this debate on the motion moved by the member for Bendigo. It is a pity that they have not stayed to listen, because they might learn a little bit.

The member for Bendigo said that the government had to put a case to the Fair Work Commission. The fact is, the government does not need to put a case to the Fair Work Commission, because it is the job of it fair work commissioned to make decisions on penalty rates. Who it was who gave the Fair Work Commission the responsibility to make decisions in relation to penalty rates. It was the Leader of the Opposition when he was in government as the minister for employment relations who did that. So all the froth and bubble we have just heard from the room member for Bendigo the member for Lilley is complete and utter hypocrisy. Whatever those opposite have to say on the matter of penalty rates is complete and utter hypocrisy.

We have just heard the member for Lilley say what a great deal it is for members of unions to have their penalty rates wrapped up in a higher base rate of pay. Let us reflect on that for a minute in relation to the employees of Coles and their EBA. The member for Petrie mentioned Cleanevent, but I will mention a more recent one, Coles. The Fair Work Commission, as a result of an action brought by a Coles employee, whose union, the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association, opposed his motion to contest the EBA and supported Coles position, found that the 2015 Coles EBA failed the better-off-overall test that the member for Lilley was just waxing lyrical about, but he could not be bothered to stay here and listen to the reality of what is going on.
What is the cost of that to the 43,000 retail employees that the member for Bendigo and the member for Lilley said we should be looking after? We should be looking after them and we should be making sure that they get paid their appropriate rate of pay, but it was their union, the SDA, and the Australian Workers Union with Cleanevent, who let down their members—in this case some 43,000 employees of Coles. The cost to those employees is estimated at somewhere between $70 million and $100 million a year. Do I hear those opposite say to the SDA and Coles that they should ensure that those employees get paid what the Fair Work Commission rightly found they should have been paid? No. There has been not a peep, not a whisper, out of them. A church mouse would make more noise on this issue than have those opposite.

The problem is that not only has this given Coles an unfair competitive advantage against people like Aldi, IGA and others, who do pay the proper minimum wage and the proper penalty rates. We have just listened to complete hogwash from the member for Bendigo and the member for Lilley. This is all because of a law passed by the Leader of the Opposition when he was last in government. He and his team can wax lyrical all they like about protecting workers rights and penalty rights, but as usual we need to look not at what the Labor Party says but at what the Labor Party does. What the Labor Party has done is let down the members of the unions—the employees of the big employers—whom they purport to protect, because that is the reality of what has happened.

We have not heard a peep out of them about this. Why is that? That is a very good question. I have not heard any response anywhere from the Leader of the Opposition, the shadow minister for employment workplace relations or the shadow assistant minister for workplace relations. Why do they not hold to account this union and the big employers to make sure that these hardworking retail employees are paid what they are due to be paid. (Time expired)

Ms VAMVAKINOU (Calwell) (18:15): I am very pleased to rise today to support the motion moved by the member for Bendigo regarding penalty rates. Penalty rates are extremely important to the people and families in my electorate of Calwell. These are low-income workers who sacrifice family time and work unsociable hours because they rely on penalty rates to pay for their everyday living expenses, in most cases including their mortgages or their rent. There are 4.5 million Australians, most in lower paid jobs, who rely on penalty rates to pay their bills and to make ends meet. Therefore, I am pleased to stand alongside my colleague the member for Bendigo, who is a very strong campaigner on this issue.

Penalty rates are a safety net for Australian workers in an environment that is becoming more precarious, casualised and underemployed. Penalty rates are essential in combatting the emergence of a class of working poor, and proposing to remove them is an assault on Australian workers. Removing penalty rates will disproportionality affect hospitality and retail workers, who are amongst the lowest paid workers in Australia and the largest employers of women in the labour force. Removing that safety net for women to engage in the workforce risks also removing their autonomy and capacity for self-determination. Many of those women live in my electorate.

Incentivising irregular hours of work, and compensation for working during usual family and recreation time, is not a new phenomenon. Penalty rates were hard fought for by early
industrial Australians. They now form an important tenet of our social democracy and are the cornerstone of fairness, social inclusion and living standards in this country, whilst preventing discrimination and exploitation.

Last week was a very big week for my electorate, with the closing of the Ford motor car factory. I look back at the 57-year history of Ford in Broadmeadows and the multiple generations of workers who have lived in the federal seat of Calwell. These were people who worked very long hours, risked their health and spent time away from their families to better their quality of life, and this sacrifice was rewarded with penalty rates. It was their penalty rates that they saved and used to buy a house and to educate their children. Penalty rates are a key feature of nation building in this country.

The difference that penalty rates make to the average worker's ability to make ends meet cannot be underestimated or undervalued. We are living in a time where wage growth is slow compared to the increased costs of housing and health care, for example. The ABS wage price index shows that wage growth is the slowest it has been in the last 20 years. We are seeing everyday Australians dip into their savings or put less aside in order to cope with the increase in the cost of living.

Penalty rates enable security and upward momentum through sharing in the nation's prosperity, by allowing low-income earners to be properly compensated for sacrificing their family life and their social life. They add to low-income workers' take home pay each week, adding to their and their family's quality of life as well as the competitiveness of the national economy.

The removal of penalty rates will impact on those most vulnerable in the labour market: low-income earners—people who live in my electorate. Many of my constituents in Calwell come from new and emerging communities, who want to make a go of their life in Australia. Employment and fair pay is key to making a go of it. I want to quote one of my constituents, who I have spoken to, who feels very strongly about this issue. Humphrey Caspersz is from Craigieburn in Melbourne's north. He is a field service technician for electronic appliances. Humphrey wants me to read this out to the chamber:

To me, after hours, overtime and minimum hours for weekend work are the most important and crucial payments I receive. It helps with my mortgage and helps provide the food I put on the table to feed my growing family as I have a wife and three children, with another on the way. I have been both on a salary and wage and found the salary meant that I was working long hours with no bonuses and hardly got to see my family, with no extra benefit but to the company I worked for. Now I am back on a wage with all the penalties, giving me the option to work weekends and after hours with the incentive of more pay and allowing me to have some extra money that I can spend on my family and also helping make ends meet—for example, paying our ever increasing energy bills. I believe these penalties are a great reward for the sacrifice of giving up my time that could be better spent with my family.

Mr HAWKE (Mitchell—Assistant Minister to the Treasurer) (18:20): The member for Lilley was right when he said that this debate is emblematic of many of the differences between the ALP and the Liberal Party in today's political environment. But he is right not for the reason that he suggested; he, of course, is pointing to the fact that the Labor Party of today is wholly captive to the Australian union movement and ignorant of the realities of the modern workplace and the realities of big business versus small business in this country.
This debate is actually about small business versus big business. What we see in today's world is that the representatives of the union movement and the union movement in this country are like the multinational corporations that operate in the private sector. Unions are big businesses today in the industrial relations space. Just like multinationals, the big businesses—the union movement—trade away the conditions under awards for their workers, with the full cognisance and agreement of the Australian Labor Party and the former union heads, at the expense of small business.

This debate today is about ensuring that we have a fair industrial umpire who is able to consider arguments from those who are unable to form unions—that is, every single worker in a small or medium business, which are most of the employers and most of the employment in this country. They are unable to join a union, and those who do not join a union, do not have their case represented at Fair Work Australia. Instead, what we see are unions representing cases at Fair Work Australia that they do not take to their workers themselves.

If any one of these members—the member for Bendigo, the member for Lilley or the member who just spoke—went out and examined the actual state of awards at the moment in this country, they would find things like this. They would find that a McDonald's has to pay a lower rate of penalty rate than a café, a small business, that exists across the road. That is what they would find in many different awards, depending on what award has to be paid for a penalty rate. They will find that a small business has to pay its workers more than a multinational corporation. Who over there wants to stand up and defend that? Who wants to stand up and defend them?

Where in this motion that the member for Bendigo moved today does it say 'a condemnation of the SDA'? Where is the condemnation of the SDA who traded away penalty rates in South Australia, was found to be unfair and did not pass the test that was required? The SDA operated just like a multinational and traded away the penalty rates of workers in South Australia in the retail sector. That is what they felt was fair. They were able, because of their size, their scale and their member base, to negotiate with the large retailers at the expense of small retailers. So it was the small retailers who suffered the most in South Australia. The union movement, of course, does not care and does not get the point.

In every argument that we hear from the Labor Party today, they are trying to say that this is about creating a class of working poor. In one sense, they are right. The new class of working poor in this country are the small businessman and businesswoman in this country running their own small business, who working longer and longer hours to pay their taxes in this country, so that they can put more people on in their small business. They are working longer and longer hours at their own expense, at their families' expense and at their time's expense, so that they can operate their small family business, because of the regulatory burdens that successive Labor governments put on them and because of the onerous industrial relations requirements that are on them. The small businesses that provide most of the employment in this country are the new class of working poor. If the Labor Party was referring to them here, we would accept it.

Here we are in this debate again post the election talking about the same things. It is the unions. The only people cutting deals in this country to reduce penalty rates are the union movement. The only people in this country doing deals to reduce penalty rates are the union movement. So when we have cases put to Fair Work Australia and finally hear an
independent umpire set up by the Labor Party to arbitrate the case for small business and employees about what rates of pay and penalty rates would be fair on Saturdays and Sundays—they are cases arbitrated by the independent umpire, which was set up and put in place by the Leader of the Opposition—we see that Labor will not accept the independent umpire's decision, which is really to the benefit of small business, predominantly.

It is the big unions cutting deals with big multinationals that are reducing penalty rates in this country. Yet small businesses are supposed to now suffer because the Labor Party will not accept in any way, no matter what they rule, the independent arbitration of Fair Work Australia—the saviour of the modern industrial relations system set up by the Leader of the Opposition and by the Labor Party. They will not accept the outcome of the independent umpire.

We know what is going on here with these kinds of motions. It shows that Labor simply does not get the modern economy. They have no interest in a fair and equitable association between employee and employer. They are wholly captive to the modern union movement and they are unable to deshackle themselves from the unions and be independent. (Time expired)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Wicks): 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.

Higher Education

Ms PLIBERSEK (Sydney—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (18:25): I move:

That this House:

(1) notes the Government's abject failure in higher education policy, including:

(a) repeated attempts to introduce a United States style, user pays approach to tuition fees which will leave young Australians with $100,000 degrees;

(b) a continued policy to slash 20 per cent from Commonwealth Grants Scheme funding; and

(c) the short-sighted 2016-17 budget decision to remove 40 per cent of funding to the Higher Education Participation Program by 2019-20; and

(2) calls on the Government to:

(a) recognise that two in every three jobs created in the future will require a university degree;

(b) acknowledge that investment in human potential is critical to boosting productivity and driving innovation; and

(c) immediately work to improve access to higher education and stop putting barriers around our universities through massive debt burdens.

We know that a university education makes an enormous difference to the lives of individuals. Many of us in this place were the first in our families to attend university, and we know the difference that has made to our lives and the different paths our lives have taken because of that. What we do not discuss nearly enough is the fact that a university education is not just a private benefit for the individual; it has a public benefit for all of us. We are better and stronger as a nation when we invest in education. In fact, the OECD estimates that the real rate of return to the Australian government from investing in tertiary education is more than 13 per cent, putting us at the higher end of that public benefit if you look across OECD nations. In fact, in 2013, the Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency found that every

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dollar invested in tertiary education would on average grow the economy by $26 within the
decade.

I have seen that personal benefit within my own family. My older
brothers were able to go
to university because of the Whitlam reforms. The reforms that came after, during the Hawke
and Keating years and during the Rudd and Gillard years, have built on that fine tradition of
ensuring that a university education is accessible to anybody who is prepared to work hard
and study hard. We invested in our universities because we wanted to make that difference in
people's lives; also because we wanted to make that difference in our economic life as a
nation. After years of neglect under the Howard government, Labor boosted investment in
universities from $8 billion in 2007 to $14 billion in 2013. We opened up the demand-driven
system, which has seen an additional 190,000 Australians go to university. Around one in
every four of the 750,000 Australians who are undergraduates in our universities are there
because of those reforms.

What is particularly important is that these reforms have meant that people who struggled
to go university in the past are now able to attend. Since 2012, we have seen a 26 per cent
boost in the number of Indigenous students, a 30 per cent boost in the number of regional
students and more than 36,000 extra students from low-income families—most, as I said, the
first in their family to go to university. What you see in contrast, since the election of the
Abbott and Turnbull governments, is a plan simply to cut university funding. If the Liberals
had their way, more than $4.4 billion will be cut from Commonwealth grant schemes over
four years. You cannot have the innovative and agile economy that the Prime Minister likes to
talk about without investing in higher education. We heard him speaking today about
advanced manufacturing replacing the jobs of the car workers. Thousands of them will lose
their jobs over coming years because of the neglect of this government.

To have that advanced manufacturing future, we have to not just invest in the capacity of
our existing workforce but also ensure that we have the designers, creators and engineers who
will lead that advanced manufacturing future. It was fantastic recently to go to Monash
University's Woodside Innovation Centre in Clayton, where I met the students and researchers
who are working in collaboration with Woodside and their Goodwyn platform, right over the
other side of the country off the coast of Western Australia. They lost a lever—a very simple
piece of equipment that would have taken weeks to replace if they have been relying on
traditional means. But, in collaboration with Monash University, they were able to send 3D
imagery to a 3D printer, have their technicians work on it and helicopter this replacement part
out to the rig much more quickly than they otherwise would have been able to. Of course that
is the future of manufacturing in Australia, but you cannot do it without a partnership with
universities.

Our young Australians are already paying the sixth highest fees in the OECD, and the idea
that we would ask them now to pay $100,000 university fees is disturbing, to say the least,
particularly with the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program cuts that this
government plans. A 40 per cent cut is already planned for HEPPP, which is the program that
has really supported young Australians who do not come from a background where university
education is an easy thing to get into. Labor supports our universities; the Liberals are just
about cuts.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Wicks): Is the motion seconded?
Mr Littleproud (Maranoa) (18:31): Today, I stand in this chamber as a proud member of a government committed to ensuring that education continues to play a key role in bettering the lives and careers of every Australian. I do not have a degree; I was fortunate to build a career in my electorate of Maranoa by working my way up in the finance sector. But, when I was at school, the line 'fail to prepare; prepare to fail' was repeatedly used. Never has a line had more relevance than today, right here in this particular motion. If any government fails to balance the exponential growth in university loans, the current economic pressures and the need to transition our economy through education, then the system that was designed to universally provide opportunity to students electing to study will surely fail.

It is important in a debate as important as this that the facts are clearly articulated: We know higher education is a fundamental component of the Australian workforce and will play a key role in transitioning our economy by building the next generation's skills sets and intellectual property and diversifying our industries. The funding of university loans to students has grown by 59 per cent, almost twice the rate of the nominal GDP growth rate of 29 per cent over the same period. In 2016, our government will contribute more than $16 billion to funding student places at record levels. The cost of a degree is not a determinative factor to the decision of students in choosing their field of study or career path, which even the opposition have conceded, with various members acknowledging that lower student contributions have no impact on student demand; rather, that a student's interests, abilities and career preferences brought about demand. If Labor had a mascot in this space, it would be the sidestepping, body-burrowing sand crab. They have a remarkable ability to run a scare campaign, while at the same time failing to accurately cost a policy in higher education—or any other policy, for that matter.

This government cannot be accused of not doing its job when it comes to finding the balance. I commend our government and, in particular, Minister Birmingham for today announcing the expert advisory panel that will work hand in glove with government to holistically tackle the issues facing this sector and ensure that we deliver a world-class, future-proofed, sustainable and progressive system that promotes excellence and innovation for the future generations to come. This diverse and qualified panel will be entrusted to examine the merits of a number of policy options emanating from the various key stakeholders and make recommendations.

I look forward to the outcome of this process, but I also look forward to the outcomes I know this government will attain in bolstering participation by students in regional and remote areas in higher education. In my electorate of Maranoa, in regional Queensland, we typically have lower enrolment rates at universities given the tyranny of distance and the issues associated with children relocating after schooling, in addition to the challenges often posed by studying externally. Our government is aware of those concerns, has heard them clearly and over the next five years will invest more than $350 million in supporting higher education delivery in regional areas. That is in addition to reforming the requirements around the assets test for youth allowance to make it easier for geographically disadvantaged children to get to university, and reducing the self-supporting criteria for youth allowance from 18 months to 14 months for regional and remote students. This is in addition to the coalition's recent announcement of 1,200 rural and regional scholarships aimed at facilitating access to
further education for undergraduate, postgraduate and vocational education students from the country.

Make no mistake, it is this government that knows just how important our kids and their aspirations will be to transitioning our economy now and into future. The government is consulting widely. We care about making sure this important system remains sustainable and affordable for all students—no matter their gender, background or postcode. I implore the opposition and the crossbenchers to come with the government on this journey to ensuring that our future generations can look forward to a world-class, sustainable system that delivers on our new economy.

Ms BUTLER (Griffith) (18:35): I was at the Stones Corner park run on Saturday morning—a fantastic park run with hundreds of people—and I did it with a friend of mine. We were at university together in 1996. She is a bit older than me; she is in her mid-40s. She said to me, 'I'm finally paying off my HECS. I'm finally finishing paying off my HECS.' I said, 'Really?'—because we were at university together and undergraduates together. She said, 'All I did was that undergraduate degree and a postgraduate certificate,' which is the very shortest form of postgraduate course. She is someone who has worked in the community sector and in lower paid sectors all of her life. She has worked in a lot of part-time work. She has a daughter with special needs and she has stayed home a lot to look after her. The consequence for my friend is that it has taken her until her mid-40s to pay off her university degree. That means, with indexation, she has paid more for that same degree than someone who left university, went straight to the workforce and got a high-paying job and worked full time. A lot of that has not been of her doing.

In fact, if you think about the workforce ramifications of higher university fees, if you have a great big lump of private debt, you are less likely to go and work in the small community legal centre or the small health not-for-profit where you are going to get a lower salary. You already take a lower salary than someone who might work in a more highly paid private sector job, so you have that decrease in your earnings. Then you pay more for the same degree, of course, because it takes you longer to pay it off. That is really the consequence of what we are talking about when the Liberals want to put up fees for university degrees.

We already have record levels of private debt in this country, which is a massive drag not just on those individuals and the lifelong burden that they are carrying in relation to private debt but also on the economy. You would know, Madam Deputy Speaker, that in the recent GDP figures the last quarter of growth was driven by government purchases because investment and consumption were so weak. That is a real problem. To try to continue to put a handbrake on consumption by increasing private debt would be a bad idea not just for the individuals who would suffer from that consequence but for the economy as a whole—for all of us. The idea of increasing levels of private debt burdens on households seems to me to be not just an unfair one but quite a silly one economically. But that is exactly what the Liberals tried to do. What they tried to do was to deregulate university fees, which would have seen the $100,000 degrees that the electorate so comprehensively rejected. The consequence for the Liberals was that they were unable to get that regulation through. In fact, if you look at their record on higher education since 2014, all you have seen are cuts and uncertainty. They have sent out a bunch of different thought bubbles into the community and into the sector. The poor old university sector is coping with one uncertainty after another as this mob
continues to come up with ideas that are patently going to be unacceptable to the community and, therefore, will not be passed.

Let's think about some of their other ideas. You have had the $100,000 university degrees. How about the 20 per cent cut to public funding of universities? Another source of GDP growth is net exports. One of the key sectors for us, as a nation, as we seek to diversify our economy, is to build our services exports. Tourism and international education, which go hand in hand—are symbiotic—are very important exports for us. What do they want to do? They want to cut public funding to universities and make it harder for universities to maintain quality. I think that is an obviously terrible idea because it is difficult enough for us to compete on our current footing when universities in China, when universities in Japan, when universities in South-East Asia are putting more and more public funding into universities. It is becoming more difficult for us to compete, not less difficult. So we would be cutting off our nose to spite our face as a nation to cut public funding to universities when we are becoming more and more used to the idea that higher education will be a key export for us for the future. So let's not do that because it is a terrible idea.

The 40 per cent cut to HEPPP is another problem that I think is really significant and needs more attention. I recently visited the University of Western Australia and met with a group of students who were first-in-family to go to university, just like I was. These were students from a long way away from the capital city who had not even necessarily thought about the idea of going to university until programs aimed at building aspiration came to their towns. It is important that we continue to build aspiration and make university education accessible to all of those who have got the capability to perform.

Mr LAMING (Bowman) (18:41): It must have been a very quiet day in the Labor ranks when they were looking for a topic for today. We have gone back to the 2013 debate of funding universities and $100,000 degrees. Let's hope that this does not become a sleeping tablet for the Australian people as they hear Labor talking points rolled out all over again. What a passionless contribution first of all from the shadow minister. Did she not just read that with zero enthusiasm for the tertiary education sector? Let's peel that away and ask what she was talking about.

The member for Griffith talked about $4 billion in cuts when in fact education funding goes up every year. Why do we not from this side just commend the Labor Party and its government for improving funding when they were in government, just as we have when we have been in government? We have actually had generous funding increases from both sides of politics. The problem is you cannot tell your union members that and you cannot tell your student unions that. Let us also acknowledge that you, on the Labor side of politics, have made very good efforts to have more demand driven approaches because there were limitations with the original design of university places. There was this notion that if the Commonwealth was not going to fund your place, you could not go to university no matter what. So well done to the Labor Party and its administration for changing that. But of course they then unlocked VET FEE-HELP and HECS into these huge problems that we now have to clean-up. Labor are a little like the rogue tenant, who, when you turn up to put out the house fire, starts attacking fire and rescue services for trying to clean up the mess that they created. Here we are just trying to clean up border problems, VET FEE-HELP, HECS and we are doing our very best.
Let's remember that today was a very important moment not just for HECS but an important moment for TAFE and VET FEE-HELP as well because today is the last day that the diploma of styling will be funded under the Labor Party model. Today is the last day that the diploma of circus arts will be funded under the Labor VET FEE model. Today is the last day that the diploma for expressive arts and group work will be funded under the Labor VET FEE-HELP model and today is the last day that the diploma of dance therapy will be funded under Labor's model.

Ms Ryan interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Wicks): Order! The member for Lalor will have her turn in a moment.

Mr LAMING: It is not just about how much money you can shovel out the door. It is not just about how many people graduate; it is patently about the quality of the graduates you create. The shadow minister was talking like Indigenous people being offered baubles by explorers, seeing plastic 3D modelling and saying how wonderful it is that they can turn around a part. I mean for goodness sake, it is way more than just 3D modelling and printing. This is about, in the peloton of developed economies, having a nation whose graduates can create new ideas and operationalise them. It is not about how many teachers you can graduate. With a BA from the University of Melbourne in teaching, 16,000 unemployed primary school teachers are added onto the waiting list of unemployed teachers, half of them with their expertise in health and physical education.

For goodness sake, it is about keeping women in STEM. It is about encouraging young women who are at school to take up a STEM career. Again, it is not just about waving your HECS debt; it is about the quality of the degree. I know you have got a BA. For anyone who has a BA on that side of the fence, you can speak with all the authority you want about your BA but this is about high-tech degrees in STEM, engineering and maths, and this is what we have to achieve. It is not about the simplistic model of just waiving a HECS fee; it is about encouraging young women at school to take on a career in STEM and do the highest quality degree they can.

A $100,000 degree—doesn't it sound horrible? Most universities charge $15,000 a year for a quantitative degree. A medical degree is six years—that is $90,000. Memo to the Labor Party: we are already paying $90,000 for a medical degree. These individuals will earn more than $2 million. That is more earnings in a lifetime than what people who do not get that medical degree earn. I do not think that a $10,000 premium for a quality medical degree is that much of a problem for a medical student. Those on the other side have never met a medical student complaining that their $90,000 degree might be a $100,000 degree. If it gets them the $2 million lifetime earnings premium, they have no problem paying it.

What we have a larger problem with is Labor's system that led to massive debts for those who took out VET FEE-HELP degrees. They now labour under a massive debt burden thanks to your system. The Labor Party did way more damage than they ever did to science graduates by queuing up people under that model and leaving them with a massive public debt. Let there never be a complaint from universities focused on quality that this is a debate about money. It is about the finest graduates that we can create, and Australia is doing very finely in that respect.
The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Lalor, I ask that all members refer to members by their correct titles. The level of interjection has been too high, and I ask that order be maintained. The question is that the motion be agreed to, and I call the member for Lalor.

Ms RYAN (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (18:46): I rise to join in this very lively debate in the Federation Chamber this evening and note that, after the contribution that the member for Bowman has just made, we are glad that clowns is off the VET list, because clearly we do not need training in it; it comes readily to some. It is interesting to listen to those opposite talk about higher education and defend the indefensible, because this government has failed—absolutely failed—in higher education policy and its implementation since coming to office in 2013.

This motion focuses on higher education. On this side of the chamber we would like to highlight the government's disastrous attempts at reform that see students leaving universities and the people who work in that sector living in a state of anxiety. They have now been living in a state of anxiety for three years. The government began with their cruel and unfair 2014 budget with the notion of $100,000 degrees, which would almost double the standard HECS bill for most students. In fact, for some courses it would triple the HECS debt for students over the longer term. Our objections to this model are about fairness and also about how it actively disincentivises higher education for the broader community. I can see what is behind the government's Americanised model. Clearly the plan is to entrench privilege. We all know it. The research is in and has been in for some time: children of parents with higher degrees, with a masters or a PhD, are more likely to succeed at school. This has been known for some time. It is also true that they are more likely to access higher education and that there are lots of things that block other children from engaging in that pursuit.

Talent, IQ and capacity are not determined by postcode—we know that—yet, over 40 years, this seems to be the reality. I go back to conversations in my electorate. The member for Bowman mentioned that we would never meet a doctor complaining about $100,000 degrees, yet a student doctor in my electorate spent some time—in fact, more than one meeting with me—explaining how, although he was not concerned for himself, he was very concerned about other students and their capacity to repay a $100,000 degree. I go back to a young single mother in my electorate, in the small community of Little River—a hamlet, if you like—who found herself alone in parenting a couple of kids and wanting to re-educate herself, wanting to go back into the education system. She was shattered by the thought of $100,000 degrees, because she saw them as a serious block for her to go and get the education she needed to allow her to earn the income she needed to break the poverty cycle and to ensure that her children had a different future to what she had herself.

In electorates like mine, decisions are made about education based on parent's experience. I think what those opposite cannot grasp is that when a family is determining whether a child will go on to higher education, they are also, partially, determining their income. This afternoon in the chamber we listened to the member for Longman's first speech. She referenced a person in her family—I think it was her father—winning a scholarship but not taking it up. That happens all the time in the real world. A person who wins a scholarship to pursue higher education might not act upon it, because their family may lose income if they do not go out and earn a wage early in life.
This government's uncertainty is reigniting those conversations in electorates around this country. At the moment, year 12 students are making those decisions in the space of uncertainty. They do not know, after three years of this government, what it is they are going to land on eventually. The government failed disastrously to convince the community that these proposals were a good idea and they failed to blackmail universities with a 20 per cent cut, tied to deregulation, that would have seen entrenched disadvantage.

**Ms PRICE** (Durack) (18:51): I welcome the opportunity to speak on the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's private members' motion, which allows members on this side of the chamber—members of the Turnbull government—to highlight the inroads this government has made in higher education, particularly with respect to regional, rural and remote Australia, since we were elected three years ago.

As all of us in this place know only too well, higher education plays a vital role in opening up doors and opportunities for all Australians, and it greatly enhances people's career prospects and their lifelong enjoyment. Madam Deputy Speaker, as you may know, I presented my own private members' motion on this exact subject earlier this year. Higher education provides the skills and knowledge that the economy requires if we are to strive to build our entrepreneurial skill base and international competitiveness. Like all of us on this side of the chamber, I believe higher education will be pivotal to the successful transition into an economy focused on the creativity of all Australians.

We have heard a lot about how terrible those opposite think the Turnbull government is, but let us start to focus on what our record is. Firstly, the Turnbull government is investing the record sum of more than $16 billion in universities in 2016. If you say the number quickly, it does not sound like very much, but $16 billion in 2016 is a significant investment in education. More funding than ever before is being invested in Australian universities, with a focus on funding more student places at universities, and this will continue at an increase of more than seven per cent over the forward estimates. I am particularly pleased that students in rural, regional and remote Australia have never had better access to higher education following the government's $152 million regional student's access to education package. This package will help more kids from the bush gain access to tertiary education.

For some time, I have been lobbying the Minister for Social Services and the Minister for Education to implement a policy which will assist students wanting to undertake post-secondary education, and I am very pleased that we made these key announcements last June. This package includes 1,200 new rural and regional enterprise scholarships, up to $20,000 each, for undergraduate, postgraduate and vocational education students to undertake STEM studies, to the tune of $24 million—a significant investment. In addition to these new rural, regional and remote scholarships, the Turnbull government is investing $45 million in isolated children's education. This includes funding for assistance for isolated children's additional boarding allowance, which is a means tested supplementary payment to provide additional support to low-income families whose child boards away from the family home.

As promised, the government will increase the rate of the additional boarding allowance by 50 per cent, bringing it into line with the costs of education for isolated families. This will be of tremendous benefit to my electorate of Durack, which has over 300 towns and communities and is home to some of the most isolated towns in the world. For them, this is fantastic news. Part of the regional student access to education package is also the reduction
of time that students need to be employed under the self-supporting criteria in order to receive the youth allowance and ABSTUDY living allowance, reducing the criteria from 18 months to 14 months. This measure will mean that a student will be able to qualify for assistance such as youth allowance within one gap year, not over two, instead of having to work for longer and delay their university commencement.

This all sounds very technical and very detailed, but I think that, if those on the other side really paid attention, they would see that we are focused on rural and remote students in Australia. These are our efforts to ensure that they do not get left behind and that we have got equity of education for them with respect to their city cousins.

In the time I have left I want to focus on the new VET Students Loans program that this government announced recently, which is going to lead to a more affordable, sustainable and student focused education sector. Our announcement is going to hit ‘reset’ on Labor’s woeful, badly designed VET-FEE HELP scheme. Now Australia can start to rebuild its trust in vocational education, and taxpayers will not have their money wasted. As I said at the time, the VET Student Loans scheme is a win-win. *(Time expired)*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Wicks):** 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.

**World Mental Health Day**

**Ms COLLINS (Franklin) (18:57):** I move:

That this House:

(1) recognises that:
   (a) World Mental Health Day (WMHD) will take place on 10 October; and
   (b) Mental Health Week will take place in Australia from 9 to 15 October;

(2) seeks to encourage help-seeking behaviour, reduce the stigma associated with mental issues and foster connections through communities;

(3) acknowledges the importance of WMHD and other campaigns including R U OK? Day in Australia, and World Suicide Prevention Day that help:
   (a) build community awareness about mental health issues and around suicide prevention; and
   (b) to encourage people to have regular and meaningful conversations with family, friends and colleagues;

(4) recognises the efforts of dedicated individuals and organisations working to address mental health issues and suicide prevention;

(5) notes with concern that suicide rates remain unacceptably too high—in Australia:
   (a) suicide is the leading cause of death for men and women between the ages of 15 and 44;
   (b) each day seven people die by suicide, and 30 attempt it;
   (c) higher rates of suicide exist among vulnerable groups including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, young people and people from lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex communities;
   (d) the annual number of deaths by suicide is around 2,500;
   (e) each year it is estimated that 65,000 people attempt suicide; and
   (f) the annual suicide toll is now twice the annual road toll; and
(6) calls on the Government to show leadership around suicide prevention, including working in a bipartisan approach to adopt the National Mental Health Commission's target to reduce suicide by 50 per cent over the next 10 years.

This motion acknowledges that today is World Mental Health Day, an important day globally for mental health education, for awareness and for advocacy. This year's theme focuses on psychological and mental health first aid. The day is supported by the United Nations and more than a hundred countries around the world and, of course, this is Mental Health Week, and Mental Health Day coincides with that. This week seeks to encourage help-seeking behaviour, to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and to foster connection through communities.

I was pleased to hear the Minister for Health talking about World Mental Health Day in the House today, because we know that here in Australia the rates of mental illness are very concerning. It is estimated that more than 3.6 million Australians aged 16 to 85 are living with or have experienced mental health problems. In addition to this, around 600,000 children and young people between the ages of four and 17 have been affected by a clinically significant mental health problem. There are more than three million Australians with moderate to mild mental health problems—that is, mostly anxiety and depression—over 600,000 Australians who are experiencing severe episodic and severe and persistent ill health and 65,000 Australians with severe and persistent complex mental health issues.

Slowly but surely we are starting to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness, and here in Australia, I am told by experts in the field, we are doing quite well in terms of raising awareness and reducing stigma compared with other Western countries. As a community we are talking more about our mental health, and that is a good thing. Dedicated awareness programs and dedicated days are ways of helping that. They make us more aware of those around us, our community, our family and our friends and make sure that we take the time to talk to people that we think may be dealing with and living with a mental illness. This day has encouraged people to have regular and meaningful conversations with their family, friends and colleagues. It is also about reconnecting with people you have lost touch with. World Suicide Prevention Day is also another reminder, and that day was held on 10 September as it is each year.

Globally, the World Health Organization estimates that around 800,000 people die by suicide each year. I raise that today because just last week the ABS released some new statistics in relation to suicide in Australia that are very concerning indeed. Suicide is again the leading cause of death in Australia for those aged 15 to 44. According to the ABS, over 3,027 Australians died by suicide in 2015. That is an increase of 5.4 per cent on the previous year. It is, of course, 3,027 too many. It is more than double the annual road toll. According to this latest data, it is estimated that more than 65,000 Australians attempt suicide each year. Sadly, suicide continues to disproportionately impact Indigenous communities, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people twice more likely than non-Indigenous people in Australia to die by suicide. This is heartbreaking indeed and should cause all of us concern.

Labor knows that suicide affects far too many Australians and that all levels of government should be working together to focus on a holistic approach to suicide prevention. It is only by working together that we can finally reduce the impact of suicide in our society. A lot of great work has already been done, and I want to thank those working in the sector, community...
mental health, mental health experts and primary health practitioners, people out there who
are supporting people in our community who need that support to get the assistance that they
need. We continue to be inspired by some of those individuals and organisations working to
address suicide and to improve mental health in our community. But there is still more to do.

I have to say I am still very disappointed that the government has not accepted the National
Mental Health Commission's recommendation to adopt a suicide prevention target—
something that Labor did. Prior to the election campaign, we accepted the recommendation
that there should be a target, and we said that that target should be a reduction of 50 per cent
over 10 years and that we should measure the implementation of the programs and the
expenditure of funds that we are putting into suicide prevention in our community. It is too
important not to, when the figures that come out are so disturbing and so large. We need to
work together, and, if we do not have a target and we are not measuring progress when it
comes to improving mental health in our community, how do we know we are making a
difference? How do we know the investments that governments of all levels are making are
actually changing things in our local community? It is too important, on this important day,
not to act.

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

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

Mr HASTIE (Canning) (19:02): As a society, it is important that we acknowledge World
Mental Health Day and indeed World Mental Health Week, to reduce the stigma surrounding
mental health issues and to encourage those struggling
with mental illness that they are not
alone and that they are supported by their community and this federal parliament. Today I
hope we can encourage people struggling with mental illness to talk about it and seek
professional help—to not give up but rather to hope for brighter days, weeks, months and
years ahead.

I rise today, on World Mental Health Day, to talk about something very close to the heart
of my electorate of Canning, and that is suicide. Tragically, over the past year there have been
eight youth suicides in Canning and the surrounding areas that have left our communities sad
and desperate for answers. Two of these students were from the same high school. My
electorate of Canning, a beautiful and vibrant part of Western Australia, has the third-
highest suicide rate of all the federal electorates in this parliament.

Every human life has innate worth and dignity. Every Australian is special and unique
because of that innate worth and dignity, and so every suicide is a tragedy. I am proud of my
local community and my government and the way they have sought to bring positive change.
The support of the Prime Minister, the Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Assistant
Minister for Rural Health and the rest of my coalition colleagues has been superb and timely.

I am particularly proud of my local mental health leaders in Canning. I have spoken
numerous times in parliament about the Peel Youth Medical Service, or PYMS, and the
invaluable service it provides to 400 young people a month in the Peel region, under the
direction of Amanda Poller and Eleanor Britton. Of these 400 people, 40 per cent have mental
health issues. Prior to the recent spate of youth suicides in Canning, Amanda and Eleanor
informed me that there was an increasing demand for physical and mental health that PYMS
was struggling to meet, despite its best efforts and the wonderful grassroots support of the local Peel community. The recent suicides underscore the need for more support.

In April, the Prime Minister and the health minister met with a delegation of local students, local and state government leaders, youth representatives and PYMS to ask how the government could help the community deal with the suicide problem. As a group, we collectively asked for funding for the PYMS health hub, a project that will see PYMS expand its services and outreach programs to more young people in need. I am proud to say that PYMS has just received confirmation of the coalition's $2 million contribution towards the PYMS health hub. I thank the Prime Minister and the health minister for their commitment.

During the election, the coalition also announced that it would be committing an additional $192 million to support mental health reform, including suicide prevention strategies. These reforms include $26 million for 10 PHN lead sites, with an additional $7 million for four PHN lead sites focused on suicide prevention to be champions of mental health reform. Perth South PHN, which covers Canning, is one of those four lead sites. Further, the reforms also include $24 million for eight suicide prevention trial sites—a total of 12 suicide prevention sites—and guaranteed funding for headspace. In addition to that, they have also committed $20 million for an additional 10 headspace centres, bringing the total to 110, with a focus on additional services in rural and regional areas. There is also a $30 million commitment for 21st century digital technologies to support mental health reforms as well as $2.5 million for Lifeline to trial a crisis text service.

These reforms are clear evidence of the coalition government's leadership on suicide prevention. But it is not just the government that is taking action to prevent suicides in Canning. The Mandurah Mustangs football and netball club has just announced a formal partnership with headspace in response to the youth suicides in the region. One of those suicide victims was a member of the junior football club. This unique partnership is the first of its kind and is designed to bring mental health services into the lives of those who need it by housing Mandurah's first headspace office in the Mustang's new clubrooms. Young sports men and women will have help where they are comfortable to receive it. While this project is still in its very early stages, it has widespread local support and I look forward to the opening of the coalition's Building Better Regions Fund in the hope that we can help to get this project off the ground with additional funding. To that end, I look forward to working with my colleagues and the Canning community to deliver on all these reforms. On this day, I endorse what the government is doing in mental health services and suicide prevention.

Mr BYRNE (Holt) (19:07): I rise to support the motion by the member for Franklin to recognise World Mental Health Day—today, 10 October 2016. This week is also Mental Health Week. Knowing the number of mental health professionals as I do, it is a very hectic week for them but a very important week to continue to raise the issues of mental health and mental illness, and the cost to the community and the fact that mental illness is, in the main, preventable and treatable. We should do everything we can to remove the stigma surrounding mental health because that stigma, regardless of the benefits and strides we have made, is still costing many lives in our community.

In this Mental Health Week, I would like to pay tribute in particular to Professor Patrick McGorry, the 2010 Australian of the Year. It was his vision that created the first headspace, which was opened 10 years ago tomorrow. I think it may have been opened by then Prime
Minister John Howard. That was an initiative that was pioneered by Professor McGorry. I think there are now over 100 sites, notwithstanding some of the difficulties with recent funding commitments. They perform a vital service. They are literally saving people's lives. Over the past decade, over 260,000 young Australians have sought help and advice in person, over the phone and online through headspace. It is making a substantial difference in our community. How does it matter to the community? The member for Canning talked about some issues in his electorate. In 2012, in my electorate we had what is known as a suicide cluster. It was devastating to the community. A substantial number of young people took their own lives and the community was forced to grapple with that and come together and work out what it could do to stop this youth suicide cluster.

I was fortunate enough to be briefed and encouraged to take some action by an astounding group of Casey's young people through the Casey Study Tour Group. Those young people that came to me and spoke about this issue—and there were people who were sitting in my office who were friends of some of those young people that had taken their own lives—their approach and their bravery inspired me to conduct a forum that was led by Professor Patrick McGorry. It was filmed by Four Corners. It was part of a program called 'There is no 3G in heaven'.

It was an important program; it was a confronting program. I certainly commended the Four Corners program for conducting it at the time and I commend the courage of the mums and dads that came along to that forum that had lost young people—enormous courage; courage that we cannot comprehend at this place. Through their commitment and through the commitment, I must say, of the people involved in the Four Corners program and Professor Patrick McGorry, we got funding for two health headspace centres that were overlaid by youth early psychosis centres.

Those centres save lives and continue to save lives. I think—notwithstanding some of the commitments and discussions and figures being put about the federal government on a number of occasions—those two headspaces—through the abolition of the Medicare local healthcare networks and now the devolution to the private health networks create uncertainty—does not lead those staff to continue to be able to provide a guarantee of service to the community.

The other thing that is quite critical in both of those headspaces—particularly the headspace in Narre Warren, which caters to a high youth growth belt—is the fact that the federal government has still not guaranteed the funding for this world-leading service. It is being run by Professor Simon Straface from the Alfred Hospital. So, even though we have heard wonderful words on this Youth Mental Health Day and we are talking about this in a bipartisan spirit, that requires the health minister to adequately fund that. And I know that Professor McGorry is speaking, probably as we speak, with the health minister to get that commitment. I say it is a shame that the health minister is in this position on World Mental Health Day. Regardless of the words that she said in the parliament about her commitment to mental health, our leading Australian psychiatrist in this field is meeting with the health minister to ensure that that funding for early psychosis is going to continue to be provided for the future of our country, our young people. It says a lot.
You have, I think, over 3,000 people who have committed people in this country; 3,000 lives that have been lost. It is an epidemic. We must do something about it; we must make it a priority and we must be bipartisan to save more lives in this country.

Mr ENTSCH (Leichhardt) (19:12): I rise here today to speak to this motion. Mental Health Week is an opportunity to remind people about the importance of their social and emotional wellbeing, and that of their families, loved ones and communities. Today I would like to mention key initiatives in my region, and highlight the government's mental health reforms which have been welcomed in this sector.

Tomorrow is the first national headspace day and the theme is 'Access all areas'. This day of awareness is about making sure every young person in Australia has access to youth-friendly mental health services, no matter where they live. Over the past decade headspace has transformed services for young people living with mental illness, including disproportionately high numbers of young people from regional and rural areas, those identifying as LGBTI, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait islanders.

At my local headspace in Cairns, there were 5,588 occasions of care during 2015-16. Headspace has been successful in bringing traditionally marginalised groups into support services, and making a measurable difference in reducing suicidal ideation and self-harm. As the only member of parliament who is also the independent chair of a headspace, I would like to thank Marie O'Dea and her team at headspace Cairns for their work to date and the great work I expect they will be doing into the future. I would also like to acknowledge consortium members the Royal Flying Doctor Service, Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service, Cairns Regional Council, Wuchopperen Aboriginal Health Service, Youth Link, Vocational Partnerships Group, and Aftercare.

Another initiative that we have of which I am very proud is The Junction Clubhouse, very capably led by Dorothy Dunne and her team. It is a wonderful facility, which I work very closely with. It helps members who are recovering from mental health challenges to become work-ready, and it provides ongoing support through outreach and social recreation. At The Junction's new premises—generously donated by Mrs Freda Mangano, who provided all of the funds for the purchase of the property—they are now operating a bike bank, with bikes for sale and hire, and promoting healthy lifestyles. During the election campaign I was pleased to secure $60,000 for The Junction to upgrade their kitchen to a commercial facility. Members are able to make and sell lunches and coffees to surrounding businesses, becoming more financially self-sustainable in the long term.

Another fabulous institution in my electorate is the Dr Edward Koch Foundation. I have spoken before about the critical work carried out by Dulcie Bird, CEO of the Dr Edward Koch Foundation. This is the lead agency for suicide prevention activities in my region, and they do it all without a dollar of state or federal funding. It is quite amazing. Later this month, in partnership with the World Federation for Mental Health, they are hosting the 2016 international conference, with 150 speakers on a broad range of mental health related issues. At the conference, the president will launch the theme for the coming year, 'Dignity in mental health: psychological and mental health first aid for all'. The launch is in conjunction with Betty Kitchener, who developed the Mental Health First Aid program here in Australia. In 2015, the one millionth Mental Health First Aider in the world was trained—an absolutely remarkable achievement.
Mental health reform is a top priority for the Turnbull government, and we are tackling it on a range of fronts, particularly in rural and regional areas, through a new 'stepped care' model, which tailors services to people's needs; a digital information gateway; new 'low intensity' support for individuals; innovative approaches to care for people with severe mental illness needs; and local planning and funding of services through the Primary Health Networks.

Feedback on the government's reforms has been very positive. Headspace has welcomed the funding for an additional 10 centres, with a focus on additional services in rural and regional areas. In closing, can I say that our mental health reforms will result in better personalised support and care, and greater opportunities and better lives for Far North Queenslanders. I certainly commend this motion to the House.

Mr BRIAN MITCHELL (Lyons) (19:17): I am very pleased to be given this opportunity to speak on World Mental Health Day and to support the motion moved by the member for Franklin. Mental health issues are prevalent in regional Tasmania but, given the stoic nature of country people, and particularly country men, they are not talked about nearly enough. Thankfully, that is changing, in part due to the hard work of organisations like Rural Alive and Well, which employs outreach workers to speak to people in their homes and on their farms, offering a friendly shoulder to lean on.

Indeed, as regional Tasmanians have battled and recovered from drought, fire and flood in recent years, RAW has proved itself to be invaluable. Importantly, RAW is based not in the city but in the regional town of Oatlands in my electorate of Lyons, and its workers are spread throughout the state. I note that my good friend the member for Braddon is here, and her electorate does also benefit from this great service. This direct connectedness to country life is, I think, essential to RAW's mission.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the leadership of RAW Tasmania President Ian McMichael and to welcome new CEO Liz Little, a lifelong community advocate. Founding CEO Danial Rochford left the organisation earlier this year to pursue an arduous life in the South Pacific. His tireless energy was vital to RAW's acceptance and emergence as a vital cog in Tasmania's mental health apparatus, and he deserves our thanks.

While we are all feeling the bonhomie of bipartisanship on World Mental Health Day and Mental Health Week it would be remiss of me not to mention the marriage equality plebiscite. I do this not to embarrass members opposite nor to score a political point but to genuinely plead with them to take this day, this World Mental Health Day, to consider the impacts the plebiscite will have on hundreds of thousands of our fellow Australians, particularly on young people, and to ask them to abandon this unnecessary and cruel endeavour. This is not the Labor Party trying to play politics. It is mental health experts who have raised serious concerns about the detrimental impact that a plebiscite will have on the LGBTIQ community and their children. Experts, including Patrick McGorry, a former Australian of the Year, and Mental Health Australia, say the plebiscite will cause significant harm to gay and lesbian Australians. He says that there is definitely a risk involved. Anyone working in mental health would be concerned about it. A plebiscite 'is a dangerous thing to be doing … It will harm peoples' mental health.' Lives are at stake—literally.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics told us this year that suicide is the leading cause of death for Australians aged 15 to 44, with 28 people in every 100,000 taking their own lives. In
rural Australia the rate is double that of the cities and suburbs. Last year in Tasmania for every 100,000 people in the state 45 young people took their own lives. That is the highest number per population in Australia. Young LGBTIQ people are six times more likely than the population overall to try to kill themselves. The average age of a first suicide attempt by a young LGBTIQ person is 16 years of age, often before they come out publicly. I will say that again: the average ages 16. That is about the same age as my teenage daughter. So kids whose only worries should be exams and pimples are trying to end their lives because they are worried about the way they are perceived in society.

But, of course, it is not only the young LGBTIQ people who are suffering mental ill health. Older same-sex Australians still grapple with the knowledge that as recently as 20 odd years ago sex with their partner was a criminal act, that as recently as 1992 their sexuality was listed as a disease, and that as recently as within a decade they and their partners had fewer legal rights regarding next of kin, division of property and taxation treatment than heterosexual couples. I cannot imagine what it must to the someone's wellbeing to be told in so many ways that you are not really one of us, that you do not quite belong. So I would ask those opposite, as they consider the importance of addressing self-harm and Australia's terrible levels of suicide, whether a plebiscite will help people's mental health or harm it.

Mr HOGAN (Page) (19:22): I rise to speak in support of the motion. As we know, today is World Mental Health Day and as many speakers have said before I do not think there is anyone who does not have direct family, extended family or friends who have not been touched by mental health issues. It is why we say as a government—and, with all due respect, it being bipartisan—that there has never been more mental health services provided in our community than there are today. This has grown steadily at all levels of government, including local and state. They have seen that we all have to play a part in extending mental health services to our communities, because we are more conscious and more aware of many of the mental health issues in all of our communities.

I was delighted recently that our local North Coast Primary Health Network was selected as just one of four lead sites from across Australia to implement the new $192 million mental health program. Under this new program the North Coast Primary Health Network will receive much extra funding for additional resources to develop localised methods to help address mental health issues. Deputy Speaker, as a regional MP you are very conscious, as I am, that most solutions to our community's issues and problems are within the local community. The expertise we have in a whole array of fields is there, and this includes mental health. So the way that this is going to roll out through our primary health networks is not necessarily a one size fits all—or, in this case, not necessarily one organisation to roll out programs that will deal with mental health issues. I know that just within my community there are different service providers already who do different things that work. They are not necessarily duplicated across the whole country. Sometimes they arise out of nuances within our own individual towns and areas. I am very excited about, obviously, the extra resources being put into mental health, but also I am very happy with the way that this has been designed. Local people, local organisations will choose through their primary health network about how to spend this money.

Work within the primary health network has begun to implement the northern New South Wales Mental Health Integration Plan, with the ability, as I have said, to direct funding back
to people who are on the ground. My local primary health network CEO, Vahid Saberi, with the team that he has—we are all very proud of a lot of different places in our communities, but I am very proud of my primary health network. Vahid runs a great team there. A lot of different spaces around our health provision that we do as a federal government is run through him. I know he is going to do a great job with the extra resources that he is going to get for mental health. There will be things such as an outreach of headspace from Coffs operating in the Clarence. They will be providing resources for the acute-care level of mental health, as well. As we know, a lot of work needs to be done in the mental health spectrum at the preventative stage. There are lots of great programs for that. Also, there is a great awareness that we need more resources and assistance in the acute care of this and actual beds in mental health, because, obviously, suicide and the prevention of suicide.

I have organisations like Cranes in Grafton. It is an example of how mental health services should be provided. Many staff on the ground have great experience in running early intervention seminars and training to pick up early warning signs. Also, within the integration plan we will have an implementation of a person-centre approach to service, an increase in co-location of services and development of community education to reduce the stigma of mental illness.

What I find almost still upsetting is: we have had many suicides in our community—often youth—and, in many cases, people have never sought help. So while we have school counselling programs and other service providers in our community, more often than not—or in too many cases—no-one has ever really been aware of the mental health issues that this person has been going through, and they have never actively sought help. So part of it is to reduce the stigma, to make it, as we say, okay to say that you are not okay, to break down the stigma of seeking help in this space and to, therefore, make people aware already of the many services. As I said, there are more services than there has ever been. But, also, as a government it is very important that we increase the services, as we are doing.

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

Federation Chamber adjourned at 19:28
QUESTIONS IN WRITING
Tweed Coast: Koala habitat
(Question No. 11)

Mrs Elliot asked the Minister for the Environment and Energy, on 01 September 2016:
In respect of the Government's election commitment to allocate $200,000 to restore koala habitat on the Tweed Coast, will these funds be allocated in the 2016-17 budget; if so,
(a) from which funding program will they come, and
(b) what additional funding requirements will be imposed upon the funding recipient for them to receive the funding.

Mr Frydenberg: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:
The commitment to restore koala habitat in the Tweed Coast is part of the $24 million Improving Your Local Parks and Environment Program. The program will support communities to undertake local actions to improve parklands, restore rivers and rehabilitate coastal areas, ensuring communities have better and more accessible green spaces.
I expect to progress this commitment through the 2016-17 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook and my Department is working through implementation details.