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SITTING DAYS—2011

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FORTY-THIRD PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—FOURTH PERIOD

Governor-General
Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce, Companion of the Order of Australia

House of Representatives Officeholders
Speaker—Mr Harry Alfred Jenkins MP
Deputy Speaker—Hon. Peter Neil Slipper MP
Second Deputy Speaker—Hon. Bruce Craig Scott MP
Members of the Speaker’s Panel—Ms Anna Elizabeth Burke MP, Hon. Dick Godfrey Harry Adams MP, Ms Sharon Leah Bird MP, Mrs Yvette Maree D’Ath MP, Mr Steven Georganas MP, Ms Kirsten Fiona Livermore MP, Mr John Paul Murphy MP, Mr Peter Sid Sidebottom MP, Mr Kelvin John Thomson MP, Ms Maria Vamvakinou MP

Leader of the House—Hon. Anthony Norman Albanese MP
Deputy Leader of the House—Hon. Stephen Francis Smith MP
Manager of Opposition Business—Hon. Christopher Maurice Pyne MP
Deputy Manager of Opposition Business—Mr Luke Hartsuyker MP

Party Leaders and Whips
Australian Labor Party
Leader—Hon. Julia Eileen Gillard MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Wayne Maxwell Swan MP
Chief Government Whip—Hon. Joel Andrew Fitzgibbon MP
Government Whips—Ms Jill Griffiths Hall MP and Mr Ed Husic MP

Liberal Party of Australia
Leader—Hon. Anthony John Abbott MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Julie Isabel Bishop MP
Chief Opposition Whip—Hon. Warren George Entsch MP
Opposition Whips—Mr Patrick Damien Secker MP and Ms Nola Bethwyn Marino MP

The Nationals
Leader—Hon. Warren Errol Truss MP
Chief Whip—Mr Mark Maclean Coulton MP
Whip—Mr Paul Christopher Neville MP

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### Members of the House of Representatives

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<td>Moore, WA</td>
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<td>Wilkie, Andrew Damien</td>
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<td>Wyatt, Kenneth George</td>
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<td>Zappia, Tony</td>
<td>Makin, SA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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PARTY ABBREVIATIONS
ALP—Australian Labor Party; LP—Liberal Party of Australia; LNP—Liberal National Party;
CLP—Country Liberal Party; Nats—The Nationals; NWA—The Nationals WA; Ind—Independent;
AG—Australian Greens

Heads of Parliamentary Departments

Clerk of the Senate—R Laing
Clerk of the House of Representatives—B Wright
Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—A Thompson
GILLARD MINISTRY

Prime Minister
Deputy Prime Minister, Treasurer
Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government
Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Jobs and Workplace Relations and Leader of the Government in the Senate
Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth
Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy and Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister for Trade
Minister for Defence and Deputy Leader of the House
Minister for Immigration and Citizenship
Minister for Infrastructure and Transport and Leader of the House
Minister for Health and Ageing
Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities
Minister for Finance and Deregulation
Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research
Attorney-General and Vice President of the Executive Council
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Manager of Government Business in the Senate
Minister for Resources and Energy and Minister for Tourism
Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency

Hon. Julia Gillard MP
Hon. Wayne Swan MP
Hon. Simon Crean MP
Senator Hon. Chris Evans
Hon. Peter Garrett AM, MP
Senator Hon. Stephen Conroy
Hon. Kevin Rudd MP
Hon. Dr Craig Emerson MP
Hon. Stephen Smith MP
Hon. Chris Bowen MP
Hon. Anthony Albanese MP
Hon. Nicola Roxon MP
Hon. Jenny Macklin MP
Hon. Tony Burke MP
Senator Hon. Penny Wong
Senator Hon. Kim Carr
Hon. Robert McClelland MP
Senator Hon. Joe Ludwig
Hon. Martin Ferguson AM, MP
Hon. Greg Combet AM, MP

[The above ministers constitute the cabinet]
Minister for the Arts
Minister for Social Inclusion
Minister for Privacy and Freedom of Information
Minister for Sport
Special Minister of State for the Public Service and Integrity
Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Financial Services and Superannuation
Minister for Employment Participation and Childcare
Minister for Indigenous Employment and Economic Development
Minister for Veterans’ Affairs and Minister for Defence Science and Personnel
Minister for Defence Materiel
Minister for Indigenous Health
Minister for Mental Health and Ageing and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Mental Health Reform
Minister for the Status of Women
Minister for Social Housing and Homelessness
Special Minister of State
Minister for Small Business
Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Justice
Minister for Human Services
Cabinet Secretary
Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister
Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer
Parliamentary Secretary for School Education and Workplace Relations
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Digital Productivity
Parliamentary Secretary for Trade
Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs
Parliamentary Secretary for Defence
Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs
Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure and Transport and Parliamentary Secretary for Health and Ageing
Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Carers
Parliamentary Secretary for Community Services
Parliamentary Secretary for Sustainability and Urban Water
Minister Assisting on Deregulation and Public Sector Superannuation
Minister Assisting the Attorney-General on Queensland Floods Recovery
Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Minister Assisting the Minister for Tourism
Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency

GILLARD MINISTRY—continued
SHADOW MINISTRY

Leader of the Opposition
Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and Shadow Minister for Trade
Leader of the Nationals and Shadow Minister for Infrastructure and Transport
Leader of the Opposition in the Senate and Shadow Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations
Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate and Shadow Attorney-General and Shadow Minister for the Arts
Shadow Treasurer
Shadow Minister for Education, Apprenticeships and Training and Manager of Opposition Business in the House
Shadow Minister for Indigenous Affairs and Deputy Leader of the Nationals
Shadow Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Water and Leader of the Nationals in the Senate
Shadow Minister for Finance, Deregulation and Debt Reduction and Chairman, Coalition Policy Development Committee
Shadow Minister for Energy and Resources
Shadow Minister for Defence
Shadow Minister for Communications and Broadband
Shadow Minister for Health and Ageing
Shadow Minister for Families, Housing and Human Services
Shadow Minister for Climate Action, Environment and Heritage
Shadow Minister for Productivity and Population and Shadow Minister for Immigration and Citizenship
Shadow Minister for Innovation, Industry and Science
Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Food Security
Shadow Minister for Small Business, Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs

Hon. Tony Abbott MP
Hon. Julie Bishop MP
Hon. Warren Truss MP
Senator Hon. Eric Abetz
Senator Hon. George Brandis SC
Hon. Joe Hockey MP
Hon. Christopher Pyne MP
Senator Hon. Nigel Scullion
Senator Barnaby Joyce
Hon. Andrew Robb AO, MP
Hon. Ian Macfarlane MP
Senator Hon. David Johnston
Hon. Malcolm Turnbull MP
Hon. Peter Dutton MP
Hon. Kevin Andrews MP
Hon. Greg Hunt MP
Mr Scott Morrison MP
Mrs Sophie Mirabella MP
Hon. John Cobb MP
Hon. Bruce Billson MP

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<td>Hon. Sussan Ley MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Justice, Customs and Border Protection</td>
<td>Mr Michael Keenan MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Assistant Treasurer and Shadow Minister for Financial Services and Superannuation</td>
<td>Senator Mathias Cormann</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Childcare and Early Childhood Learning</td>
<td>Hon. Sussan Ley MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Universities and Research</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Brett Mason</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Youth and Sport and Deputy Manager of Opposition Business in the House</td>
<td>Mr Luke Hartsuyker MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Indigenous Development and Employment</td>
<td>Senator Marise Payne</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Regional Development</td>
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<td>Shadow Special Minister of State</td>
<td>Hon. Bronwyn Bishop MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for COAG</td>
<td>Senator Marise Payne</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Tourism</td>
<td>Hon. Bob Baldwin MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Defence Science, Technology and Personnel</td>
<td>Mr Stuart Robert MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Veterans’ Affairs and Shadow Minister Assisting the Leader of the Opposition on the Centenary of ANZAC</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Michael Ronaldson</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Regional Communications</td>
<td>Mr Luke Hartsuyker MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Ageing and Shadow Minister for Mental Health</td>
<td>Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Seniors</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Disabilities, Carers and the Voluntary Sector and Manager of Opposition Business in the Senate</td>
<td>Senator Mitch Fifield</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Housing</td>
<td>Senator Marise Payne</td>
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<td>Chairman, Scrutiny of Government Waste Committee</td>
<td>Mr Jamie Briggs MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Cabinet Secretary</td>
<td>Hon. Philip Ruddock MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Leader of the Opposition</td>
<td>Senator Cory Bernardi</td>
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<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance</td>
<td>Hon. Teresa Gambaro MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Roads and Regional Transport</td>
<td>Mr Darren Chester MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary to the Shadow Attorney-General</td>
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<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Tax Reform and Deputy Chairman, Coalition Policy Development Committee</td>
<td>Hon. Tony Smith MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Education</td>
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<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Northern and Remote Australia</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Ian Macdonald</td>
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<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Local Government</td>
<td>Mr Don Randall MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for the Murray-Darling Basin</td>
<td>Senator Simon Birmingham</td>
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<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Materiel</td>
<td>Senator Gary Humphries</td>
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<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for the Status of Women</td>
<td>Senator Michaelia Cash</td>
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<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Environment</td>
<td>Senator Simon Birmingham</td>
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<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Citizenship and Settlement</td>
<td>Hon. Teresa Gambaro MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration</td>
<td>Senator Michaelia Cash</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Innovation, Industry, and Science</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Richard Colbeck</td>
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<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Forestry</td>
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Thursday, 18 August 2011

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Slipper) took the chair at 09:00, made an acknowledgement of country and read prayers.

BILLs

Defence Legislation Amendment Bill 2011

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Stephen Smith.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr STEPHEN SMITH (Perth—Minister for Defence and Deputy Leader of the House) (09:02): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Defence Legislation Amendment Bill 2011 (the bill) amends the Defence Act 1903, the Naval Defence Act 1910 and the Air Force Act 1923 to provide the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) with the authority to issue directions to the service chiefs in relation to the administration of their respective cadet schemes.

The Australian Defence Force Cadets is a nationwide youth development scheme delivered in partnership by defence and the community. The Australian Defence Force Cadets comprises the Australian Navy Cadets, Australian Army Cadets and Australian Air Force Cadets. There are approximately 22,000 Australian Defence Force Cadets and 2,500 cadet staff in some 500 cadet units and headquarters across Australia.

Currently, the Chief of Army, Chief of Navy and the Chief of Air Force are responsible for the administration of their respective cadet organisations, subject to the direction of the minister.

This means that for cadet related policy to be enforceable, consistent and binding on each of the cadet organisations, the three service chiefs, the Secretary of the Department of Defence and the Chief of the Defence Force must agree and endorse the policy.

This can result in delays in development of policy and misinterpretation of policy leading to duplicated efforts and inhibiting the development of a concerted and consistent youth development scheme. Indeed, the current arrangements have resulted in disparate policies and procedures being applied by each cadet organisation. For example there are no common selection and training standards for cadets staff, which inhibits the transfer of qualified cadet staff between the cadet organisations.

In 2008 the government commissioned an independent review of the cadet scheme, known as the Hickling review, to consider how cadets could be improved to ensure it reflected community expectations for a youth development program.

The bill implements part of the government's response to the recommendations of the Hickling review. In essence, the bill's measures will:

- allow the Chief of the Defence Force, as well as the minister, to issue directions to the service chiefs in relation to the administration of their respective cadet schemes; and
- allow the CDF to delegate his power to direct the service chiefs in relation to cadet administration to the Vice Chief of the Defence Force, and;
- for consistency align the three cadet provisions.

Cadets are not members of the Australian Defence Force and are not subject to the
command and control regime of the ADF under the Defence Act 1903. This bill will ensure that coherent tri-service policy can be consistently developed and implemented by each cadet organisation, and will assist with consolidating and reducing duplicated efforts across the cadets programs.

Allowing the CDF, in addition to the minister, to issue directions in relation to the administration of the cadet scheme will strengthen the accountability of the management of the cadets, and will facilitate the establishment of a common and concerted youth engagement and development strategy within defence.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

BILLS
Corporations (Fees) Amendment Bill 2011
First Reading
Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Shorten.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading
Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Financial Services and Superannuation) (09:06): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Today I introduce a bill to amend the Corporations (Fees) Act 2001. The bill amends the entities which may be charged fees for the performance by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) of its financial market supervision functions under the Corporations Act 2001.

The fees act currently only allows market operators (such as licensed entities in the ASX group, and operators of a number of smaller financial markets) to be charged. This amendment would allow fees to be levied on market participants (such as stockbrokers and derivatives traders).

By way of brief background, on 31 March 2010, the government announced its support for competition among markets for trading in listed shares in Australia. At the same time, it also announced in-principle approval of an application for an Australian market licence by Chi-X Australia Pty Ltd (Chi-X). Chi-X is expected to commence trading in competition with the ASX equity market in November 2011 or soon after, subject to satisfying a number of regulatory conditions. The decision of the government to support competition is a vital step in the development of Australia as a financial services centre—and a key recommendation of the Johnson report, which encouraged competitive, efficient and innovative equity markets.

What does 'financial market competition' mean?

The ASX is by far the largest market for companies seeking to raise capital by issuing shares to investors and listing on an exchange. It is also the principal market for trading shares. While other licensed financial markets operate in Australia, these markets do not currently trade ASX listed shares. This means that shares listed on the ASX can only be traded on the ASX. With the coming of competition, ASX listed shares can be traded on alternative markets, depending on which market has the best price.

Competition between financial markets for trade execution services in listed equities is well established in the US, Canada and Europe, but has not been a feature of the Australian financial landscape. International experience shows that competition is expected to deliver lower transaction charges, more innovation, and maintain or improve market quality—all to the benefit of
As a key step towards competition, on 1 August 2010 ASIC took over market supervision from market operators. The government's decision to implement market supervision reform provides for a single entity—ASIC—to undertake whole-of-market supervision. This is important to safeguard market integrity, as ASIC will be able to better monitor potential misconduct or manipulative activity across multiple competing markets.

To support these reforms, additional government expenditure has been invested to support ASIC's new role and bolster its capability to undertake this role. It was intended that government funding would be budget neutral, and would be recovered from the financial sector via fees.

As stated, a fee is currently levied on licensed market operators only. To some extent, market operators can be expected to pass on fees to participants. However a fee arrangement based on charging both market participants and market operators is in line with the government's cost recovery guidelines and would allow a more efficient and equitable allocation of ASIC's market supervision cost burden—especially given that a significant portion of ASIC's costs in providing market supervision functions are attributable to interactions with market participants.

The bill does not set out details of the proposed changes to the current cost recovery arrangements; these details will be prescribed in the Corporations (Fees) Regulations 2001 (the fees regulations). This bill simply provides the legislative basis to enable new cost recovery arrangements, which will apply to both market operators and market participants, to be made through the fees regulations.

In the coming months, the government will consult closely with industry on the details of the proposed cost recovery fee model and arrangements before implementing regulations to finalise the cost recovery model. The details will be set out in a consultation paper entitled 'Proposed financial market supervision cost recovery model', to be released shortly.

The draft fees regulations will also be exposed for industry comment in the coming months. It is intended that the proposed market supervision fee model, applicable to both market operators and market participants, will apply from 1 January 2012.

In accordance with the Corporations Agreement 2002, the Legislative and Governance Forum for Corporations (meeting as the Ministerial Council for Corporations) has been consulted in relation to the bill, and will be further consulted regarding the proposed cost recovery fee model and arrangements.

**Summing Up**

The ability to impose fees in relation to ASIC's market supervision activities on both market operators and participants is central to the design and implementation of a fair, transparent and efficient market supervision and cost recovery framework.

Such a framework is vital to our efforts to support efficient and innovative equity markets in Australia and will ensure that Australia has the right financial market infrastructure capabilities to respond effectively to the challenges of a dynamic market place.

The Australian government has a longstanding commitment to competition in financial services. Competition in Australian equity markets can deliver benefits through innovation, efficiency and reduced costs. This bill is the next milestone along the path to competition.
Debate adjourned.

BUSINESS
Orders of the Day
Mr ALBANESE: I move:
That Main Committee orders of the day No. 6 relating to the Centenary of the Royal Australian Navy, No. 2 relating to the SA Remote Areas Energy Supplies Scheme, No. 4 relating to Fraud under the Home Insulation Program, and No. 24 relating to Flooding of communities in the Torres Strait, private Members' business, be returned to the House for further consideration.

Question agreed to.

Rearrangement
Mr ALBANESE: by leave—I move:
That so much of the standing and sessional orders be suspended as would prevent the following orders of the day, private Members' business being called on, and considered immediately in the following order:
Centenary of the Royal Australian Navy—Order of the day;
Live Animal Export Restriction and Prohibition Bill 2011—Order of the day No. 22;
Live Animal Export (Slaughter) Prohibition Bill 2011—Order of the day No. 23;
South Australian Remote Area Energy Supplies scheme—Order of the day;
Fraud under the Home Insulation Program—Order of the day;
Funding of non-government schools—Order of the day No. 20; and
Flooding of communities in the Torres Strait—Order of the day.

Question agreed to.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS
Centenary of the Royal Australian Navy
Debate resumed on the motion:
That this House:
(1) recognises the:
(a) unique contribution made by the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) to national defence since its inception 100 years ago; and
(b) naming of the Royal Australian Navy by King George V on 10 July 1911 as a significant step towards Australia's post-Federation independence from colonial rule; and
(2) notes the significant role played by the electorate of Bennelong in the development of the RAN, particularly the construction of Halverson's ships in Ryde.

Question agreed to.

BILLS
Live Animal Export Restriction and Prohibition Bill 2011
Second Reading
Debate resumed on the motion:
That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr WILKIE (Denison) (09:15): In closing the debate for now, at least, may I say that the shocking animal abuse shown on the ABC's Four Corners program threw up an opportunity for the government, or equally the opposition in this power-sharing parliament, to finally do something about Australia's cruel and economically counterproductive live animal export trade.

But the government did not act. Instead of immediately halting shipments of all cattle exports to Indonesia until proper animal welfare safeguards were put in place, the government dithered, then belatedly did stop the trade, then dithered some more before eventually giving the go-ahead for the resumption of exports without proper safeguards and without the legislation to enshrine them.

What a shambles, and what a breathtaking demonstration of the government's disregard for animal welfare, as well as for the vast majority of people in the community who are deeply concerned with animal welfare and/or Australia's economic interests. Not that the
opposition is any better when it comes to this issue, the alternative government preferring instead to argue for no suspension of trade and ridiculing those who speak up for the animals.

The opposition plumbed new depths recently when Liberal Senator Chris Back even went so far as to accuse Animals Australia of paying an Indonesian abattoir to torture a beast. This is an outrageous slur on the organisation and on the courageous investigator Lyn White in particular. I have got to know Senator Back through our work on the Joint Select Committee on Gambling Reform and I think he is a decent man. But what on earth came over him to peddle such an offensive, unbelievable and misleading tale without revealing any hard evidence?

I call on the Leader of the Opposition to pull Senator Back into line, because it is unacceptable for the alternative Prime Minister of this country to be tolerating, some would say encouraging, such bad behaviour by inaction. No wonder we have ugly sentiments circulating in some parts of the community right now, given the poor example that is being set by some of the country's most influential political leaders.

While he is disciplining his parties, the opposition leader might also admonish the member for Parkes, who had the temerity to describe the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals as a 'fringe animal activist group' simply because the society dares to give voice to the millions of Australians outraged at the animal cruelty being experienced routinely within Australia's live animal export system. The RSPCA is one of the most well respected organisations in Australia. Its sin, it seems, is to do no more than speak the truth to the powerful commercial interests preoccupied with making as much money as possible from an industry more concerned with its commercial self-interest than with doing the right thing.

I call again on all members to put their support behind the Live Animal Export Restriction and Prohibition Bill 2011. In essence this bill would end all live animal exports from Australia by mid-2014, and in the interim mandate appropriate safeguards throughout the entire length of the supply chain, including stunning in foreign abattoirs processing Australian animals.

This bill is endorsed by Animals Australia and the RSPCA and supported by an enormous number of Australians who understand that the live animal export system is broken and beyond repair, and the arguments against shutting it down are baseless. It escapes me how it is that neither the government nor the opposition seem set to support the bill when the serious problems with our live animal export industry are so obvious to so many of our constituents.

How much more evidence does the government and the opposition need to see before they agree to wind up the industry? It is not as though the Four Corners program is the only evidence we have here. For year after year, in episode after episode, in country after country, we have learned of the systemic cruelty being meted out to Australian livestock. Over the last eight years in the Middle East alone some eight countries have been shown to harbour serious abuse of Australian livestock. Even in the short time since the Four Corners program we have seen compelling new evidence of continuing abuse—for instance, the footage collected by Animals Australia of sheep being seriously mistreated in a Middle Eastern saleyard.

Just in the last week we have learned of the live export ship, the Al Messilah, which was loaded with 67,000 sheep about a week ago and which is still stuck in Adelaide
having become unserviceable. Even if the vessel had got away successfully, the animals aboard would have faced a two- to three-week voyage to the Middle East, but this delay has already added at least another week to their torture.

As it was, thousands of the sheep aboard the Al Messilah were already condemned to a miserable death because of the atrocious conditions onboard, including absurdly dense loading, like the three animals per square metre that has been witnessed on other live export ships. Add to that the effects of climate—for example the 45-degree temperatures that can be experienced routinely in the Middle Eastern summer—and it is no wonder so many animals suffer so terribly. The lucky ones die early.

The Al Messiah will not be the end of this shameful episode in Australian history, and in fact later today Animals Australia and the RSPCA will be revealing more footage, this time of the shocking cruelty being endured by Australian livestock in Turkey. But, regrettably, any genuine reform to Australia’s indefensible live animal export industry looks to be unlikely until the industry, and the governments which serve it, drop the disinformation and start to be more honest with the community.

As I have said before in this place, ending all live animal exports will not destroy our relationship with Indonesia simply because our ties with that country are stronger than critics give them credit for. hey are certainly strong enough to survive any Australian decision to stop selling to Indonesia just one form of one particular foodstuff.

Nor will Indonesians go hungry when we outlaw live animal exports because, on average, they consume just two kilograms of red meat each a year. In other words, even the complete removal from the Indonesian market of fresh Australian beef would make virtually no difference whatsoever, except for the more affluent Indonesians, who tend to eat Australian beef and who have the means to purchase and store boxed Australian meat processed by Australian workers in Australian abattoirs.

Significantly, the Indonesian government plans to be beef self-sufficient by as early as 2014 anyway. So, rather than ramping up our live animal export trade with that country, common sense—not to mention good business practice—would see the Australian beef industry working now towards an alternative business model which does not rely on live beef exports to Indonesia.

The religious dimension of this matter has also been mischievously overcooked by the live animal export industry, because the fact is that the overwhelming number of relatively affluent Muslims who tend to consume Australian meat would have no objection to buying that meat so long as it has been processed in an Australian halal certified abattoir.

Moreover, the argument is ridiculous that banning live cattle exports to Indonesia will somehow destroy the beef industry, because the direct and indirect value of the red meat industry in Australia is something in the order of $17 billion dollars and employs some 55,000 workers. By comparison the live export trade comes in at about $1 billion and 10,000 workers. In other words, ending the live export trade will have a marginal effect, even more so when the workers shift to the processed meat sector.

Please excuse me for repeating here some of the very same points I have made before, but it seems that very few members in this place listened before, so I will keep on having my say until they do start listening. For instance, let me say again that the economic argument is in fact strongly in favour of banning live animal exports.
because of the way the trade is cannibalising
the processed meat industry at the expense of
thousands of Australian jobs. So any short-
term commercial jolt will be limited while
the medium- to long-term benefit will be
enormous. In any case, the three-year phase-
out period stipulated in the bill gives the
industry more than enough time to move
from live to processed meat. For instance,
the mothballed abattoirs in Katherine and
Innisfail could be refurbished and reopened,
the mooted abattoir in Darwin could be well
on its way to completion, and thousands of
unemployed and underemployed workers
could be trained.

Moreover, three years is more than
enough time to solve the challenges of
steering the northern Australian beef industry
away from live exports and towards
processing onshore. I am mindful in
particular of issues like cattle breeds,
transport difficulties in the wet and the cost
of northern feedlots, but surely we are a
decent enough people to give primacy to
animal welfare, democratic enough to
respond to public opinion and smart enough
to solve our farming challenges.

This bill is fundamentally different to the
bill put forward by the member for
Melbourne. While his would legislate the
immediate end to all live animal exports,
mine recognises the social, economic and
political merit in giving the industry a
transition period and in the interim
mandating appropriate safeguards along the
entire length of the supply chain, including
stunning in the foreign abattoirs. This is, I
feel, a more sensible approach—to put in
place quickly effective animal welfare
safeguards before the resumption of trade,
including mandatory stunning, pending the
wind-up of the industry within three years.
Such an approach also considers the graziers,
the Indigenous station hands, the truckers,
the shipping line operators, the feed
producers and everyone else involved in the
live animal export industry.

Fast-tracking safeguards in Indonesia is
also the only way to help the tens of
thousands of animals currently in Indonesian
feedlots that are being, and will continue to
be, treated in exactly the same way as the
poor animals we saw on the Four Corners
program. The live animal export trade is
unethical and not in Australia’s economic
interest. That the government and opposition
might not support the Live Animal Export
Restriction and Prohibition Bill 2011 is
delely disappointing, not just because of
what it says about the Labor, Liberal and
National parties but, more importantly,
because another opportunity will be lost to
put in place reasonable and effective animal
welfare safeguards.

This should be a matter of conscience and
I appeal to all in this place to follow their
hearts and to support the bill. It already has
the support of Animals Australia, the
RSPCA and many people involved in the
beef industry. The support of the parliament
will legislate the safeguards our animals
need right now and shut down a trade that is
fundamentally broken, systemically cruel
and not in Australia’s economic interest.

I received an email some weeks ago from
a mother who wrote that she does not want to
have to respond to her young daughter one
day asking why we knew how bad the live
animal export trade was and yet did nothing
to stop it. As the father of a four and a half-
year-old daughter and another who is three
tomorrow, I think I know how that woman
feels, and I promise not to let this end here.

Prime Minister and Leader of the
Opposition: please do the right thing and end
the shocking animal cruelty endemic in
Australia’s live animal export industry.
Please support my bill or, if nothing else, at
least demand Australian standards be applied
right along the supply chain, including stunning, and then legislate the reform to protect the animals from those who will follow us.

Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition: there are important principles at stake here. To paraphrase Montesquieu: the deterioration of a government—or an opposition—begins almost always by the decay of its principles.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

A division having been called and the bells having been rung—

The SPEAKER: As there are fewer than five members on the side for the ayes, I declare the question resolved in the negative in accordance with standing order 127. The names of those members who are in the minority will be recorded in the Votes and Proceedings.

Question negatived. Mr Bandt and Mr Wilkie voting aye.

Live Animal Export (Slaughter) Prohibition Bill 2011

Second Reading

Debate resumed on the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (09:34): In conclusion, the Greens took a position to this election, as we have to other elections, to end the live export trade. We did so because we have known for many years what many campaigners and many members of the public have also known for many years—that is, that the live animal export trade is not a trade that we can defend ethically, it is not a sustainable trade and it does not deliver bang for the buck to the Australian economy that domestic meat processing would. Now, thanks to the fantastic, continued and tireless work of campaigners like Lyn White, the RSPCA and Animals Australia, many more people know what a number of us have known for years—that is, that the boats that take animals overseas for killing in ways that we cannot control are shiploads of cruelty.

We know that tens of thousands of these animals die in transit. We have seen a graphic reminder of what happens to over 60,000 animals when they are stuck dockside and stranded. I must say too that I spent my university years in Fremantle where one could see on a regular basis the shiploads of sheep and other animals sitting on the dockside and the stench that wafted over the whole of the town as they were stuck there—

An incident having occurred in the chamber—

Mr BANDT: I did get a motion passed yesterday for a 10 per cent energy efficiency cut, but I did not realise it would be implemented quite so quickly!

Honourable members interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): Order! The member for Melbourne has the call and those members that are conducting conversations out of their places should either return to their places or conduct their conversations outside the chamber.

Mr BANDT: One of the things that became very clear to me and many others as we could see the truckloads of animals being taken down to be loaded on the docks was that these animals were not in for a humane end to their lives. No of the things we can also be in no doubt about, either as a parliament or as an Australian people, is that we cannot control how animals are killed in other countries. The basic standard that applies here in Australia of stunning animals before they are killed may not be applied universally, much to the chagrin of many, but it is the basic standard. It is to the government's shame that not even the basic
standard of stunning an animal before it was killed was insisted upon when resuming the live export trade.

If we do not stun animals before we kill them, we know that they can be alive for many minutes before they finally die. It is fanciful to believe that we can somehow control the way in which every animal is killed in abattoirs in other countries. We are not going to be able to have an Australian government inspector watching the slaughter of every animal. The way we can exercise maximum control over how animals are killed is by having the processing done domestically. We know that processing animals domestically will mean a 20 per cent greater return to the Australian economy than exporting them.

The member for Denison has also presented a bill and I will be supporting that because I think it is better than the status quo. But if we think it is cruel to kill animals in this way and if we think it is going to have a better return to the Australian economy then we should be ending the trade now, not in three years time. We should not allow three more years of this cruel practice to continue.

I have been inundated with messages of support since bringing Greens policies to this place. It is extraordinarily disappointing that we are about to have a vote where Labor and the coalition will vote together without offering any solution of their own as to how to ensure humane slaughtering of animals. In doing that not only are they continuing an unethical and unsustainable practice but they are also thumbing their nose at public opinion. Every opinion poll and every member of this parliament would agree that the strong outpouring of public support has been in favour of ending live exports. To all those people who have contacted my office and contacted the offices of other members in this place, who are here in the gallery today, who have been campaigning for many years, my message to all of you is to keep it up. Despite the darkness in this chamber right now, you have shone a spotlight on this issue that will not be removed.

For our part, the Greens will keep up the campaign here and elsewhere to end this trade. We currently have an inquiry in the Senate into our bill to ban live exports. We will await the outcome of that Senate inquiry with great interest. We will return to this place during the life of this parliament to continue to press this issue. I commend the bill to the House. I would hope that those members from both sides who have spoken up against this cruel practice over recent months will be able to support me and the member for Denison in supporting this bill.

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

A division having been called and the bells having been rung—

The SPEAKER: As there are fewer than five members on the side for the ayes in this division, I declare the question negatived in accordance with standing order 127. The names of those members who are in the minority will be recorded in the Votes and Proceedings.

Question negatived, Mr Bandt and Mr Wilkie voting aye.

The SPEAKER: I indicate to the member for Melbourne that I am not sure that the mood lighting in the chamber is as a result of his successful motion yesterday. I would like to believe that the parliamentary administration has immediately stepped in, but I am not sure that that is the case.

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the House and Minister for Infrastructure and Transport) (09:46): Mr Speaker, it is out of respect for your birthday that it is occurring!
The SPEAKER: Thank you!

Mr ALBANESE: It is in order to have a more sombre mood in order to assist with the behaviour in the House, Mr Speaker, and I commend you for your action!

The SPEAKER: Thank you, Leader of the House!

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

South Australia Remote Areas Energy Supplies Scheme

Debate resumed on the motion:

That this House:

(1) expresses:

(a) its greatest concern at the SA Government's decision to slash support for its Remote Areas Energy Supplies Scheme which subsidises off-grid generation for isolated communities; and

(b) great concern that the reduction in subsidy will lead to escalating power prices for businesses of up to 100 per cent, recognising users will pay as much as $0.60 per kilowatt hour;

(2) names the affected communities as Coober Pedy, Andamooka, Yunta, Nundroo, Maria, Oodnadatta, Marree, Kingoonya, Glendambo, Parachilna, Blinman, Manna Hill and Cockburn;

(3) recognises that as Coober Pedy relies on a desalinated water supply and that the reduction in subsidy will lead to the price of water rising to $5.70 a kilolitre;

(4) brings to the SA Government's notice that every other State and Territory in Australia which has off-grid generation systems for isolated communities supports a state-wide pricing policy;

(5) expresses support for the affected communities and recognises the public outrage expressed at a public meeting in Coober Pedy on Sunday, 15 May 2011 attended by Senator Nick Xenophon, SA Legislative Council Member the Hon. John Darley and Rowan Ramsey MP; and

(6) condemns the SA Government for its actions and calls on it to immediately re-instate the subsidies and consider bringing SA into line with the rest of Australia in supporting state-wide pricing.

Question agreed to.

Home Insulation Program

Debate resumed on the motion:

That this House:

(1) notes that:

(a) many home owners have reported incidents of suspected fraudulent insulation claims under the Government's Home Insulation Program to the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency;

(b) the Department has indicated to complainants that they may never be provided with advice about the outcome of investigations in each case; and

(c) the Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency and his Department, have failed to provide information concerning the number of claims of fraud that have been made or of instances of fraud which have been detected;

(2) condemns the Government for failing to:

(a) provide specific information to home owners about the outcome of investigations into alleged fraud at their homes; and

(b) report to Parliament, and to Australian taxpayers who have funded the Home Insulation Program, the details on the number of claims of fraud that have been made or of instances of fraud which have been detected; and

(3) calls on the Minister to:

(a) direct his Department to provide information to home owners on an ongoing basis concerning the progress of investigations into incidents of suspected fraud reported by those home owners;

(b) immediately authorise an additional 50,000 random home inspections from within allocated funds; and

(c) provide regular reports to the Australian public concerning investigations into fraud under the Home Insulation Program, that include the number of:

(i) claims of alleged fraud that have been received, identified in the Government commissioned forensic audit, and investigated;
(ii) cases investigated that have been completed, and those that resulted in prosecutions, along with the outcomes of each;

(iii) prosecutions that are in train; and

(iv) cases where steps have been taken to seek restitution from fraudulent claimants, and the outcomes of such cases.

Mr Fletcher: Mr Speaker, I have an amendment.

The SPEAKER: I appreciate that it is dark, but you need to be in your place to get the call.

Mr Fletcher (Bradfield) (09:47): Mr Speaker, I seek leave to move an amendment.

Leave not granted.

Question put.

A division having been called and the bells having been rung—

The SPEAKER: Order! It appears, now that we can shed some light on the subject, that there is some confusion over the point we are at. The question is that the motion moved by the member for Bradfield relating to fraud under the Home Insulation Program be agreed to.

The House divided. [09:51]

(The Speaker—Mr Harry Jenkins)

Ayes.........................69
Noes.........................71
Majority....................2

AYES

Alexander, JG
Andrews, KL
Billson, BF
Bishop, JI
Broadbent, RE
Chester, D
Ciobo, SM
Coulton, M (teller)
Dutton, PC
Fletcher, PW
Gambaro, T
Griggs, NL
Hartsuyker, L

Hockey, JB
Irons, SJ
Jones, ET
Kelly, C
Ley, SP
Marino, NB
Matheson, RG
Mirabella, S
O'Dowd, KD
Prentice, J
Ramsey, RE
Robb, AJ
Roy, WB
Schultz, AJ
Secker, PD (teller)
Sliper, PN
Somlyay, AM
Stone, SN
Truss, WE
Turnbull, MB
Vasta, RX
Wyatt, KG

AYES

Hunt, GA
Jensen, DG
Keenan, M
Laming, A
Macfarlane, IE
Markus, LE
McCormack, MF
Morrison, SJ
O'Dwyer, KM
Pyne, CM
Randall, DJ
Robert, SR
Ruddock, PM
Scott, BC
Simpkins, LXL
Smith, ADH
Southcott, AJ
Tehan, DT
Tudge, AE
Van Manen, AJ
Washer, MJ

NOES

Adams, DGH
Bandt, AP
Bowen, CE
Brodmann, G
Burke, AS
Byrne, AM
Cheeseman, DL
Collins, JM
Crean, SF
D'Ath, YM
Elliot, MJ
Ferguson, LDT
Fitzgibbon, JA
Georganas, S
Gray, G
Griffin, AP
Hayes, CP
Jones, SP
King, CF
Livermore, KF
Macklin, JL
McClelland, RB
Mitchell, RG
Neumann, SK
O' Connor, BPJ
Owens, J
Perrett, GD
Ripoll, BF

NOES

Albanese, AN
Bird, SL
Bradbury, DJ
Burke, AE
Butler, MC
Champion, ND
Clare, JD
Combet, GI
Danby, M
Dreyfus, MA
Emerson, CA
Ferguson, MJ
Garrett, PR
Gibbons, SW
Gierson, SJ
Hall, JG (teller)
Husic, EN (teller)
Kelly, MJ
Leigh, AK
Lyons, GR
Marles, RD
Melham, D
Murphy, JP
Oakeshott, RJM
O'Neill, DM
Parke, M
Pilberskik, TJ
Rishworth, AL
Education Funding

Debate resumed on the motion:

That this House:

(1) acknowledges the importance of the role that non-government schools play in reflecting the diversity of Australian society and serving a broad range of students, including those from a variety of religions, social backgrounds, regions, and socio-economic circumstances;

(2) supports the continuation of a funding model into the future that distributes funds according to socio-economic need and which recognises that every non-government school student is entitled to a basic level of government funding;

(3) calls on the Government to continue to support parents in their right to choose a school which they believe best reflects their values and beliefs, by not penalising parents who wish to make private contributions towards their child's education, nor discouraging schools in their efforts to fundraise or encourage private investment;

(4) notes the many submissions made to the Review of Funding for Schooling by non-government sector authorities requesting that changes to school funding arrangements not leave schools or students worse off in real terms;

(5) acknowledges that any reduction in government funding for non-government schools would need to be addressed by increasing the level of private income required to be raised by the school community (such as school fees), or through a reduction in the quality of the educational provision in affected schools; and

(6) calls on the Government to make a clear commitment to the continuation of current funding levels to all non-government schools, plus indexation, and for this to be the basic starting point of any new funding model resulting from the Review of Funding for Schooling process.

Question agreed to.

Torres Strait Flooding

Debate resumed on the motion:

That this House:

(1) notes the severe flooding effects taking place in the outer islands of the Torres Strait and the dire conditions the Torres Strait Islander people find themselves in each year;

(2) recognises that:

(a) the Torres Strait Islander people deserve the same rights as the people in flooded South-East Queensland;

(b) discrimination should not exist in one particular area of the nation;

(c) the Torres Strait Islander people have been experiencing flood devastation for the past four years with no help from Government; and

(d) sea wall infrastructure at six low-lying islands is inadequate and in urgent need of repair;

and

(3) in light of the evidence of continued flooding on the outer islands due to king tidal surges, calls on the Government to commit to restore and rebuild the damaged sea walls on the outer islands of the Torres Strait to protect the island communities from further devastation.

Question agreed to.
BILLS

Customs Amendment (Anti-dumping Improvements) Bill 2011

Second Reading

Debate resumed on the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Ms MARINO (Forrest—Opposition Whip) (09:59): When I started speaking on the Customs Amendment (Anti-dumping Improvements) Bill 2011 last night there were no Labor speakers listed. I called on them to come and represent their electorates and speak on anti-dumping. I see this morning there are now Labor members who will speak on this bill.

Mr Albanese: Mr Deputy Speaker, I reluctantly rise on a point of order. The member should not mislead the House. If you look at the speaking list yesterday—

Mr Secker interjecting—

Mr Albanese: there were a number of members listed. Those opposite continued to call quorum during divisions—

Mr Secker interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): Order! The Leader of the House has made his point and the Opposition Whip will desist from interjection.

Ms MARINO: I am very pleased that, after my call for the members opposite to represent their electorates, there are now speakers to follow. I will call on them not only to speak on this legislation but, given that what we are discussing is about the manufacturing sector, to pressure their government to provide positive policies for the manufacturing sector—not a carbon tax to keep driving investment and jobs out of Australia.

On the issue of this bill, as I said last night, there has been no greater acknowledgement of the failure of equity and trade than the failure through Doha to deliver particularly to the agricultural sector. This process has been acknowledged as not having produced a lot that is concrete. It is important that we have effective anti-dumping laws in this nation. World Trade Organisation Director-General Pascal Lamy is on record as saying that the process of trade liberalisation and equalisation is failing. He stated that the gap between member states 'is not bridgeable'. In addition, EU Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht told European lawmakers 'there is no reason to be optimistic' that negotiations can be concluded successfully. That is why, in framing our debate over this bill, we have said that this is a work in progress. Anti-dumping laws are very important and they need to be continued to be worked on to encourage fair trade and to reflect the needs of manufacturers in this nation, be they in food or elsewhere in the broad range of quality manufacturing that we are capable of in this country. The anti-dumping measure we see here is modest in its improvements, but trade must be fair. This is a work in progress and it is on that basis that I support this bill.

Ms GRIERSON (Newcastle) (10:03): I am pleased to rise to lend my support to Labor's latest demonstration of its commitment to regional employment and to a competitive manufacturing industry, via the Customs Amendment (Anti-Dumping Improvements) Bill. This bill forms part of the first tranche of improvements to Australia's anti-dumping regime announced by Minister for Home Affairs O'Connor and Minister for Trade
Emerson on 22 June. It represents the most important overhaul of anti-dumping measures in a decade. It will provide greater safeguards for Australian manufacturers against deliberately underpriced foreign goods. The dumping of unfairly priced foreign goods has long been a major concern to industry and workers in regional electorates like mine in Newcastle.

Upon our election in 2007, the federal Labor government became acutely aware of the weakness in the previous anti-dumping arrangements. Industry, unions and the communities sustained by manufacturing made very clear their concern that Australia's safeguards against dumping were not up to the task. Even a cursory examination of the evidence available demonstrated that these complaints had some merit. In particular, it was clear that comparable nations, including Canada and the United States, had much more robust safeguards against the types of dumping activity that were affecting Australia.

As a first step to reform, on 3 July 2008 the Council of Australian Governments affirmed their support for a strengthening of anti-dumping arrangements. Accordingly, in March 2009, then Assistant Treasurer Bowen directed the Productivity Commission to review the adequacy and rationale of our anti-dumping arrangements. The Productivity Commission publicly released its report in early 2010 and its recommendations form the basis of the bill we are considering today. Most importantly, the commission concluded there were strong grounds for a robust and effective anti-dumping system. But, echoing concerns from a range of community, business and employee groups, the commission concluded there were a number of serious deficiencies in the anti-dumping safeguards. The government has accepted, either in full or in part, 15 of the commission's 20 recommendations.

The package of 29 new measures announced by Minister O'Connor and Minister Emerson on 22 June represents the most far-reaching overhaul of our anti-dumping arrangements in over a decade, giving greater security to Australian manufacturers from deliberately underpriced foreign imports. The bill amends division 5 of Part XVB of the Customs Act 1901, giving effect to a number of those 29 new measures. It reflects four key principles of the government's package. Firstly, a new time limit on ministerial decisions will give greater certainty to all parties involved in dumping cases. It will require the responsible minister to reach a decision within 30 days of receiving a report or a recommendation on which to make a determination. This will give all parties involved—whether the foreign importer accused of dumping or the business or worker whose prosperity is being undercut by unfair practices—greater certainty about when their case will be resolved. Although it has long been the practice of the federal Labor government to reach a decision within 30 days, this will bind this government and future governments to that time line and provide greater certainty to all parties involved.

Secondly, the government will boost confidence in the integrity of our arrangements by widening the definition of 'anti-dumping' to better reflect its adverse impact on jobs, industry and communities. So, when determining whether material injury has occurred—the key test of imposing anti-dumping duties—the responsible minister may now consider the impact on jobs and investment in industry. This is a commonsense decision that I warmly endorse. We cannot expect workers or businesses to have any confidence in an open and liberal trading system if we cannot
protect their job security or investment in their industry from unfair and predatory competition. hirdly, these measures will mean that the set of policy levers in place to respond to dumping are comparable to other nations'. Again this represents another common sense decision. For too long, comparable nations, including the US and Canada, have been able to impose higher duties than Australia on the same goods dumped in the same circumstances. By removing these anomalies and ensuring better consistency with comparable nations we will ensure that Australian industries are competing on a more level playing field with our trading partners.

Finally, we will significantly improve transparency by widening the number of parties that can participate in antidumping investigations. This bill will clarify that industry associations, trade unions and downstream industries who have a direct interest can now be treated as an interested party and participate in investigations. Ensuring that decision makers have access to as much relevant information as possible and making decision-making processes as transparent as possible are fundamental principles of good governance. Widening the range of bodies that can contribute to an investigation will provide all parties greater confidence that the most informed and transparent decision will be made on dumping cases. These amendments will make substantive and commonsense changes to our antidumping arrangements. They are fully compliant with our World Trade Organisation and other international obligations.

It should be noted there was one important recommendation from the Productivity Commission's report that the government does not accept and that is its proposal for a bounded public interest test. We understand the Productivity Commission's interest in ensuring that broader public interest, especially that of consumers, is taken into account on antidumping decisions, but under present arrangements the responsible minister already has more than adequate scope to take account of the public interest implications of any decision to impose antidumping duties—and I think that at this stage that is working in a satisfactory way—nor is there a compelling case, at least as far as I am aware it, that our present antidumping safeguards have in any way impinged substantially on consumer or other unrelated public interests. The Productivity Commission's proposal, although very well intentioned, would simply have placed an unnecessary brake on the government's ability to apply remedies to proven dumping activities.

It is no surprise that these changes have been widely applauded by unions, businesses and communities. Australian Industry Group Chief Executive Heather Ridout stated:

These improvements will help create a stronger, more credible and transparent anti-dumping regime for Australia. They are critical for Australian business to effectively combat the predatory sale of under-priced product on the local market and to support the ongoing health of domestic industries.

The 45 per cent increase in Customs staff under this new system working on antidumping issues over the next 12 months is an important part of that improvement.

Of course there have been some armchair commentators who continue to regard antidumping measures as an offence to the supposed purity of true free trade. For example, I note that just last week Chris Berg from the Institute of Public Affairs described antidumping laws as nonsense and pure protectionism. The federal Labor government and I reject that view entirely. Rather than detract from liberal trading systems, a robust and effective antidumping...
system actually reinforces community confidence in free trade and puts more rigour into competitive trade internationally. One of the fundamental principles of any free trade system is that it be based on a level playing field. Measures against dumping ensure that such a level playing field is maintained.

The simple reality is that no government, no business, no community and no union anywhere in the world can or should tolerate domestic industry being undercut by unfair trading practices. If such predatory undercutting was allowed to run rampant, it would serve only to strengthen support for protectionism and undermine the very system of open and competitive trade upon which our prosperity depends. Under the government's package a new support officer will support small and medium businesses and domestic manufacturers and producers to actively participate in investigations around dumping.

Dumping also has particular significance for regional areas like Newcastle and the Hunter. Although the incidence of dumping has decreased in recent years, the sectors where it still occurs—paper production, aluminium and other related industries—are overwhelmingly concentrated in regional areas. By implementing these measures, the government is recognising the increased pressure faced by many of Australia's manufacturing industries. Although, sadly, the federal government cannot influence many of the factors putting pressure on manufacturing, such as higher commodity prices and the value of the Australian dollar, we can do something about policing unfair foreign competition.

I note that many members of the opposition have, for I suppose all sorts reasons, recently discovered a belated interest in the manufacturing sector. Unfortunately, despite all of that, the opposition are yet to put forward a single positive policy to provide support to Australian manufacturing. Yes, I am pleased that the coalition will be lending their support to this vital bill, but this will not be the last test of their resolve to support manufacturing jobs. In the coming months, federal Labor will present bills to effect our industry assistance programs under the Clean Energy Future plan. This will provide members on the opposite side of the chamber with a very clear and very unambiguous opportunity to demonstrate whether they genuinely support assistance for jobs in manufacturing and in regional Australia. I wonder whether the member for Warringah, with his oft-stated concern for the steel industry, will vote for or against support for steelworker jobs in Whyalla, the Illawarra or Newcastle under the $300 million Steel Transformation Plan. On 11 August, Senator Joyce waxed lyrical in a press release about the continued threat of unemployment in his home state of Queensland. So the question for Senator Joyce is will he vote for or against the $9.2 billion Jobs and Competitiveness Program, which will provide direct support to industries in Queensland? The member for Paterson, Mr Baldwin, will have a clear choice to support or oppose assistance to mines and mineworkers in his own electorate under the $1.3 billion Coal Sector Jobs Package.

This bill demonstrates very clearly Labor's ongoing support for manufacturing jobs in Australia. It is not about spin and it is not about getting a good visual of a leader on the evening news wearing a hard hat and feigning interest in regional jobs, which is the Leader of the Opposition's wont these days; it is about enacting real-world measures that will make a tangible difference to the pressures currently faced by our manufacturing industries. I commend this bill to the House.
Mr RIPOLL (Oxley) (10:14): This is important and long overdue legislation, and it does a range of things which are in the interest of all Australians and Australian industry. This is the first legislation to implement the changes to anti-dumping measures that were announced on 22 June and they are the most important improvements to our anti-dumping regime in probably more than a decade. These changes will improve the administration of anti-dumping measures in Australia and will better align our laws with the laws of other nations. Even more importantly, they will rebalance the playing field to ensure as best as possible that dumping does not take place. Anti-dumping can be complex. Dumping of products in Australia can be a very complex matter, but the very fact that there are a number of anti-dumping cases where anti-dumping measures have been taken and the significant measures taken over numbers of years demonstrates that dumping in Australia actually does take place, so I think we should acknowledge that fact upfront. In fact, it takes place in many countries around the world.

We should not be afraid to support our industries, and we should not be afraid to do the right thing in terms of Australian manufacturing and jobs where there is clear evidence of dumping taking place. I am not a protectionist. I do not believe that protectionism in the end is good for anybody. It is certainly not good for Australian industry and it is not good for Australian jobs. Protectionism, in the end, means that everybody loses. I think consumers ought to have the right to the best available products and the cheapest available prices and that we should all compete on those grounds. However, dumping is not about that. It is not about cheap products; it is about dumping products. It is where a product is dumped into this country at a rate cheaper than it is in its home country. There is more than enough evidence and there are more than enough cases to demonstrate this. What this government has done is look at those matters and a number of cases across the country very closely to ensure that we do not penalise our own industries through a lack of robust rules and regulations around how this takes place.

There is the argument that it can be quite a complex set of circumstances, but no minister in this or any other government should be tied to legislation that prevents that minister from acting in the best interests of this country or in our national interest through poor legislation. What the Minister for Home Affairs, Brendan O'Connor, has done by the introduction of these amendments, the Customs Amendment (Anti-dumping Improvements) Bill, is redress that imbalance and those irregularities. Not only will this improve the regulatory framework and give the minister the right platform to operate from, but the regulatory frameworks that we will now have in place with the legislation will mean that other countries importing goods into Australia have a clearer understanding of how our rules work, what our expectations are of them and also that they should meet their WTO obligations, as we do. I am very confident that what we have put on the table is good for everybody in the industry.

I want to make it very clear that I am a supporter of consumer protection and I am also a supporter of consumer value. I do not believe we ought to protect an industry where it cannot compete or does not innovate and do everything that it can to compete and properly deliver value to Australian consumers. In the end, that should not be what we are about. The short-term gain that somebody might have by paying a few dollars less for a particular product can actually mean long-term pain for our
economy, for industry and, in the end, for consumers. At the same time, that should not equate to seeing whole businesses and whole industries wiped out completely because another country or a particular company decides it is going to dump product in Australia for whatever purpose but often for the purpose of actually destroying those particular industries in this country and our capacity to complete. As complex as this is, at the same time, I think it is quite simple: we need to get that balance right, and I believe that is what we have done.

It is also important to stress that where a particular industry is under threat from competition government ought to help and assist in whatever way we can, within the WTO rules, because we expect the same of other countries. We expect when we export products, goods and services that we are treated fairly. We see cases on a monthly and yearly basis showing just how important this is. But we ought to be cognisant of the fact that there are certain industries in this country—manufacturing in particular—where, if they are attacked by dumped products into this country, some of those industries cannot survive, cannot compete, will never be able to compete and cannot be rebuilt once they disappear. That frightens me, because I think there needs to be a substantial manufacturing base in this country. We need to provide the capacity and the support from a government perspective to ensure there is innovation and that industry can work its way through some of these difficult times. I am certain people agree with me that there are certain things we probably do not need to make any more of in this country because we just cannot compete. The evidence is everywhere, sometimes right on our backs, in terms of the clothes we wear. It is very difficult to compete in some of those environments and the reality is that most Australians cannot afford or will not pay the sorts of prices necessary for some of those products to be manufactured in this country. That does not mean, though, that we cannot compete at boutique and other levels and have niche markets and so forth.

This legislation takes all of that into account, and I think the work that the government has done in this area is really good. I believe that we have not only strengthened our anti-dumping legislation but also met our World Trade Organisation obligations fully. I think that we demonstrate this to other countries in the way that we deal with them and that we will not, in response to what we have done, have any retaliatory impacts. We support free trade globally. I also support fair trade. There is a significant difference between free trade and fair trade and how they actually work. Again, that carries right across the board, whether it is in manufacturing or in food products. Australia is a trading country. Our economy is based on trade. We are just too small a country in terms of real numbers, with 23 million people, for our domestic market to support our industries, our manufacturing and our production. We have been a wealthy country since before federation, based on the fact that we trade. We are an exporting country. We export much more than we import. So, in terms of the way that we want to be treated by other countries, we ought to apply the same principles and same philosophies to ourselves in how we treat them. His legislation is also about supporting the Australian manufacturing industry. There are plenty of examples of good Australian companies, some of which are well known. I will not name them, but I know there are a lot of large organisations that have struggled under an archaic system of anti-dumping regulation. They have tried to be innovative, to be competitive, to meet market demands and compete where there was clear evidence
of dumping. They have had to deal with all of those matters while, at the same time, try to grow a business and a market in Australia.

This legislation does four key things which are very important. It imposes a time limit on ministerial decisions. This means the minister has to make a decision and I think that is important. It also clarifies for the minister what he can consider and that he has to consider all appropriate factors which may indicate dumping. That was not the case in the past when the minister was limited in the information that he could take on board and had no time frame in which to make that decision. It also expands the list of actionable subsidies and clarifies that parties with a clear interest are given an opportunity to participate in anti-dumping investigations.

It brings together a sensible set of rules which mean that all of those involved, including people and organisations with allegations of dumping against them, can work quicker to remove any dumping in place. Where dumping is taking place in Australia, the company is made aware of it and changes its practices to remove the component of dumping, we should not impose a penalty against the company for a longer period than is necessary to address the dumping itself. It is about fairness. In the end, if we are genuine about preventing dumping, that is all it should be. It should not continue for months or years beyond the dumping itself.

The amendments will provide that the minister will exercise the decision-making powers within 30 days of receiving a report or recommendation on which to make a decision. Currently there are no legislative time constraints governing the minister's decision. This poses a whole range of administrative problems for a minister. The benefits of imposing this time frame are more than obvious. It provides greater certainty for all parties and reduces the overall period in which the minister can act. There is also a consideration of injury factors. There is a lot of controversy about material injury and how it takes place, particularly as dumping can be acceptable if it does not particularly injure an Australian industry. We have made how that works clearer. There is also a list of economic factors which a minister may take into account when dealing with these matters.

Currently interested parties are defined as domestic manufacturers and producers, importers, exporters, trade organisations and foreign governments. Clearly there are current stakeholders who should be involved in investigations, some of which are prevented from doing so. I do not think that is appropriate. We should have everybody at the table. This is too important an issue when you consider what the outcomes can be. An outcome may be a loss of jobs or that consumers do not get the best value for money. In the long term, it can also lead to the end of particular industries or organisations that have worked really hard to compete on a global platform. These amendments specify that trade unions, industry associations and downstream industry, whether or not they are importers but who have a direct interest, can be treated as interested parties. That is a worthy amendment and it is a welcome change. It will also mean that reports and recommendations made to the minister take into account the views of a much broader range of stakeholders.

In the end these amendments are fair. They are fair changes for Australia; they are in our national interest. They are also fair for countries that export to Australia; they are fair for industry and also for consumers. We have strengthened legislation and regulation that was inadequate for a changing global environment. We have done that and met our
World Trade Organisation obligations. These amendments are about getting the balance right. Talking about getting the balance right, this will be demonstrated today when the opposition has its opportunity to support these very good changes and amendments that will support Australian industry and Australian jobs. This really good legislative change should have the full support of the opposition. I commend the amendments to the House.

Mr CHAMPION (Wakefield) (10:27): I rise to support the Customs Amendments (Anti-Dumping Improvements) Bill 2011. This legislation is about providing fairness and security after a decade of indifference. We see this in a lot of things that the government has had to do during the previous term and the past few years, whether it be guaranteeing bank deposits or the work we are now doing trying to prepare the horse industry for the potential of equine influenza. We see it in this bill because for a decade or so many problems that were brought to the then conservative government's attention were simply ignored. The previous government sat on its hands on a whole range of issues, some of which I have mentioned. You can look at disability reform and aged-care reform—these problems did not emerge with the election of a Labor government. These problems have been around for a great deal of time, and so it is with dumping of products in our markets.

The member for Oxley talked about free trade. I think most Australians are free-traders. We understand that we are an exporting nation and that we send more products overseas than we import. We are a country with a small population base and our comparative advantages are in mining at the moment, as well as in exporting wine, wheat, wool and our manufactured goods. We understand that protectionism is largely a siren song. It is a very tempting siren song.

There is a tale about the Scullin government: that you could not move for seeing members of the government and the opposition with tariff lobbyists. I do not think anybody wants to return to those days because we understand that protectionism actually costs jobs, reduces wealth and stops incomes from growing. Largely it is counterproductive; it protects industries that cannot last in the longer term.

I do not think this is a question of free trade or fair trade versus protectionism. I think that dumping of goods is profoundly unfair not just to Australian industry but to anybody who wants to import to Australia, anybody who is not importing goods at a lower cost than that at which they can produce them. He dumping of goods raises a question of fairness and security around the rules for trade. People do not mind competing, but they want to compete on a fair and level playing field.

I heard the member for Barker in this debate talking about some of the issues that have emerged in the south-east, particularly as a result of the dumping of toilet paper, and some of the adjustments that Kimberly-Clark have had to make there. He made some criticism of the $17 million provided by this government for structural adjustment to help workers and to help the local community adjust to the job losses and changes. I think he was a little cynical. It is possible to be cynical around this place. Cynicism is the great scourge of modern life; people tend to be cynical rather than believing. But I have had some experience of these structural adjustment funds. Bridgestone closed in my electorate and we worked very closely with Job Services Australia providers and with the bureaucrats, unions and business involved. We were pushy about getting people jobs because we knew about the transition from one job to the next. We knew that people were transferring from manufacturing jobs...
where they had worked for decades. For many it had been their only job; others had only had a couple of jobs. So it was a profoundly insecure time for them.

We found that working with those bodies and pushing bureaucrats, job service providers and others to get good outcomes was the key. Standing back and being cynical and taking pot shots did not help the process, because workers feel that cynicism. Hopelessness is often a really corrosive thing for job seekers. It depends on whether you roll up your sleeves and get stuck into it. We have to accept that the high Aussie dollar and the change in our terms of trade present some challenges for manufacturing. Those challenges differ industry to industry, but we know that we have to adjust to them, and part of this government's approach to this adjustment is to provide a fair and level playing field, and this anti-dumping legislation is part of that.

Leon Byner is a talkback radio presenter in my home state. He is a great friend of the member for Hindmarsh; I know they have a great friendship both on and off the air. I must say that Leon Byner and I spar a bit, but he has been very good on this issue. He has done a lot to bring the issue of the dumping of goods and the profound unfairness, to Australians and others, into the public eye. I know that he has taken a great interest in this. He has defined this phenomenon as being a situation where somebody imports something for a price less than what you can buy it at the market where the import comes from. His public advocacy of this has done a great deal—not to fan the siren songs of protectionism but as a great call for fairness in our trading system. I would certainly like to add my voice to that.

We know that this is not a new problem. In fact, in 2002 Bill Shorten, who was then the National Secretary of the Australian Workers Union, spoke in response to some of the things that were going on with steel tariffs in the United States and other places, and some of the dumping of steel that was occurring into the American market. The now member for Maribyrnong said:

We need tougher anti-dumping laws and clear local content requirements on major infrastructure projects.

That was way back on 7 March 2002. So we know that this is not a new problem. We know that OneSteel, the year before, brought an anti-dumping case against several steel manufacturers from Korea. This has been a problem for some time and you might wonder why a decade or so has passed before this parliament is finally dealing with it.

This is tremendously important legislation. We know that it affects workers, unions, businesses and others. Other speakers have talked about the very important merits of this bill and the fact that we have improved time lines, increased staff for Customs and created a 30-day time limit for ministerial decisions that makes sure that anti-dumping cases move quickly. We know that the injury that dumping causes is immediate but that it often takes some time to get anti-dumping cases up. Justice delayed is justice denied. If the injury is done we should do all we can to get quick action in response.

This bill provides for stronger compliance. We want to make sure that there is a dedicated resource within Customs and we want to make sure that they are out there working as hard as they can on compliance. We want improved decision making, greater use of trade and industry experts in investigating complaints and the introduction of a rigorous appeals process supported by more resources. And we want to clarify the list of injury factors that can be claimed by domestic industry. We want to clarify the
Customs approach to those determinations. We want to provide flexibility in allowing extensions of time to complex cases while keeping that immediacy there.

We want better access to the anti-dumping system and a new support officer to help small and medium business and downstream manufacturers to participate in these investigations and actions. We want to improve the data that is available so that people can make their cases. We want to clarify who can participate in investigations and provide more access to anti-dumping regimes for unions, for businesses and for individuals who are injured by dumping into our markets. We want to make sure that we have greater consistency with other countries, with regular consideration of practices and decisions of other countries, allowing Australian companies to combat a wider range of subsidies. All of this, I might say, is consistent with the World Trade Organisation approach. It is consistent with the international trading system, which is an important system that has brought down tariffs across the world in the postwar period. People often get very frustrated about the levels of protection elsewhere, but we do find that, over time, tariffs have reduced. Most importantly, we have not had a flight to protectionism during these times of great financial upheaval. That is one of the things that happened during the Great Depression, when the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act in the United States unleashed a wave of protection which stopped world trade. That caused job losses and overall economic decline, with a decline in incomes not just for workers but for pensioners and others. We want to make sure that that does not occur.

There have been many groups in society which have welcomed this legislation. Mr Willox, the Director of International and Government Relations at the Australian Industry Group, said on 5AA—no doubt on Mr Byner's program—that this is 'undeniably good news for Australian business'. The National Farmers Federation said it was:

… very important that industries like agriculture, that have legitimate claims against dumped exports, have the opportunity to seek a remedy for this through Australia's anti-dumping system, ensuring unfair trading practices can be challenged.

As I said before, many of my constituents, and I think Australians generally, understand that we are an exporting nation, that we must necessarily be a free-trading nation. But they want fair rules, not a return to protectionism—not favours but fairness. That is an important principle, not just in this legislation but in all legislation.

This bill, like so many others, is about providing fairness and security in a troubled world, after a decade of indifference by the previous government. It was a decade of saying, 'She'll be right!' no matter where you look—at the fact that we did not have guaranteed bank deposits, at the fact that we were profoundly unprepared for the onset of equine influenza and at the fact that we did not save enough money out of the first mining boom when some $300 billion extra went into government coffers. For all the chest beating by the opposition about how much they saved during that period and about their wonderful surpluses, we as a nation did not save enough.

We now know, given what has happened to the rest of the world, that we live in an uncertain and insecure world. It is world which has great challenges that require international cooperation, but they also require this parliament and the Australian people to have honest discussions about how we prepare ourselves, how we insulate ourselves and how we provide ourselves with security in this uncertain world. And I tell you this: it will not come from protectionism. It will not come from a
'fortress Australia' mentality or from the idea that we can somehow stand apart from the challenges in the financial world or in climate change or in international economic cooperation. We cannot simply put up the shutters and pretend the rest of the world does not exist. We know these are challenging times. We must participate and we must take sensible measures to secure ourselves. This anti-dumping legislation is exactly that sort of measure and I commend it to the House.

Mr GEORGANAS (Hindmarsh) (10:41): I too rise to support the Customs Amendment (Anti-dumping Improvements) Bill 2011. At the outset I would like to make a few observations to the House about concerns that are repeatedly expressed by members of the Hindmarsh community, the community in South Australia and the wider population. These concerns are genuine and stem from our rapidly changing global economy.

We have seen global capital shift from country to country and manufacturing shift from country to country and region to region. We have seen the changing profitability of domestic and local production, the questionable sustainability of old and long-held jobs in manufacturing and the divergence of what industry we have and what we consider normal and good. Ultimately, and especially in my electorate, we have seen many, many manufacturing jobs disappear. We had textile factories, other factories and manufacturing hubs that serviced the auto industry in South Australia, but I could now write a whole list of what has disappeared from my electorate over the last 20 years.

Our community has been concerned over many years, and rightly so, about what Australian industry is, what our industrial landscape should consist of and what jobs should be expected to remain open to successive generations. All of that is morphing. Whether these ideas and views are accurate or not, people often see change as a loss. Where there is a shift in the composition of a town's industry or the proportion of industry within any one sector, people too often view the shift as a net loss of opportunity for that area's population. But data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, for instance, may attest to change promoting opportunity, not enshrining its contraction. We may see the Australian industrial landscape morphing over time, with the proportions of certain industries lessening as new industries increase and grow, but generally we see the Australian population continuing in employment. We have one of the lowest unemployment figures ever, as our workforce is engaging in different sectors and doing different types of work compared with in the fifties, sixties and seventies. But these observations do not diminish the real fear of change that exists in our community or the insecurity that people may feel about our industries and our workforce. Each situation through which we travel holds some reference to our changing industrial landscape. We have all passed Coles or Woolworth and been reminded of our agricultural challenges and the ready availability of imported goods that we see on the shelves of our supermarkets. When we compare items as dissimilar as socks and solar panels, tea sets and televisions, we are reminded of just how much of what we consume is imported from overseas. Even driving along any road we are reminded of the apparent loss of the service stations that used to exist in our neighbourhoods. Small independent business people notionally have been driven to the wall by larger, better resourced corporations. So this is a debate that is taking place and a conversation that continually happens in my electorate about...
the old industries and the new industries. It is not about protectionism or being anti-trade; it is about having a sustainable way for these businesses to survive and grow and to give opportunities to people to start businesses.

We are engaged in trade with companies from overseas for very, very good reasons, including, principally, our own generation and maintenance of the wealth and high living standards that we have here in this country. But the penetration of so much overseas product into our daily lives—and, as I said, we see it every day on the shelves of our supermarkets—gives people cause for concern for the manufacturing sector that we still have in many parts of Australia.

The rules of international trade, always evolving, are derided by many, especially in terms of comparable tariff protection, but they continue to be observed by the Australian population. While some may say that there is no virtue in being more observant of the rules than our competitors, I would certainly welcome the ongoing application of the rules that exist, to which we as a nation subscribe in the protection of Australian jobs. The anticompetitive conduct of companies—for example, in the domestic market—of which people typically so vehemently disapprove, must also be prevented in the international trade markets. Predatory pricing, for example, the dumping of goods at below-cost prices to injure competitors, is prohibited in all its forms. Our law is meant to protect our companies from such conduct, and the maintenance of the effectiveness of our laws must remain a priority for all governments of Australia.

The bill before us has the precise purpose of maintaining the effectiveness of such a law. The bill addresses an accidental error of logic imposed by the courts in good faith. The area is as simple as it is clear, and it could be erroneously applied to many areas of government.

If we cannot prove collusion between oil companies with regard to keeping the price of petrol artificially high at any one time, should we scrap our anti-collision laws? Certainly not. If we cannot prove that predatory pricing is being perpetrated by the big supermarkets at any one time, should we scrap the laws that penalise it? If we have not imported pests or disease with foreign apples or pears for a time, should we discard our quarantine and inspection services? These are all legitimate questions. The purpose of Australian law is not only to stop a prescribed activity that has already commenced; it is also to prevent a prescribed activity, the threat of which hangs over us, waiting for an opportunity.

The law we address here today is that of the Customs Act 1901, which became the unwitting victim of our legal system. I would like to congratulate the Minister for Home Affairs. I commend him and applaud him for making these changes, because these are the first changes we have seen in this area for many, many years. Minister Brendan O'Connor explained in his second reading speech on the bill the unfortunate situation that arose from the judgment of the full Federal Court last year.

I would like to add to what the member for Wakefield said about this being highlighted on the Leon Byner show in South Australia on 5AA. I would like to congratulate Leon as well for raising this as an issue, informing people that this was a real issue and that we did need some changes made in this area. This issue became the subject of a typical conversation in South Australia, especially on his program. I congratulate Leon on bringing this to the attention of the public. In fact, he
interviewed the minister on a number of occasions on this issue.

We cannot have a situation in which a law devised for the proper implementation and enforcement of trade rules is undermined and, I should say, removed from potential application simply because there has been no unlawful activity in the recent past. We have the law not only to enforce proper behaviour when a party is tempted to cross the line but also to establish acceptable behaviour and to proclaim what is right and what will not be tolerated.

I would fully expect all members and senators to get behind the government on this matter—and I believe they will—to support the community in its concern for the maintenance of fair trade and anti-dumping rules within our jurisdiction and to support this government's bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr STEPHEN JONES (Throsby) (10:50): I rise to support the Customs Amendment (Anti-dumping Improvements) Bill 2011 and wish to make a few brief observations about its importance in the panoply of policy measures that are needed to assist local producers. I note that this bill is about dumping and anti-dumping and it is a broad issue that affects the agricultural and manufacturing sectors, but the observations I wish to make are in relation to manufacturing, an issue which is of deep concern to the residents of my electorate of Throsby.

It has been observed by previous speakers that, since European settlement, Australia has benefited from the fact that it is a trading nation. In each of the 200 years since white settlement, we have had and relied upon a net inflow of capital to develop our industries and to ensure that we have been able to build a modern economy. Equally, we have relied on the markets of Asia, America and Europe to sell our agricultural resources and manufactured goods. It is beyond belief that anyone could stand in this place and say that Australia as a whole does not benefit from the fact that we are a trading nation integrated into the markets of the world. So the debates that we must have as policymakers are not about whether or not we should be engaged in an open trade with the rest of the world but how indeed we design those markets to ensure that we foster a competitive, robust domestic manufacturing sector at the same time as reaping the benefits that we undoubtedly gain from our natural advantages in the area of resources and agriculture and in many other areas. have made a number of observations over the past two months in this place and elsewhere about the fact that manufacturing is doing it very tough in this country at the moment. Manufacturing is a sector which has employed over one million Australians for well over 50 years, and the circumstances which manufacturing has faced over the last two years are, in my view, the toughest circumstances that we have faced in well over 20 years. They are tougher indeed than the manufacturing sector faced during the global financial crisis.

They are tough because on the one hand we enjoy the benefits of the high prices that our commodities are able to command on international markets, particularly iron ore and coal, and they are no doubt reaping benefits for mining communities and those associated with mining communities. But for electorates such as mine on the other hand the high cost of iron ore and coal directly relates to high input costs for steelmakers and the manufacturing sector. The impact that is having on the Australian dollar is working an economic tsunami through the manufacturing sector such that our manufactured goods are finding it very difficult to compete with imported products
from China, India and other places around the world. Added to the very sluggish international demand for steel and other manufactured products we have a very difficult situation indeed.

We need a holistic approach to these issues; there is not one silver bullet. But I welcome the fact that the Minister for Home Affairs has taken this issue seriously and has taken the review that has been commissioned into dumping seriously and brought this bill before this parliament. It is not a silver bullet, but it will help to make a difference. It goes together with our proposals to provide more assistance for research and development to inject literally billions of dollars into innovation and to spend more money in the areas of skills and infrastructure to ensure that we provide our local businesses with a fighting chance in a very difficult world market.

I have a couple of observations about dumping in general and the legislation. The first thing I wish to say is that dumping goods in Australian markets at below cost or below normal price is not an exercise of efficient markets; it is anti-competitive behaviour. The provisions of this bill are aimed at ensuring that we stamp out anti-competitive behaviour. The sole objective of dumping is to ensure that the perpetrator does harm to their natural competitors, to drive them out of the market place so that they then have the capacity to command greater prices than they would otherwise be able to command in a more competitive marketplace. Dumping is not competitive behaviour and it is not evidence of an efficiently operating market; it is anti-competitive behaviour designed to drive out the competition, and therefore any responsible government is required to put in place responsible measures to stamp it out.

The second observation I would make is built upon the experience of a conversation I had on Monday with a manufacturer from my electorate, when he was in Canberra to talk to a number of ministers and departments about circumstances facing his business, Metal Manufacturers—MM Kembla—a copper pipe and a wire manufacturer based in Port Kembla in my electorate. They have had significant experience with the previous anti-dumping provisions in the legislation. In 1998 they had cause to bring action for anti-competitive dumping behaviour by a Korean merchant who was offering cheap copper tube at well below market price. This had the very real threat—if allowed to run its course—of making Metal Manufacturers lay off literally hundreds of workers because they were losing some of their traditional markets.

One of the observations that the CEO of that company made to me was that a problem with the existing system was it took too long. Their action was commenced in 1998 and they still did not have a remedy in place until 2001, and even when the remedy was put in place we saw the perpetrator flouting that remedy by continuing to offer their goods on the Australian market at well below the normal price for those goods. So timeliness is critical and having a credible remedy is critical. I think that the measures in this bill go some way to addressing those concerns—the concerns of Metal Manufacturers and other employers in my electorate—so I welcome them.

The other observation I would make about this—and why I say that there is no one silver bullet in this area and that we need a raft of measures to assist manufacturing—is that even with provisions such as this in place employers and manufacturers are going to be very reticent to take action because it puts at risk the markets and the relationships
that they have. Whilst the legislation is good, and it is an important part of an overall raft of measures to assist manufacturing, the implementation of these measures is going to be critical. I welcome the fact that in addition to the new measures within the bill the minister has succeeded in beefing up the resources that are available to the Australians Customs and Border Protection Service and others to ensure that we have a tough cop on the beat to assist manufacturers and others to enjoy the benefits of these new measures. I commend the bill to the House and once again thank the minister for taking the issue seriously.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR (Gorton—Minister for Privacy and Freedom of Information, Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Justice) (10:59): I thank the member who acknowledged the importance of the Customs Amendment (Anti-dumping Improvements) Bill 2011. This is an important bill realising reforms that were announced by the government in June this year. I would like to take a moment to thank those who contributed to the debate. Before I do, I present a replacement explanatory memorandum entitled Customs Amendment (Anti-dumping Improvements) Bill 2011.

As I was saying, this is an important bill and I do thank those who contributed to this debate. I thank the member for Throsby for his generous words and I also thank the members for Indi, Barker, Fadden, Hughes, Murray, Blair, Wakefield, Newcastle, Hindmarsh and Oxley for their contributions. The fact that the opposition has supported this bill is a good thing. In the typical generosity of spirit that the member for Indi is renowned for, she attacked the government but commended the bill. She, as you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, chairs an anti-dumping task force which does not seem to have much force or any meaningful tasks, but I do applaud the opposition for seeing sense and supporting this bill.

It is somewhat disappointing that these reforms were not undertaken some time ago, perhaps 10 years ago, but these reforms are important. We need to ensure that industry and workers in this country are afforded sufficient support. We as a government support trade. Trade has brought great wealth to this nation; we are a great exporter and, indeed, we are an importer. We support the World Trade Organisation rules but we also want to ensure that, when those rules are broken, we have the capacity to support our industry and workers in order to ensure that those rules are not broken again. We need to ensure that we have sufficient capacity to redress the material damage that occurs when people are in breach of WTO rules.

This bill realises some of the announcements that were made in June by me and the Minister for Trade. I would like to thank the Minister for Trade for his work on this matter as well. The package of reforms announced in June reflects the government's response to the Productivity Commission's report into Australia's anti-dumping regime. These reforms also respond to issues that Senator Xenophon identified in his proposed amendments to the anti-dumping system which he introduced into the Senate in March this year. This bill also takes into account issues that have been raised by stakeholders in relation to the operation of Australia's anti-dumping system that were not referred to in the Productivity Commission's report or, indeed, in Senator Xenophon's bill.

I would like to thank the industry representatives, some very significant companies—BlueScope, OneSteel, Orica and many others—and the Australian Industry Group. I would also like to thank the Australian Workers Union—Madam Deputy Speaker.
Speaker D’Ath, you know them well—the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union and the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union for their very positive contributions on these matters. We have seen representatives of workers and businesses put very positive suggestions to government and I do believe we have done everything we can to engage with them. This bill is an expression of some of the things we are seeking to do to make the anti-dumping regime in this country more effective, more robust and more capable of ensuring that we respond to breaches of WTO rules. An anti-dumping regime is very important to ensure confidence in trade. It is important so that we can ensure that those that are doing the wrong thing are indeed taken to task.

These amendments were also drafted in close consultation with the Office of International Law within the Attorney-General’s Department and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. I would like to thank them for their work along with, of course, my agency, the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service. They have done an outstanding job in order to ensure that they are consistent with Australia’s international obligations.

The government is committed, as I say, to a robust and effective anti-dumping system. This first tranche of reforms directly responds to concerns expressed by stakeholders about the accessibility and timeliness of the anti-dumping system. These amendments will further strengthen the anti-dumping system by enhancing decision making in relation to how material injury to an Australian industry is assessed. They will also enhance accessibility by ensuring that all interested parties with a stake in the anti-dumping system will have the opportunity to participate and be heard in the anti-dumping investigations.

The amendments in the bill also update the legislation to ensure that Australian companies can take action against the full range of subsidies provided by the relevant WTO agreements which specify the types of government subsidies that can be actioned by another country. Finally, in relation to the improved timeliness of the system, these amendments provide that the minister will exercise his or her decision-making powers within 30 days of receiving a report or recommendation on which to make a decision, thereby ensuring that the decision-making process is not unduly protracted. With those words I commend this bill to the House.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Mr BRENDAN O’CONNOR: by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Legislative Instruments Amendment (Sunsetting) Bill 2011

Report from Committee

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (11:07): On behalf of the Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs, I seek leave to make a statement on the Legislative Instruments Amendment (Sunsetting) Bill 2011, in discharge of the committee’s requirement to provide an advisory report on the bill and to present a copy of my statement.

Leave granted

Mr PERRETT: The committee has considered the content of this statement and unanimously endorses it.

On Thursday, 7 July 2011, the House of Representatives adopted the report of the
Selection Committee referring the Legislative Instruments Amendment (Sunsetting) Bill 2011, referred to as the sunsetting amendment bill, to the Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs for inquiry and report.

The sunsetting amendment bill proposes minor amendments to the Legislative Instrument Act 2003. That act sets out a comprehensive regime for the making, registration, publication of legislative instruments and provides for the gradual sunsetting of legislative instruments unless particular steps are taken to preserve them. The process is intended to keep legislative instruments up to date and in force only for as long as needed.

The amendments proposed in the sunsetting amendment bill are not extensive and, in the main, are intended to make the operation of the Legislative Instruments Act 2003 more accessible by adding subheadings, making terminology consistent, and more clearly outlining how the sunsetting period is to be calculated. Item 3 inserts a new subsection which clarifies the commencement date for any instrument's 10-year period before sunsetting. This will apply to retrospectively commencing legislative instruments.

This amendment will ensure that instruments made under the LIA sunset 10 years from the date they are registered, not the date they are in force. This will allow for retrospective instruments to operate for a full 10 years following registration, rather than sunsetting less than 10 years after they are registered, or potentially sunsetting prior to registration if the retrospective action is required longer than 10 years into the past.

The bill clarifies the original policy intent of the Legislative Instruments Act 2003 by ensuring that all legislative instruments made after 1 January 2005, regardless of retrospective action, are subject to periodic review and therefore subject to the same scrutiny as prospective instruments.

Following referral of the sunsetting amendment bill, the Social Policy and Legal Affairs Committee issued a media release advising of its inquiry and wrote to selected stakeholders requesting they provide a submission should they have any concerns regarding the proposed amendments.

No submissions were received and consequently the committee determined not to hold public hearings. The committee has not identified any issues regarding the sunsetting amendment bill and therefore recommends that it be passed by the House of Representatives without amendment.

CONDOLENCES
Wake, Mrs Nancy Grace Augusta, AC, GM

Report from Main Committee
Order of the day returned from Main Committee for further consideration; certified copy of the motion presented.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs D’Ath):
The question is that the motion be agreed to. As a mark of respect I ask all present to signify their approval by rising in their places.
Question agreed to, honourable members standing in their places.

BILLS
Indigenous Affairs Legislation Amendment Bill 2011

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

Mr ANDREWS (Menzies) (11:11): I rise to speak on the Indigenous Affairs Legislation Amendment Bill 2011. This bill contains three schedules. Schedule 1 and 2 of
this bill were originally included in Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and Other Legislation Amendment (Budget and Other Measures) Bill 2010. I note that these schedules were removed from the original bill by the government when concerns were raised by the coalition. In removing the schedules, the government agreed to debate the issues separately from other measures.

The first schedule would see the addition of further parcels of land in the Northern Territory to the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976. This will enable the land to be granted to Aboriginal Lands Trust. The intertidal zone surrounding the land and islands listed in the schedule includes significant recreational fishing grounds and their scheduling may have made these waters subject to the precedent created by the Blue Mud Bay case, namely resulting in restricted access to those waters. The government has resolved the issue by scheduling those parcels associated to the Borroloola land claim to the high-water mark instead of the low-water mark thus negating the impact of the Blue Mud Bay case. The Port Patterson islands are adjacent to the long-running Kenbi land claim and will become part of the Kenbi land grant. A negotiated deal between the government, the traditional owners and recreational fishing interests has been reached to maintain fishing access. The coalition has successfully negotiated with government to ensure ongoing access to the intertidal zones. The coalition therefore supports this schedule.

The second schedule would make changes to Indigenous land corporations to introduce new powers for the minister to make guidelines that for what such corporations must give regard to in discharging their functions, particularly with respect to native title settlements. This schedule was the subject of a parliamentary inquiry conducted by the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs committee, which reported on 9 February 2011. This bill makes a change to the previous bill in that it clarifies that the Indigenous Land Corporation has the discretion to decide whether to perform its functions in support of native title settlements. If the ILC does decide to perform its functions in support of native title settlements it must have regard to any guidelines in force at the time.

In July 2008 the Attorney-General indicated the Commonwealth would provide the states with financial assistance to settle outstanding native title claims. This support was not forthcoming. Instead, in August 2009 the Attorney-General promised the states that the government would propose alternative funding options. This bill provides such an option. Non-government senators recommended in the Senate committee report that a review into the operation and functions of the ILC be conducted to ensure that the ILC continued to meet its objectives. Those senators held that any changes to the land acquisition functions should only be proposed after such a review and not prior to it. he majority Senate committee report also recommended that the government release draft ministerial guidelines before proceeding with this measure. The government has not released any such guidelines. The coalition does not support the passage of this schedule and the coalition notes the government's circulated amendments which seek to omit this schedule.

Schedule 3 is a new measure and would see changes to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005 to remove the connection between the election of members to the Torres Strait Regional Authority and the Queensland local government elections and to provide powers for the minister to determine how the Torres Strait Regional
Authority is constituted rather than by notice in the Gazette as is the current practice. The Torres Strait Regional Authority has indicated its support for the provisions contained within the schedule. The coalition supports this schedule.

The Labor-Greens alliance have failed in the area of Indigenous affairs. They have failed to deliver and they have failed, unfortunately, to act. They have presided over waste and mismanagement in program after program. Those members of the Labor-Greens alliance should hang their heads in shame in relation to Indigenous affairs, because for all the talk and all the smoke and mirrors they have done little, from the so-called bipartisan commission that the former Prime Minister was to establish to the Indigenous housing programs to Indigenous health programs, such as their failure on dialysis. And let us not forget the way in which this government has bungled the Northern Territory intervention, failing to deliver the desired outcomes to Indigenous communities. Regrettably, the legacy this minister will leave in this area is one of hollow promises, one of inaction and, worst of all, one of failure and neglect.

**Ms O’NEILL** (Robertson) (11:16): I rise to speak in support of the Indigenous Affairs Legislation Amendment Bill 2011. There are few issues of greater national priority than those affecting the first Australians. This bill predominantly concerns the issue of Indigenous land rights and represents significant progress in the way in which native title is recognised and managed. Additionally, this bill transfers ownership of land near Borroloola and of the Port Patterson Islands to the relevant Aboriginal land trust. This specific provision of the amendment bill concerns a native title claim made under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act.

As the member for Robertson, I understand that native title issues are very significant in the Northern Territory. In a way they are not quite as dominant in the landscape of the seat of Robertson. Despite this the Central Coast, including my electorate, has a proud Indigenous heritage which I always feel very proud to represent here in this place. Indeed, this heritage is demonstrated with the proud culture of the Darkinjung and Guringai people from my area, who I have the privilege of being in contact with in my role here as a member of parliament. Whilst the Darkinjung land council operates under New South Wales legislation, it is an immensely significant organisation in my electorate which effectively represents the interests of the Darkinjung people. There are large numbers of significant leaders in the Aboriginal community right across the Central Coast doing wonderful work for our community.

The welfare of the first Australians is something that affects all Australians. Whilst the issues in this bill may largely be geographically confined, the welfare of Indigenous Australians and the cultural heritage of our nation are issues that affect us all. Indeed, whilst the Darkinjung and Guringai people are separate nations of Indigenous people, the large geographical distance from the Northern Territory does not prevent a shared cultural heritage or mean there is a lack of interest from afar.

Since the Mabo and Wik decisions of 1990, native title has achieved a long overdue significant place in Australian property law. I understand and respect the role of native title in legally respecting and recognising traditional land ownership. Indeed, it is through native title and the Native Title Act that we as a parliament recognise that Australia was not terra nullius, or a land that belonged to nobody, before 1788. It is through this Native Title Act that
the custodial relationships that our first Australians have with the land, stretching back 20,000 years, can be recognised in legal form. As a member of parliament, I am proud that as a nation we have eventually been able to develop a just and mature approach to recognising native title and enabling it to be maintained within the boundaries of Australian property law.

This bill reflects the ideal that native title is best established and administered through settlements rather than through expensive litigation. Litigation will always have the disadvantage of being inherently adversarial, and in the context of native title it is prone to community division. Therefore, in my opinion, the promotion of native title through settlement is inherently culturally appropriate and beneficial in the maintenance of Aboriginal land rights. I believe that this bill will be very successful in advancing this practical and pragmatic objective.

A significant reform of this bill is enabling the minister for Indigenous affairs to make guidelines to which the Indigenous Land Corporation must have regard before deciding to perform its functions in support of a native title settlement. This will assist in providing guidance to the Indigenous Land Corporation, enabling it to be more effective in the manner in which it carries out its functions. As the minister stated in her second reading speech, the Indigenous Land Corporation was established shortly after the Native Title Act came into being in 1993. The establishment of the Indigenous Land Corporation was recognition that not all native title claims would be successful and that alternative means of recognising Indigenous land ownership were needed. The Indigenous Land Corporation plays important roles in assisting Indigenous communities to acquire and maintain land. The ILC acquires land and grants it to Indigenous corporations for the purpose of achieving economic, social and cultural benefits. To acquire land grants by this method, Indigenous communities need to demonstrate a commitment and a capacity to sustainably manage the property. They also have to show a capacity and a commitment to the achievement of continuing benefits, particularly in the areas of training and employment. The ILC also plays a vital range of roles in assisting Indigenous communities to manage land through land management projects. These projects have the goal of ensuring that Indigenous land ownership leads to very practical and tangible economic, social and cultural gains.

Such achievements require a huge effort, and there will always be challenges. However, as a member of parliament, I am proud to support this government, which is persevering in our aim to improve the living standards of our first Australians. Matters affecting the first Australians should never again be out of sight or out of mind, which for far too long they were. This bill reflects recognition by the government that the Indigenous Land Corporation is useful in assisting with resolution of native title disputes. It will provide the minister with the ability to make guidelines concerning matters to which the ILC must have regard and improve its functions in support of settlement. Proposed section 191F(2A) will require the ILC to have regard to these guidelines when making any decisions to perform its functions in relation to a native title settlement.

The third component of this bill is the reforms to the elections and composition of the Torres Strait Regional Authority. It is vital to recognise the distinct difference between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and the importance of being aware of these differences is embedded in the amendment. Again, the
issues that affect Torres Strait Islanders affect all Australians. This is because of the need to sustain our treasured national cultural heritage, in which the Torres Strait Islander people play a significant role. Indeed, it was a Torres Strait Islander who took the step of successfully asserting land rights in the High Court. Regardless of differing opinions concerning native title, it can never be denied that Eddie Mabo’s successful High Court challenge forever changed and improved the manner in which we view Indigenous land ownership.

This bill seeks to confer greater authority to the Torres Strait Regional Authority by firstly by removing the connection between elections to the Torres Strait Regional Authority and Queensland local government. This reform is required because section 142Y of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005 requires that elections to the Torres Strait Regional Authority occur every three years. However, since 2009 Queensland local government elections have been occurring every four years. Additionally, amendments to section 142S of the ATSI Act remove a connection between the TSRA and Queensland local government. This provides the minister with the freedom to determine how the TSRA is constituted. Importantly, this reform will reduce the potential for conflicts of interest between the roles of people elected to both the TSRA and the Queensland local government councils. This will further ensure that the TSRA provides good governance for the Torres Strait Islands.

It is within the national interest that the proud people of the Torres Strait are provided with the means of effective self-governance. Indigenous affairs has been one of the most challenging issues affecting our nation and one we should all endeavour to address in the short, the medium and the long term. Indeed, throughout the last 20 years many significant events in our national history have occurred concerning the past treatment of Indigenous Australians. We had the Mabo and Wik decisions, in addition to the Native Title Act, establishing the legal basis for the traditional ownership of land. We had the groundbreaking Bringing them home report, released in 1997, exposing once and for all the terrible and shameful reality of the stolen generations. We had the apology that occurred a long 10 years after the report, and a recognition that, as a parliament and as a nation, we accept responsibility for actions which when we look back can only be described as reprehensible.

The road to improving the living standards of Indigenous communities and increasing educational outcomes is a long one. The Northern Territory intervention is perhaps one of the most contentious policies ever passed by an Australian parliament and enforced by Australian governments. I welcome the proposed replacements to the intervention when the Northern Territory Emergency Response ends in 2012. Like this legislation, those replacements will ensure that future policies in relation to Indigenous communities are developed and enforced in partnership with those communities.

As a parliament, we must never shy away from our obligation to fight to ensure that the next generation of Indigenous Australians has a better future than the previous generations. We must remain ever vigilant in moving towards closing the gap. It is by doing this that we can ensure we achieve justice that honours our first people and enhances our democracy. On that basis, I commend the bill to the House.

Mr HAASE (Durack) (11:26): I rise today to address the Indigenous Affairs Legislation Amendment Bill 2011. There are three schedules in this bill as it stands. I had
a firm understanding that schedule 2 was going to be dropped. Regardless of that, the point that I would like to discuss in some detail is the very sensible decision to give a little more land back to those Indigenous persons so it can be handed over to the Aboriginal Lands Trust. This has been a win-win situation, I believe, because what we want to maintain is that all Australians have the right to throw a fishing line in a tidal creek. Where there was some demand for control over lands down to the low water mark, that demand will now be eased by the knowledge that more land will be available to go into the Aboriginal Lands Trust.

We are broadly in support of this legislation, but the nature of it and the fact that we have been debating it here in the House today raises the whole issue of legislation and consequential funding that surrounds matters Indigenous in Australia today. Many of us on this side of the House have had a long association with Indigenous affairs, broadly representing more remote areas of Australia, and I believe that more and more today the community at large is asking about the veracity and the effectiveness of specific funding for Indigenous causes. Recent media has highlighted this concern and raises the questions: are we on the right track? Are we doing the best for Indigenous people with the taxpayer funds that are being spent on Indigenous people? Do we have the right strategies in place? Are those strategies based on the correct philosophy? Do we wish to give rebirth to Indigenous culture across this nation? Do we want to see the eventual repatriation of some 600 Indigenous languages?

We have a huge philosophical dilemma here. The purists would have us believe that we need to fund ad nauseam all manner of Indigenous causes to take the culture back to where it rightfully belongs. Others would argue that we do not need to focus on any more than the basic essentials of good education, health and housing conditions. We need, of course, to wrestle with the whole concept of regional and remote communities. That has also raised its head in debate, as to whether or not we have a legitimate right to make people captive in communities with welfare as opposed to providing real employment opportunities outside those communities.

That philosophical question has never been satisfactorily addressed in this place or, I might add, in any other major institution in Australia. The dilemma remains as to whether we should be supporting with welfare and other essential services those populations that choose to live in remote communities because they are their traditional lands, or whether we should be drawing people away from those communities to where they would have real-life opportunities, from the basics of good education through to job training, independent living and all that follows from being economically independent.

That is an issue that many people will glibly tell you is clear cut. They will tell you that Indigenous people have the right to live on their country and we as the taxpayers of Australia should support them with water, sewage, electricity, roads, education, health and housing. They will tell you that Indigenous people have every right to choose that lifestyle and that, given that there is no employment in those areas, they have the right to be dependent upon taxpayers through welfare.

But I put the question: are we doing the right thing in providing this financial crutch to thousands of people in remote Australia, almost making them captive in those locations by not underlining the alternative? We make no public statement about serious
mutual obligation. We do little to reinforce our philosophy that mutual obligation is important, especially under the Australian welfare system.

There are numerous programs talked about today under the broad headings of income management and welfare quarantining. The basic idea is that, in some cases, welfare payments are not being managed to the advantage of families at large and that we ought to influence the way in which those funds are spent—we ought to, for instance, prevent welfare being spent on alcohol, tobacco and other drugs and insist that a high proportion go towards housing, clothing and food. I find it quite unbelievable that many spokespeople in this country would take umbrage at that sort of guidance, assistance and management.

We have all seen far too often the results of the total lack of management of welfare income for Indigenous groups and others in remote communities. When the report Little children are sacred was handed down, it revealed the addiction to substances, domestic violence and child abuse in so many Indigenous communities across this nation that Minister Mal Brough and the Howard government at the time instigated inquiries, medical checks and quarantining of welfare. That was applauded roundly by many, many people in those environments, who knew the state of affairs and the damage that was created. But there were sectors of the community—less well-informed, in my opinion—that were very critical of those new measures imposed to assist in the education and general wellbeing of community people.

And that argument goes on. I believe that it is an important argument, but it is no good just arguing about it; we need to come to a resolution and come to a point where legislation is proposed that we can boldly say is to the advantage of Indigenous people. We need to be able to boldly say that the expenditure in such legislation on Indigenous programs would be to the good of Indigenous people as opposed to the good of individual Indigenous people who—and it would seem that this happens too often—misappropriate the funds for particular programs.

Before anyone accuses me of overgeneralising, I know full well that the Indigenous population is represented by numerous professional, capable people who are committed to their families, hold solid jobs and do the right thing as Australians. Sadly, there are also far too many examples of Indigenous leaders with access to funds for particular programs who do not have the skill or the experience, or perhaps the will, to acquit funds in the appropriate manner. The media love to inform Australians about the failed programs. That can cast a general slur across the many programs that are greatly beneficial. Personally believe that much more stuff of a very serious nature needs to be done to look at the whole question of advancement of Indigenous peoples. The whole question exists as to whether the government’s funding focus should be on promoting wellbeing, life expectancy, education, financial independence et cetera or should be on assisting in the rebirth or redevelopment of Indigenous culture for all its complexity. I said at the beginning of my contribution that in the past we had some 600 languages across Australia. If we are to seriously contemplate what we are going to do to give pride and perhaps motivation to each of those original groups, I think we might agree that that would be a mammoth task that would take a lot of time and a lot of money and we may lose the plot in the meantime.

So, as I said, I believe we need to look at health, education and longevity. We need to apply tough love. We need to develop
policies that will see Indigenous people realise that mutual obligation is vitally important and that welfare is not the answer. Noel Pearson for decades has been saying just that. Jackie Dann from Derby in the late 1980s wrote a paper on the welfare paddock, condemning its influence on his people.

Indigenous people, broadly speaking, need a better crack at life, and I think that will come with better education. Better education will only come if there is motivation to attend school on a regular basis. Schooling ought not be accidental. Schooling ought to be as important for Indigenous people living in communities as it is for the average Joe Blow and their kids living in suburbia. It is certainly not at this stage. If anyone believes there is an expectation amongst Indigenous families living in remote communities that their children will regularly attend school, get a primary school education, do well in secondary education, get job training and have a job for life, then those people need to think again. That is not a general expectation. Until such time as education is seen as a vital link to life for Indigenous people then education will be neglected and those individuals subsequently will not have the crack at life that mainstream Australians do.

We as a parliament need to get serious in looking at a better way. We need to realise once and for all that the money that has been spent has not been spent wisely. The programs that have been devised by Canberra bureaucrats in the main—ticking boxes and handing out ticked reports to other people who tick other boxes—are not solutions. For decades it has been recognised by people who know that that is not a solution. We have not seriously bitten the bullet and had a debate for the good of Indigenous people. We have had a debate about what is good for the longevity of governments, but not about what is good for Indigenous people. Some tough love needs to be applied. Some greater understanding of the Australian population at large needs to be acquired. We need to do a better job for the sake of Indigenous people into the future.

(Time expired)

Mr NEUMANN (Blair) (11:41): I support the Indigenous Affairs Legislation Amendment Bill 2011 and the government amendments. This bill has three purposes. I want to use this opportunity to speak about Indigenous Affairs generally and also refer to what is happening in my electorate and commend certain people for their wonderful work. I recognise the commitment of the member for Durack. He and I disagree on a lot of things in politics, but I believe he is absolutely genuine in his commitment to improve the lot of our Indigenous peoples, not just in his area in Western Australia but across the country. I want to thank him personally for the great cooperation he gave during the Doing time report we undertook. I look forward to working with him on the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs in its inquiry into languages in Indigenous communities. We will be looking at not just the effectiveness and efficiency of English language teaching in Indigenous communities but the loss of Indigenous languages across the country. We can identify about 250 Indigenous languages, but only 20 or 30 are viable. You cannot divorce one thing from another—you cannot divorce employment, health, language and land rights. All of it is linked to what has happened with our Indigenous peoples across the country.

I will go off on a tangent. A number of great speeches have been made by both Labor and Liberal Prime Ministers in this country over the years. I think of former Labor Prime Minister John Curtin’s speech turning to America at the height of World
War II, Liberal Prime Minister Robert Menzies's forgotten people speech and his speech in opposition rallying conservative forces to retake government in 1949. I think also of the speeches of two great Labor Prime Ministers on indigenous affairs. Former Labor Prime Minister Paul Keating's Redfern speech in my view was the greatest speech he ever made. He talked about dispossession and what we need to do about native title and helping our Indigenous brothers and sisters. Former Labor Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's sorry speech in this place I think is the greatest speech he has ever made as well. It is interesting that a number of these speeches from these greats of Australian political life, if I can use that term, have dealt with Indigenous issues, because that taps into our hearts and into Australia's psyche. What we are doing here is making a difference. Some of it is a bit pedantic, but some of it is listening to what Indigenous people want to say and have to say about their land rights and what they want and responding to that. The first aspect of this particular legislation deals with land rights, as I mentioned. I think land rights are crucial and linked in to the Closing the Gap policies, which I understand to be bipartisan. We have a lot of terminology in relation to these things—such as Closing the Gap, national partnership agreements and building blocks—with which we want to make sure that Indigenous people have a better say and a better go. We want to close the gap in longevity of life, to lift employment outcomes and to improve school attendance and completion of school rates.

I want to briefly address some of the things in this bill. One of the purposes of this bill is to amend the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976, known as the Land Rights Act, to insert Borroloola and Port Patterson Islands into schedule 1. Again, there has been consultation in relation to this, making sure that this is important to land rights in the Northern Territory, it is important in relation to Aboriginal land trusts and it is an amendment which will make a difference to Indigenous people.

The second aspect of these amendments will withdraw the Indigenous Land Corporation measure from the original bill. The measure was going to introduce a power to the minister to make guidelines that the Indigenous Land Corporation must have regard to in deciding whether to perform its functions in support of a native title settlement and, if it decided to perform its function in support of a native title settlement, in performing its function in support of that settlement. The measure is being withdrawn from the bill pending further consultation on proposed guidelines. With the withdrawal of this measure, consultations can take place without any further delay to the remaining measures in this bill.

The other measures are scheduling, as I said before, in relation to Aboriginal land and amendments in relation to the election of Torres Strait islander regional authority members. We also have a problem in Queensland in relation to local government elections, which happen to be falling in March 2012, as well as the situation with respect to the Queensland election, which is also due in March 2012. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005 currently provides for elections for the TSRA being held every three years.

The timing of those elections, of course, are linked into local government elections. We have a problem in that regard, so we are removing the connectivity between the two sets of elections, which will reduce the potential for conflicts of interests between the roles of people elected to the TSRA and the Queensland local government councils.
One of the aspects of that is that a lot of Indigenous leaders perform roles in both. It is important that people understand the role of their respective members and that they have an opportunity to actually have a say in which particular people are elected to which different roles so that there is no confusion in the public's mind.

This week, in recognising a number of important people in this country, we recognised the contribution of people like Nancy Wake. I want to pay tribute to the loss of a great friend of Indigenous Australians, the Hon. Clyde Holding, the former Aboriginal affairs minister under the Hawke government. I mentioned before a number of great prime ministers, prime ministers who said things about Indigenous affairs and wanted to lift up the role of Indigenous people in this country. They wanted to say it like it is. They did not want to worry about black armband views of history but about actually telling it like it is and making the point that we need to turn the page. There is a degree of recognition, of repentance, required, but there is a commitment that I believe this federal Labor government has to closing the gap.

Clyde Holding believed that. He believed that all his political life. In the roughhouse of Victorian politics, with all the machinations that went on, he retained his ideals of lifting up the poor, the weak, the oppressed and people from all walks of life, regardless of their colour, race or creed. He was all about helping those in disadvantage. Mabo was a wonderful outcome for this country, and it took a federal Labor government, against the opposition of the forces of conservatism, to legislate in relation to those issues.

Sadly, when those opposite sit on this side of the House, they always seem to want to take away from the rights of Aboriginal people. They say one thing, as the shadow minister said— criticising us when in opposition—but when they are on this side of the House they never seem to have the political will or commitment, the money or the determination, to carry these things out. Clyde Holding believed we needed to do it, and in his conduct of the affairs in Aboriginal jurisdictions he made that commitment and he fought for it all of his life. Of the Mabo judgment he said it provided our nation with a matchless opportunity to:

… redress Australia's oldest and most continuous social wrong and to recognise the depth, nature and spiritual attachment of Aboriginal people to this land.

Once again, a social reform is brought forward by this federal Labor government which makes a difference in terms of Aboriginal land rights and Aboriginal land in this country, and I commend the legislation to the House.

Ms MACKLIN (Jagajaga—Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs) (11:50): This bill contains some non-budget measures relating to Indigenous affairs. Firstly, the bill continues the government's important program under Aboriginal land rights legislation for the Northern Territory by adding parcels of land near Borroloola and the Port Patterson Islands to schedule 1 to the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976. The scheduling of these parcels of land will help to resolve two long-running and very complex land claims.

The parcels of land near Borroloola are associated with the Borroloola land claim, which was the first land claim made under the land rights act. Once these parcels of land are granted, the Borroloola land claim will be resolved. The Port Patterson Islands relate to the Kenbi land claim over the Cox Peninsula near Darwin. The scheduling of the Port Patterson Islands will enable this
land to be added to a grant associated with the Kenbi land claim to be considered later this year in accordance with the heads of the agreement between the Australian and Northern Territory governments and the Northern Land Council, which was announced by the Prime Minister on 29 June 2011. The bill also amends the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005 in relation to the Torres Strait Regional Authority established under that act. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act provides for election of members to the Torres Strait Regional Authority. Presently, there is a connection between the election of members to the Torres Strait Regional Authority and the timing of Queensland local government elections. This bill removes that connection so that elections to the authority are conducted solely in accordance with the provisions of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act. Removing the connection between the two sets of elections will also reduce the potential for conflicts of interest between the roles of people elected to both the authority and the Queensland local government councils. The bill also amends the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act to allow for a wider range of options for the composition of the authority following that review.

The bill as introduced includes amendments to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act in relation to the Indigenous Land Corporation established under that act. The amendments were intended to allow ministerial guidelines to be made which the Indigenous Land Corporation must have regard to in deciding whether to perform its functions in support of a native title settlement, in performing its functions in support of that settlement. However, amendments will be moved to withdraw that measure from the bill pending further consultation on the proposed guidelines. With the withdrawal of the measure, consultations can continue without delaying the remaining measures in the bill. As I mentioned, the other measures are scheduling further Aboriginal land and amendments in connection with the election of members to the Torres Strait Regional Authority. These will now be able to progress with a view to passage as soon as possible.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Bill—by leave—taken as a whole.

Ms MACKLIN (Jagajaga—Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs) (11:55): I present a supplementary explanatory memorandum to the Indigenous Affairs Legislation Amendment Bill 2011. I ask leave of the House to move government amendments (1) to (3) together.

Leave granted.

Ms MACKLIN: I move government amendments (1) to (3):

(1) Title, page 1 (lines 2 and 3), omit “, the Indigenous Land Corporation”.

(2) Clause 2, page 2 (table item 2), omit “Schedules 1 and 2”, substitute “Schedule 1”.

(3) Schedule 2, page 5 (line 1) to page 6 (line 2), omit the Schedule.

These amendments will withdraw the Indigenous Land Corporation measure from the bill. The measure was going to introduce a power for the minister to make guidelines that the Indigenous Land Corporation must have regard to in deciding whether to perform its functions in support of a native title settlement and, if it decides to perform its functions in support of a native
title settlement and, if it decides to perform its functions in support of a native title settlement, in performing its functions in support of that settlement. The measure is being withdrawn from the bill pending further consultation on the proposed guidelines. With the withdrawal of the measure, consultations can continue without delaying the remaining measures of the bill. The other measures, as indicated earlier, are scheduling further Aboriginal land and amendments in connection with the election of members to the Torres Strait Regional Authority. These will now be able to progress with a view to passage as soon as possible.

Question agreed to.
Bill, as amended, agreed to.

Third Reading

Ms MACKLIN: by leave—I move:
That this bill be now read a third time.
Question agreed to.
Bill read a third time.

COMMITTEES

Cyber-Safety Committee

Report

Mr HAWKE (Mitchell) (11:57): On behalf of the Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety, I present the committee's report entitled Review of the Cybercrime Legislation Amendment Bill 2011 incorporating additional comments.

In accordance with standing order 39(f), the report was made a parliamentary paper.

Mr HAWKE: by leave—As Deputy Chair of the Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety, I have presented the report of the review of the Cybercrime Legislation Amendment Bill 2011, referred to us by the House Selection Committee. Senator Bilyk, the chair of the committee, will be tabling the report in the Senate today.

The Cybercrime Legislation Amendment Bill deals with the law enforcement powers to tackle cybercrime, a subject that has increasingly occupied the attention of all Australian governments and this parliament. The globalisation of communication technology has brought many benefits, but it has also enabled transnational crime to flourish. Hacking, the spread of malware, denial of service attacks on private corporations and the institutions of government is the modern face of cybercrime. Large-scale online fraud can net organised crime vast profits. We are no longer dealing with just nuisance hackers but with organised syndicates of crime.

This bill will amend the Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act, the Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Act and the Criminal Code Act 1995 to enable Australia to accede to the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime. The convention and the bill are intended to enable law enforcement agencies to keep up with criminal networks that attack computers and computer systems or use the internet to facilitate their criminal enterprise.

Before speaking about the report, I will briefly outline what the bill does and correct some of the misinformation that has been circulating in recent days. There are four main aspects to the bill. First, it will introduce a new mechanism for the preservation of communications to prevent the destruction of potential evidence until a warrant for access is obtained. This new preservation mechanism will be available to law enforcement agencies and to ASIO, he purpose of a preservation notice is to ensure that potential evidence is not destroyed. Access to that material is by a stored communications warrant, which is already available under the Telecommunications Interception and Access Act.
Second, the bill also requires the AFP to preserve communications data on behalf of a foreign country when requested to do so. But, again, there is no access to this material without a warrant and the AFP can only apply for the warrant once the Attorney-General has agreed to a formal request for mutual assistance from the foreign country.

Thirdly, the bill allows the AFP to share telecommunications data—that is, non-content data—with a foreign country without the need for a formal mutual assistance request. This may occur only where that data has already been obtained for a domestic investigation. It is intended to speed up international cooperation where perpetrators may also be operating overseas.

Fourthly, the Ombudsman will have oversight of the preservation regime and stored communications warrants obtained for a foreign country. The Inspector-General of Security and Intelligence will have oversight of ASIO's use of the preservation regime for intelligence purposes.

I want to make it clear also that neither the convention nor the bill seek to implement a general data retention scheme. It does not, as has been claimed by various online news information services this week, open the door to mass surveillance of internet usage. That is very important from the committee's perspective. The powers available under the bill—and, indeed, the powers that already exist under the Telecommunication Interception and Access Act—can only be activated where there are legitimate law enforcement requirements or, in the case of ASIO, legitimate security purposes. No country can demand the communications or the traffic data be transferred to them.

Turning to the inquiry, the committee received 23 submissions and heard from several witness on Monday 1 August. We also carried out an inspection of the Australian Federal Police high-tech crime operations facilities in Barton. We have been conscious of the sensitivity that goes with any expansion of covert police powers, and especially powers that involve access to private communications of Australian citizens. We are mindful of the importance of subjecting these powers to proper standards and safeguards, and the scrutiny applied by the committee's inquiries addressed many of the concerns that have been in the public domain. It is with this in mind that we have proposed a range of realistic, modest and practical changes, which are tabled in this report. If adopted, we believe these changes will go a long way toward allaying any fears of unwarranted intrusions into privacy or unjustified sharing of data with foreign countries.

The time for presentation of this report is short, so I will forgo a detailed explanation of each of our 10 recommendations, but the fact that we have made a series of detailed recommendations in relation to such an important piece of legislation should be a signal that we are taking our role seriously in terms of the serious nature of this legislation. The general approach of the committee was to ensure that thresholds that apply to domestic investigation are applied equally to foreign countries seeking access to communications material of Australians. We have proposed that the Australian Federal Police guidelines on police-to-police cooperation in possible death penalty scenarios be tightened and should only occur in exceptional circumstances, and with the consent of the relevant ministers—the Attorney-General and the Minister for Home Affairs. This means that telecommunications data—traffic data—cannot be shared, even at an early investigative stage, in possible death penalty scenarios without both of the ministers' consent.
We also propose that police should be required to consider the range of factors set out in the Mutual Assistance Act before sharing telecommunication data obtained during a domestic investigation with foreign counterparts. This would strengthen protection against data sharing in relation to, for example, a political offence, which, of course, has been a concern with Australia signing this international convention. The committee considered that the general privacy safeguard in proposed section 180F would be elaborated in more detail to provide greater guidance to the Australian Federal Police. That guidance is already in the explanatory memorandum, but putting it in the statute, I believe, will provide better visibility to police and the public.

Finally, the committee proposed that the government consider in more detail what privacy obligations might apply to carriers and carriage service providers. Of course, the Privacy Act already applies, but better visibility and clarity can be achieved if there are clear obligations to destroy material held by a carrier. Law enforcement agencies already have an obligation to destroy this material when it is no longer relevant to an investigation. The report recommends that this obligation be replicated for industry unless there are practical, legitimate business purposes for keeping the information, such as billing. But in relation to information gathering by industry, the report recommends that there will be a requirement for this information to be destroyed. The intention of the committee is to improve public confidence in the scheme, and we are sure that public confidence is equally important to the industry. I commend the report to the House.

**BILLS**

**Industrial Chemicals (Notification and Assessment) Amendment (Inventory) Bill 2011**

Report from Main Committee
Bill returned from Main Committee without amendment; certified copy of bill presented.
Ordered that this bill be considered immediately.
Bill agreed to.

Third Reading
Mr BRADBURY: by leave—I move:
That this bill be now read a third time.
Question agreed to.
Bill read a third time.

**Education Services for Overseas Students (Registration Charges) Amendment Bill 2011**

**Education Services for Overseas Students Amendment (Registration Charges Consequentials) Bill 2011**

Second Reading
Cognate debate.
Debate resumed on the motion:
That the bills be now read a second time.

Ms LEY (Farrer) (12:06): I am very pleased to speak today on the Education Services for Overseas Students (Registration Charges) Amendment Bill 2011 and the Education Services for Overseas Students Amendment (Registration Charges Consequentials) Bill 2011. I will say at the outset that the coalition supports these bills. The bills will create a new fee structure for higher education providers who wish to be registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students—CRICOS. The fees that they will be able to charge will more accurately reflect
the actual costs of supervision to these providers. The bills change the current fee-charging structure for the compulsory annual registration charge payable by all CRICOS registered providers. The new base fee, the compliance history fee, charge for student enrolment and charge per registered course is designed to cover the administrative costs of the registration process and reflect the size of any associated supervision, compliance or enforcement activity needed to ensure that only reputable providers are permitted to operate. These amendments have come about in part as a result of the Baird review into education services for overseas students, which was called for by the government in light of some significant concerns with the way some providers were offering substandard services, bringing down the overall quality of Australia's international student education sector. We need to ensure that as a country we offer world-class education services to both domestic and international students.

I am alarmed at the downturn in what is our third largest export. The international student market was worth $17.2 billion to Australia in 2008-09, making it one of the greatest exports of this country. Yet, the June 2011 monthly summary of international student enrolments shows a 6.8 per cent decline in year-to-date enrolments from June 2010 figures. Vocational education and training figures are especially disappointing, with enrolments and commencements at year-to-date June 2011 falling by 18.7 per cent and 4.1 per cent respectively from the same period in 2010. Certainly the high Australian dollar is acting as a deterrent for some overseas students; however, various changes to the visa requirements implemented by Minister Evans have played a major role.

From 1 January 2010, students had to demonstrate or declare evidence of access to $18,000 a year to cover their living expenses. This is an increase of $6,000 from the previous year. In addition, providers have informed me of the significant blowouts in the visa approval process and student concerns over the changes to the approved Migration Occupations in Demand List, which will prevent many current students from staying on in Australia to work in the industry for which they have trained.

Changes to the ESOS framework are necessary to ensure the sector can be better tailored to provide education of the highest level possible. We do need to ensure that the interests of overseas students are protected and that we promote Australia as an international education destination. Given the substantial decline in enrolment figures in the vocational education and training sector, the VET sector, in particular, we have a lot of work ahead of us.

Last week I was in Western Australia. I met with representatives from the TAFE sector and other registered training organisations. They see huge potential for this industry, with one provider indicating that he felt the sector could expand to be worth $25 billion by 2015. However, this would not have come about without significant changes to the existing visa framework.

We want a strong sustainable VET sector. We should acknowledge that the revenue stream from international students is a vital part of that. Providers of education have previously relied significantly on the public purse—and there are good reasons that that, to an extent, needs to continue—and there are community service obligations on our TAFE sector as well, but there is also a vibrant, innovative and really very exciting opportunity for services to international students that is not being taken up. I condemn the government for its lack of action in this area. We have to ensure that all
education providers offer a high standard of education, on a par with best practice. The coalition is committed to ensuring that we have sufficient safeguards in place for international students. We have in the past needed to propose amendments to education services legislation; however, in this instance, we do support the bills.

**Dr LEIGH** (Fraser) (12:11): The opportunity to study overseas is a unique one. I was fortunate myself to have the opportunity to study in the United States as an international postgraduate student. For me it was an invaluable experience. It was an experience in which I got to learn about new subjects and to look at my own country with the benefit of a little distance. It is so true, as they say of the United States and the United Kingdom: two countries separated only by a common language. One gets the same perspective as an Australian living in the United States. Cross-cultural relationships can have their advantages too, and my own international study experience gave me the life-changing opportunity to meet my wife, Gweneth.

It is important for Australia that we encourage international students to come to this nation to study. International students are a vital part of our universities, and increasingly they are becoming an integral part of Australia’s social and civic fabric. In my former career as an economics professor at the ANU, I had the privilege of guiding and supervising international students in their postgraduate studies, both masters students and PhD students. Working with and benefiting from the experience in the classroom of students born in countries other than our own is something that I have continued through an internship program in my parliamentary office today. Only recently, Ruth Tay, an ANU economics student on a scholarship from the Singaporean government, worked with me analysing mental health policy and immigration policy. Those experiences and Ruth’s background very much opened my eyes to new perspectives on the issue and new systems of government. I am sure Ruth will take back some of those ideas to her work in Singapore.

Teaching international postgraduate students, as an ANU economics professor, gave me the privilege of spending time with people from a wide range of backgrounds, cultures and perspectives. I learned a great deal from them, as I hope they did from me. Some examples were Cathy Gong, a Chinese student who completed her PhD in 2008 and has gone on to publish important work on education, intergenerational disadvantage and unemployment, working with NATSEM at the University of Canberra. Cathy and I, working with Xin Meng, have even published a paper looking at intergenerational mobility in China. Dinuk Jayasuriya, born in Sri Lanka, completed his PhD in 2010 and his first position was with the World Bank. He now works with the monitoring and evaluation operations for the bank’s private sector arm in the Pacific. His research looked into issues such as microcredit and behavioural economics. Daniel Suryadarma, an Indonesian PhD student who works on poverty and the economics of education, is now a research fellow at the Australian National University. Students such as these have given a great deal to their fellow students and to the institutions in which they study. I expect they will all, over the course of their careers, make substantial contributions to the developing countries in which they were born. The contribution that these students make informs the issues that we are grappling with in this place.

The Gillard government is committed to ensuring the long-term sustainability of the international education sector. We want to
protect Australia's reputation as a provider of world-class international education that continues to attract and retain overseas students. My electorate of Fraser has a particularly large community of international students. There are 4,280 international students at the Australian National University and 2,481 at the University of Canberra. On top of this, the electorate of Fraser boasts campuses of the Canberra Institute of Technology, the Australian Catholic University and UNSW @ ADFA. They all have international students. These students make a valuable contribution to local businesses, the local economy and academic research and provide a kaleidoscope of cultural variety that we in the Fraser electorate enjoy.

In recent times there has been a slowing of growth in the sector that is related to the strong Australian dollar, the Dutch disease that affects international education, as it affects tourism and manufacturing, and partly the downturn that has resulted from the global financial crisis. But the fast and decisive action that this government took during the global financial crisis and our recognition of the Dutch disease issues that can arise from a high Australian dollar have been important in ensuring that the impact on overseas education is as minimal as possible.

It is true—there is no getting away from it—that Australia is no longer as cheap an international education option as it once was, and that means that our higher education providers must compete on quality. Our sector is of high quality and we need to guarantee that it continues that way. We are placing higher fees and stricter requirements on new entrants into the international education market and are rewarding low-risk providers that have a proven track record of delivering world-class quality education for international students. This bill ensures that our international education sector maintains its high-quality reputation.

International education is overall an increasingly important part of the Australian economy. It is Australia's third-largest export and the number of international students studying here almost tripled in the seven years from 2003 to 2010. The sector is now worth tens of billions of dollars to the Australian economy. I have already mentioned the factors that have influenced the sector in recent years. There are a number of challenges today—the stronger Australian dollar, the global downturn and increased competition in the global education market—but we have seen international enrolments in the Australian higher education sector continue to show modest growth.

The government is very focused on strengthening the regulation and consumer protection framework for international education. The sector is really as diverse as the students in it. When we talk about the international education sector many people think of the private providers established to deliver training specific to the international market, but we sometimes forget that schools, TAFEs and public universities are also included in that sector. The range of education courses offered to international students includes everything from a year 12 certificate to a PhD. International students contribute enormously to the learning experience of local students in the classroom and outside the classroom. The diverse backgrounds that come into a lecture theatre make it such a rich experience in an interactive classroom environment.

Problems arise in the international student market when we start allowing high-risk providers into the market with little regulation or allow them to continue to operate when we know that they have a
history of not meeting their regulatory requirements. It is in no-one's interest in this sector to have a market dominated by high-risk providers. Students are not offered certainty about the ongoing existence of their provider. Parents are not offered certainty about the investment that they have made in their child's education. We all know that the decision to invest in a child's education is a stressful one for parents. How much more so when your child is studying in a foreign country? High-risk providers mean that teachers and support staff do not have certainty about their wages, entitlements or job security.

The Australian education sector gains an international reputation for being uncertain if we allow high-risk players. It gets the reputation of not being a sector where we can provide students with a high-quality degree. Australia as a whole loses out. We place at risk our diversity and multiculturalism if we allow high-risk providers. So it is important that we ensure the sector is of high quality and that the messages that get out through word of mouth about higher education in Australia are uniformly good ones. We do not want to make it too easy for risky entrants to set up, because that places every provider at risk. We are taking this important action to ensure that high-risk providers are faced with an additional requirement to enter the market. We do not want to promote and subsidise education providers if they are putting at risk the whole overseas student sector. In this process we want to recognise that we need innovation. We need to encourage providers to put in place new products and innovative products, but we want to distinguish between that and high-risk providers. We want to ensure that we have new diversity in the market—much as we have seen, say, from the University of Melbourne's shift to a different style of undergraduate teaching—but we also want to ensure that that innovation does not threaten the sustainability of the sector.

The Baird review into the ESOS legal framework recommended that the government take a risk management approach to the sector, and the government agreed. By linking the risk level to the fee structure, the Gillard government is adopting a model favoured by insurance companies all over the world: the greater the risk, the greater the fee. The fee paid by a provider will be based on four indicators of risk. The first part is a flat fee—a charge that all providers pay to cover the administrative costs. The second tier is a size fee that covers the costs of ongoing regulatory activity based on the size of the task. It is a combination of a charge per student enrolment and a charge per registered course for each provider. Third, there is a compliance history fee imposed in circumstances where the minister has in the past 12 months taken action against a provider under section 83 of the ESOS Act for breaching the act, the national code or a condition on the registration. Fourth, there is an entry to the market fee. Evidence suggests that providers with a shorter history of registration present a greater risk and therefore a greater regulatory and supervisory burden. New providers will be charged a fixed fee for each of the first three years of registration.

There have already been several measures adopted by the Gillard government to promote and enhance risk management in the international education sector. These include introducing review systems and periods, enabling conditions to be placed on a registration when the provider is first registered, and strengthening the ability to take compliance and enforcement action.

The Gillard government is interested in providing rewards and incentives for higher
education providers who demonstrate their ability to continue to provide high-quality, low-risk education opportunities for overseas students. Government-funded schools, TAFE colleges and public universities that accept international students will pay the lower fee structure in recognition of the lower risk that they present in this sector. These low-risk providers will pay the flat fee and the student enrolment component of the size fee. These low-risk providers will be exempt from the course component of the size fee as they are already subject to rigorous quality control processes through other government requirements for local students and courses.

Overall, there will be a reduction in the level of the annual registration charge paid by the sector as a whole. This is because the low-risk providers comprise a significant share of the market. The revised charging structure will result in a more sustainable international education sector through better protection of international students and an ongoing commitment to continual quality improvement. Providers representing a greater risk to the market, such as new entrants and those with a history of non-compliance, may pay more under the new arrangements. We make no apology for this. We want to create an international education system that provides incentives for providers to improve their performance and to continue to deliver great quality education.

The reforms that we are talking about today are a small part of a wider suite of reforms to the international education sector. This legislation addresses the annual registration charge component of risk management. It is the second package of reforms, and will be complemented by the third package later this year.

During my time as an academic, one of the first things I learned was that collaboration is essential to research. Sometimes the other experts in your field are from countries that are not your own. Sometimes the best person to assist you and guide you through your postgraduate studies is an expert on the other side of the world. Here in Australia we want to ensure that we are offering attractive options for international and domestic students—the best researchers, the best facilities, the best quality of outcome for any type of qualification.

I am enormously proud of the Australian higher education sector, and particularly those institutions in my electorate of Fraser, and I want to make sure all Australians feel that sense of pride. We want to make sure that the best people to guide others through their postgraduate research, to lecture the undergraduates or to offer hands-on vocational training are located here in Australia. We want there to be all the factors possible that make Australia the best option for students who are looking to study overseas. I commend the bills to the House.

Mr BALDWIN (Paterson) (12:26): I rise today to speak on the Education Services for Overseas Students (Registration Charges) Amendment Bill 2011 and the Education Services for Overseas Students Amendment (Registration Charges Consequentials) Bill 2011. These bills have come about through a process that was first considered by the Bradley review. A report into overseas education conducted by the Hon. Bruce Baird—and I have to say that it was a substantial report provided to the parliament—highlighted issues that need to be addressed. These bills, in part, go a way towards addressing those issues.

This legislation will create a new fee structure for higher education providers who want to be registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students, the CRICOS.
Registration of the CRICOS allows higher education providers to offer courses to overseas students. This would occur through amendments to the Education Services for Overseas Students (Registration Charges) Act 1997. The charges are a result of the review entitled *Stronger, simpler, smarter ESOS: supporting international students*, which has become known as the ESOS review.

A new fee structure would be introduced, including a base fee, a compliance history fee, a charge per student enrolment and a charge per registered course. It is designed to cover the administrative costs of the registration process and the supervision requirements associated with it.

This legislation is designed to help ensure that only reputable providers are allowed to offer education services to overseas students and it will provide funding for the regulatory activities. What I just said is the critical issue: it will help to ensure that only reputable providers are allowed to offer education services to overseas students. Currently in Australia we have a $17 billion economy that is based around overseas education. In fact, 430,416—or eight per cent of the visitors aged 15 and older who come to Australia—came for the purposes related to education. That was according to the March quarter edition of *International visitors in Australia*, published by Tourism Research Australia. It identified that this education group spent a total of 60 million nights in Australia, which is almost one-third of all international visitor nights. On average, each person spent $15,206 during their trip, and that number is growing. That is a massive contribution to our economy, to our retail and accommodation sectors. On top of that, with each overseas student comes families and friends who visit and spend time holidaying in Australia, in both city and regional areas. Overseas students are not limited to the major capital cities; a lot of regional and rural universities and registered training organisations are away from the cities. So the spread of the spend is significant throughout the whole footprint of Australia.

That same report showed that 24 per cent—almost one-quarter of international visitors to Australia—arrive to visit friends and family. To give you an idea, in one of the reports, the number of student visa applications granted in 2010-11, to 30 June 2011, by citizen by country, shows that at 19 per cent we had 54,541 granted applications to citizens of the People's Republic of China. Unfortunately that has diminished by 8.6 per cent. In India, our second-largest market, there were 29,826 approved visas, making up 11.6 per cent of the market. Again, that softened by 2.9 per cent.

What concerns me are countries like South Korea and Brazil, where we have seen a softening of some 19.5 per cent and 14.5 per cent. In Thailand we have seen a softening of 21 per cent. Some of the smaller countries have seen an increase—for example, 45.4 per cent in Nepal. We had just over 9,000 applications approved last year from the United States of America, and we saw a softening there of 4.9 per cent. Student visas were granted for 270,499 applications. That number is down 7.4 per cent on the previous year.

I know that certain aspects of this are in relation to the strengthening of the Australian dollar, but it concerns me, and it is highlighted in the report by Bruce Baird, that there are concerns raised in some sectors about the quality of the education that is being provided. In April and May 2009 and also in a newspaper article in April this year, there were concerns expressed about the safety and security of overseas students. In particular, in the *Australian* on 16 June 2009,
an article by Kumar Parakala from ACS highlighted the point that there needed to be greater safety for international students, particularly in Sydney and Melbourne where they had been singled out for robbery and violence. As one of the articles on 29 May 2009 in the Sydney Morning Herald by Arjun Ramachandran reported: 'There is a name for these racist attacks—curry bashing'. I remember well, as everyone in this House will, the outrage that occurred not only here in Australia but also particularly in India about Indian students being singled out for attack. And it is not just in Sydney and Melbourne. There was an article on 16 May 2009—so around the same time—by Dan Proudman in the Newcastle Herald that talked about Korean students, in my own area of the Hunter, attending Newcastle University having also been singled out for attack.

We need to put an end to the situation where people looking at making an investment in Australia—and it is substantial investment—by attending university or higher education or vocational training, feel that they are not secure in this country and feel they are not getting value for money. This was clearly highlighted in the report by Bruce Baird. He said:

... I spoke to nearly 200 students and education providers from the tertiary, school and English-language sectors and other stakeholders at consultation forums. I also met with provider and student peak bodies, regulators, state and territory government officials, embassies, education industry bodies and Members of Parliament. The review received around 150 formal submissions and more than 300 people registered with the online discussion forum. I have also considered recommendations from the International Student Roundtable held in September 2009.

He also said in the report:

Concerns raised during consultations included reports of: false and misleading information provided by some education agents, poor quality education and training, gross over-enrolments, lack of appropriate education facilities, providers paying exorbitant commissions to education agents, limited financial scrutiny of providers, ineffective application and enforcement of regulation, low English language entry requirements, poor social inclusion of students in their institutions and the broader community, inadequate complaints and dispute handling services and some duplication between Commonwealth and states and territories leading to confusion and unnecessary regulatory burden.

These are the things that will directly affect the bottom line of Australia's ability to continue to attract students, particularly considering the extra strong push by US and European education facilities into the Chinese and Indian markets. We need to do what we can to protect those markets and we need to ensure that we deliver a quality education at an affordable price. As I said, the amount of money brought into our economy by this sector is $17 billion and it needs to be secured. Already we have seen a softening in the numbers. As I said, there has been a 7½ per cent decrease in the number of student visas granted. Hopefully the implementation of this legislation will see a strengthening in the process and we will weed out those that are more focused on the money than the educational outcomes for their students. It is critically important that we do that. As I have said, it is not just the education and the dollars; the spin-off effect is value-add to the tourism market. The economic benefit is not just while these people are here studying; it is when they go back to their country of origin and start to talk about the great experience they had in Australia. Indeed, they themselves may end up returning to Australia as tourism visitors. So it is critically important that we do not allow anything to stand in the way of the quality of education or indeed the safety and security for international students.
The report highlighted the number of education facilities that have failed. It said that 21 providers closed between January 2008 and September 2009, and only five of those were able to meet their obligations to reimburse students. So 16 facilities shut down and took the money, without any recourse for their students to recover their money. That does not do a great deal for Australia's reputation. In fact, it soils it quite badly and even affects those quality education providers that do everything they can to make sure that people are accommodated and get a quality education. They suffer the bad reputation that comes from charlatans like this in the industry who set up a get-rich-quick scheme and then shut down with little care and no responsibility.

The report that led to this legislation being brought forward is very long and detailed and unfortunately I do not have the time to cover in detail all of the aspects of it, other than to say that this industry needs absolute transparency in what it is doing so that those who are making this investment decision have a clear understanding of what will be desired. The ESOS Act is only one part of the equation. There needs to be greater cooperation between state and federal agencies to make sure that we can bring about the further benefits that were raised, such as opportunities for trade, increased tourism, diplomacy and government relations, productivity and social inclusion. These need to be addressed as broader issues.

Finally, the aim of this legislation is to ensure that only courses and providers registered with the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students may offer and provide courses to students on student visas and to ensure that international students in Australia receive the education and training for which they have paid—thereby protecting the reputation and integrity of Australia's education and training export industry and strengthening public confidence in the integrity of the student visa program. If these goals and ideals and the aims of the legislation are achieved, then we will move towards increasing the overseas student numbers in Australia and not see them softening as we have in the past year. I commend these bills to the House.

**Mrs ELLIOT** (Richmond—Parliamentary Secretary for Trade) (12:41): I am very pleased to be speaking on the Education Services for Overseas Students (Registration Charges) Amendment Bill 2011. It gives effect to the recommendations arising from the review of the Education Services for Overseas Students Act, the ESOS Act, conducted by the Hon. Bruce Baird and known as the Baird review. In accepting and implementing the recommendations from this review, the government has introduced a series of amendments to the ESOS Act, including the amendment bill before the House today.

The Baird review recommendations on the regulation of the international education sector include a stronger focus on risk management and improved use of resources. The amendments being discussed today will create a new fee structure to replace the current annual registration charges paid by all registered international education providers. Overall, there will be a reduction in the level of fees and charges paid by the sector as a whole. The changes to the registration charges will allow for fees paid by international education providers to be based on risk and will lead to improved regulatory activity. The risk based changes to the education charges will help ensure that resources are more effectively targeted right across the sector, placing greater scrutiny on those institutions that present the greatest risk. The change in registration charges is a key element of an overarching approach to
managing risk in the international education sector.

The Education Services for Overseas Students Act protects and enhances Australia's reputation for delivering quality education services and provides financial and tuition assistance to overseas students. On 9 March 2010, the then Minister for Education, the member for Lalor, Julia Gillard, released the final report of the Baird review, titled Stronger, simpler, smarter ESOS: supporting international students. The report sets out the issues facing the sector and makes a number of recommendations along two central themes. Central to theme 1 is ensuring students are better supported through improved information, management of education agents, stronger consumer protection mechanisms and enhanced support to study and live in Australia. Theme 2 seeks to improve regulation of Australia's international education sector and to find ways to make the ESOS Act stronger, simpler and smarter to ensure Australia maintains its reputation as a high-quality study destination.

Recommendation 3a of the Baird review suggests that ESOS regulators adopt a consistent, comprehensive risk management approach. The recommendation suggests that this approach be developed, in consultation with stakeholders and experts, to profile providers at entry to determine the level of scrutiny, evidence, tests and costs that should apply at registration. The changes to the registration charges in this bill are all part of this overall approach.

In light of the Baird review and changes in the international education sector since the annual registration charges were last amended, in 2003, including unprecedented growth in student enrolments, it was very timely to revisit the registration charges. Revenue raised through the registration charges contributes to many things, including maintaining and developing information to support administration and enforcement, ongoing registration, regulatory supervision, compliance and enforcement activities and also contributes to the Overseas Students Ombudsman's role in investigating complaints.

Together with the change, registration charges resources will be better targeted at higher risk providers to ensure a robust and comprehensive supervisory and compliance regime is implemented. The changed registration charges will reflect the number of courses offered by each provider as well as the overseas student cohort in order to more accurately recoup the costs involved in the monitoring and enforcement activities, relative to the size of individual providers. The revised registration charges will be risk focused and based on the following four components: the first tier, a flat fee per provider charge to cover the administrative cost of the registration process; the second tier, which is a size fee and will be comprised of a charge per student enrolment and a charge per registered course for each provider; the third tier, a compliance history fee, which is a flat fee imposed in circumstances where the minister has, in the past 12 months, taken action against a provider under section 83 of the ESOS Act—this fee would reflect the additional supervisory activity which would be involved in relation to these providers; and the fourth tier, which is an entry-to-the-market fee and is based on evidence which suggests that providers with a shorter history of registration present a greater risk and therefore the greater regulatory and supervisory burden applies.

On this basis new providers will be charged a fixed fee for each of the first three years of registration. Providers that are representing a lower risk, such as
government funded schools, TAFE colleges and public universities, will pay the flat fee and the student enrolment component of the size fee. These low-risk providers will be exempt from the course component of the size fee as they are already subject to rigorous quality control processes. As the amount of revenue to be cost recovered through the changed registration charges is expected to reduce from approximately $15 million in 2011 to less than $7 million in 2012, the vast majority of existing low-risk providers will experience considerable relief in this regard. The Australian Government Actuary has modelled the new fee schedule based on an assessment of the risk posed by education providers.

Australia has an international reputation for excellence in all areas of education and training. This reputation has been established and maintained by a strong regulatory regime put in place over many years to protect students and ensure the quality of our education and training courses.

In 2000, the Australian government introduced the ESOS Act. The ESOS Act ensures that, in order to enrol international students, institutions must first meet requirements for registration. All institutions which meet registration requirements are listed on the publicly available Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students, CRICOS. If an institution does not meet stringent standards for marketing activities, education delivery, facilities and student support services, it just is not registered. That means it cannot enrol international students.

The ESOS legislation provides consumer protection. This means students will receive the tuition for which they have paid and their fees are protected by law. Institutions must ensure that the marketing materials they provide to international students are accurate and not misleading. Before issuing proof of enrolment, the institution must first provide students with current and accurate information such as requirements for acceptance into the course; the course content, duration and the qualification that it leads to; the modes of study and assessment methods; the facilities, equipment and learning and library resources available; indicative course related fees, including advice on the potential for fees to change during the course; and relevant information in terms of living in Australia, including indicative costs of living and accommodation options.

Institutions must support international students in adjusting to study and life in Australia, achieving their learning goals and satisfying the learning outcomes of their course. This includes providing information on arrival about issues such as student support services available to help facilitate a smooth transition to life in Australia; legal services; emergency and health services; complaints and appeals processes; and any student visa conditions relating to course progress and/or attendance, as appropriate. Throughout a course, institutions must help students access study support services and welfare related services if they need them.

The Australian government acknowledges and values the contribution to Australian life of the international students who come from all over the world to study, live and work here. International students enrich Australian communities throughout the nation, whether they are in urban or regional areas. They bring much energy, diversity and enthusiasm and offer new ways of seeing things. What is really important is that international students expand Australia's global networks and link us to the world in so many ways. Their high-quality life experiences in Australia contribute to, and reinforce, our regional and global standing.
The Gillard government is committed to expanding the horizons of our educational institutions and their reach in overseas markets in which they can attract even more students to our shores. As part of this commitment, I was very pleased to announce a new brand for Australia's international education sector, Future Unlimited, on 6 June this year. Future Unlimited builds on Australia's new nation brand, Australia Unlimited, and is designed to refocus attention on the benefits of Australian educational qualifications and the doors they open for international students. The new brand, which is already reflected on the Australia government's website for international students, Study in Australia, which received over 3.3 million visits in 2010-11, will be incorporated into the activities undertaken by Austrade's global education network.

The growth of Australia's international education sector over the past 25 years has been a notable success. Australia is the preferred choice for international students from many countries and is the third most popular English-speaking study destination for these students. It is very important to remember, and a number of speakers have commented on this, that Australia's international education sector is our largest services export sector and our third-largest export overall. In fact, it contributed $18.3 billion to the Australian economy in 2020, so it is a very important part of our economy. In 2010 there were 617,000 enrolments recorded by students, representing more than 195 nationalities, at educational institutions in Australia. These are figures we can be proud of. And thousands more were studying Australian courses at offshore campuses established by Australian institutions. In addition to all this, the Australian government currently invests over $200 million each year in international scholarships which at any time are supporting around 5,000 international students, researchers and professionals studying in Australia and Australians undertaking study, research and professional development overseas. So we have a very strong commitment to this sector.

Australia's education sector is crucial to our economy and our global reputation and for our connection to the world economy at large. As students from overseas come to study in our institutions, they not only bring this very large investment in our country but develop very strong ties and relationships with Australia and our people that last long after they have ended their studies here. So our educational institutions provide one of the greatest networking opportunities imaginable with so many the future leaders around the world in different areas, whether in government, in business or in the not-for-profit sector. When many people who have studied in Australia return to their own countries, those wonderful networking ties continue and we can build upon them, increasing our global reputation as a result.

It is therefore vitally important that we protect our hard-earned reputation for the excellence and integrity of our institutions by ensuring that they continue to provide very high standards of education and training. We have a strong commitment to that because we understand the value for our international reputation of having such a strong regulatory regime in place. We know how important the investment return from international students is for our local economy, flowing through as well to so many sectors such as tourism, which has been mentioned by a number of speakers. So there are many benefits and we should all be very proud of the very good international reputation we have. The amendments in this legislation will build upon that. Australia, for all the reasons I have mentioned, is a very popular place for...
people to study because we have such high standards and excellence.

This bill will have many positive results, not just for the education providers but for all the students who will come here and, of course, for the Australian economy, which is vitally important. The bill will strengthen the governance arrangements and ensure that our nation continues to lead the world in the international education sector. We should be very proud of this fact. We will continue to recognise its importance and build on it. The Gillard government is very committed to providing high-quality educational resources, both domestically and for our international students, and to their continuous improvement. Australia's record in this area has developed over the decades and the sector has grown to the very large size it is today. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ALEXANDER (Bennelong) (12:55): I rise today to speak on the Education Services for Overseas Students (Registration Charges) Amendment Bill and the related bill. These bills seek to amend the ESOS charges act to create a new fee structure for higher education providers who apply for registration on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students, or CRICOS. Registration on CRICOS is necessary for providers to be able to offer recognised courses to overseas students. This is an area of particular interest to me due to the large population of overseas students enrolled in courses at Macquarie University in my electorate of Bennelong.

We on this side of the House will not be opposing these bills as we support the improvement in processes that arise from the Baird review. Yet this change today is reflective of the possible improvements that could be made if this government genuinely understood the nature of the problems in this important industry. The financial measures implemented by these bills need to be expanded.

The sharp increase in overseas student numbers over the past decade or two has seen a marked change to the leafy suburban areas surrounding Macquarie University. I am not sure of the correct collective noun, but, just like the industrious beaver, I will say that a 'lodge' of boarding houses has popped up throughout my local area, leading to the development of a community action group, MARS—Marsfield Against Residential Suffocation. These concerned residents are campaigning not against the students but against the lack of involvement by the higher education institution in providing for and, indeed, protecting the students. The lack of suitable and affordable accommodation has led to these illegal boarding houses, sometimes with up to 15 people crammed into a three-bedroom apartment. The impact this has on the infrastructure and the amenity of the area cannot be overstated.

Allegations have been made of students with poor English language skills being taken advantage of, sometimes financially and sometimes sexually, in return for accommodation. This is an issue that the higher education providers are not required to take responsibility for through a formal duty of care. As a result we have seen incidents at and around a multitude of Australian universities that have precipitated a massive fall in numbers.

Australia is one of the largest providers of education services for overseas students. Education is our nation's largest services export industry and currently our fourth largest export earner overall, following coal, iron ore and gold. I have talked of this in this place in the past and will repeat it to emphasise the importance of further changes in this field. In 2008-09, education
contributed more than $17 billion to our nation's export earnings and was linked to the employment of approximately 120,000 people. The total value-added generated by international higher education student studying in Australia contributes over $50,000 to our economy each year. Two-thirds of this amount is spent on goods and services, injecting vital income into the economy and generating more jobs. any overseas students will remain in Australia, contributing to our nation in a variety of economic and cultural ways. Others will return home and share their affection for their second home as a legitimate business, study or tourist destination. In short, government inaction, or poor policy action, can have massive repercussions for our nation's economic wellbeing, on each education provider's financial viability and on the costs of tertiary study for our own citizens, thereby impacting on the professional and intellectual capacity of our future generations.

Over the past few years we have observed a sharp decline in commencement numbers of international students. One of the great failings by our higher education providers, those bodies that will be registered under CRICOS through this legislation, is that they do not prioritise the package education experience for international students as we see in the United States, Canada and the UK. In these countries it is common for first-year students to receive accommodation on campus in order to assist their transition into a new country and culture. Our providers must compete with these countries and take a more proactive role and responsibility for the broader student experience. Accommodation in the first year should be a minimum requirement, a starting point from which to launch the rest of the package experience. This may occur in private accommodation close to the university, but it should at least be administered and monitored by the provider to ensure that the student and their experience are being protected. I understand that these matters operate alongside the specific matters raised in these bills, yet I cannot ignore the fact that we are willing to go down the path of amendment legislation to alter the fee structures for higher education providers to overseas students but not consider measures to save this important dwindling export industry.

Some of the issues I have raised relate to state and local government powers, yet, just as the federal government has the authority to amend the fee structures through these bills, it also has the ability to implement a duty of care, a standard of values that we expect our institutions to follow. The focus of our parliament must not be to promote unnecessary regulation and bureaucracy to hinder the performance of our great institutions, but the importance of this industry to our national economy is too great to rely solely on self-regulation. We have a responsibility to motivate our great schools of learning to be proactive in attracting the best young minds of the world, giving them the standard of support they deserve and assisting them to reach their full potential. The flow-on benefits to our country will be significant.

As mentioned earlier, we on this side of the House will not be opposing this bill. We support the improvements in the processes that arise from the Baird review, but, just as the Baird document is titled, we are craving a stronger, simpler and smarter system for the provision of education services to overseas students. As I mentioned in my maiden speech in this place, I will remain committed to this goal. For the important role this industry plays in our local economy, for the individual students being taken advantage of and for the residents in Marsfield being
suffocated by boarding houses, I hope that the resident of our other Lodge treats this issue with the seriousness it deserves.

**Mrs PRENTICE** (Ryan) (13:03): International students bring an enormous benefit to Australia. Economically, education is our third largest export, second only to coal and iron ore, and it is estimated that each international student studying in Australia generates $29,000 value added to our economy. Given international students' contribution to our economy, as well as the benefits they bring in diversity and culture, it is vital that legislation relating to this industry ensures its continued success.

The bills before us today have four main aims: to ensure that only courses and course providers registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students may offer and provide courses to overseas students; to ensure that international students in Australia receive the education and training for which they have paid; to protect the reputation and integrity of Australia's education and training export industry; and to strengthen public confidence in the integrity of the student visa program.

The bills today—administering compulsory registration fees for providers of courses for overseas students—have been introduced to provide for recommendations arising from a review of the Education Services for Overseas Students legislative framework, which was conducted by the Hon. Bruce Baird AM. This review was commissioned in 2009 after a series of violent events against international students, coupled with revelations of a few very questionable practices by some education providers which left the sector facing a crisis. This crisis has not yet been stemmed, with the *Australian* reporting in May last year that the sector saw a 40 per cent decrease in overseas student applications in one month alone. At the time, Stephen Connelley of the International Education Association of Australia cautioned that, should this decline continue, the sector could lose up to 35,000 jobs by the end of 2011.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* also reported in February this year that the number of international students choosing Australia for their degree course has fallen. Student visa applications from outside Australia decreased 32 per cent over the past six months of 2010 compared with 2009, where they had already fallen 22 per cent compared to the same period in 2008. This drop in international student levels can have serious effects, with Monash University—Australia's largest—announcing that it would lay off 300 staff to cover the budget shortfall caused by the reduction in international students at that institution.

Estimates by Access Economics also show the impact of a five per cent increase—or decrease—in international student activity. The effects of a five per cent decrease are significant, reducing the total value-added contribution by more than $600 million. As seen through the Monash example, however, the most telling effect of a decline in international students is its impact on employment rates, with a five per cent decrease resulting in an employment fall from 126,240 full-time equivalent workers to just 119,900—a loss of more than 6,000 FTE workers.

This is a serious issue. Education export from Australia is by no means a small industry: the benefits of international students are vast. International students contribute $12.3 billion, value added, based on student expenditure of $13.7 billion and visiting friends and family expenditure of $365.8 million. While students spend about 46 per cent of this—$6.4 billion—directly on their education, they also spend money on
other items such as food, accommodation and travel. Again, based on an average $14.3 billion, value added, it is estimated that for every $1 an international student spends on their education there is a flow-on effect of $1.91 economy wide, value added—nearly double. This in turn, of course, generates jobs for Australians.

Tourism Research Australia suggested that for every two formal students one friend or relative visited Australia throughout the duration of their studies. These travellers contribute an estimated $314.7 million to the economy, comprising $179.7 million in labour income and $135 million in gross operating surplus. Indeed, Brisbane City Council, through Brisbane Marketing, initiated a student ambassador program to try to maximise the effect and impact of visiting friends and relatives. These students now Twitter and Facebook their experience in Brisbane so that when their family and friends come to stay they do not immediately want to go anywhere else; they want to see what their family member has already experienced in Brisbane—Australia's new world city.

It is clear that international students contribute enormously to Australia as a whole, but the effects are also evident when broken down to a state-by-state level. In Queensland international students and their friends and visitors contribute approximately $1.7 billion, value added, to the state’s economy. Comparing this to the gross state product of $214 billion, international student flow-on effects account for 0.81 per cent of GSP. Of this, $1.2 billion is in the direct form of employee wages, with the remainder representing a return to capital investors. International student activity in Queensland contributes close to 17,500 full-time equivalent workers, including almost 14,000 jobs in my hometown of Brisbane alone. This equates to $970.4 million in direct wages and $416.8 million as returns to capital investors, with the sector contributing $4.15 billion to Brisbane’s economy.

When broken down to a local level the contribution and importance of international students becomes particularly clear. Once again, Brisbane City Council joins with many of the consuls and other institutions providing education services and holds a function welcoming international students once a year to emphasise how much we appreciate these students contributing to our city and to our local economy.

This is why legislation that supports this industry is vital. It was very concerning back in 2009 when stories emerged of scam institutions guaranteeing students results in the IELTS—the International English Language Testing System—exam in exchange for thousands of dollars in fees. We heard tales of shonky providers threatening students with deportation unless they paid more fees upfront and, of course, there were students who were forced to make advance payments on courses at colleges which were then shut down and the students lost their money.

Stories about students falling victim to these scams were damaging for the industry’s reputation and unfairly stained the image of hundreds of good private colleges. It was a blow to the industry and, as I have previously detailed, it was also a major blow to the economy.

International students are valuable to Australia. We do not ever want to see a repeat of 2009, when international students were so let down by shonky providers. The bills before us today go some way to ensuring this does not happen again: we cannot afford to lose our international students.

Mrs ANDREWS (McPherson) (13:12): I rise to speak on the proposed amendments to
the Education Services for Overseas Students Act, known in the ESOS Act, contained in the Education for Overseas Students (Registration Charges) Bill 2011 and its related bill. The inclusion of these amendments will create a new fee structure for higher education providers who wish to be registered in the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students, known as the CRICOS.

Higher education providers are required to register with the CRICOS in order to offer their courses and programs to international students. The amendments to the act will allow for the fee structure to be set to more closely reflect the cost of supervision of these providers. The bill will amend the Education Services for Overseas Students (Registration Charges) Act 1997 to provide for recommendations that have arisen from the Stronger, simpler, smarter ESOS: supporting international students review, known as the ESOS review, conducted by the Hon. Bruce Baird AM.

The Bradley review recommended that an ESOS review take place before 2012. The review came about from the significant growth in the number of overseas students and the changing composition of this group. The ESOS review received around 150 formal submissions and more than 300 people registered with the online discussion forum.

The ESOS Act has been evolving through substantial reforms since 2000, when there were allegations of immigration rorts, poor quality education services, college closures and exploited students. Forty-one recommendations were endorsed from an independent evaluation in 2004-05 to improve the act’s effectiveness. Following this, amendments were then made to the act in 2006 and 2007. However, in 2009 there were further allegations of unethical behaviour reported by the media and this led to protests by the Indian community against assaults on Indian students and resulted in the closure of a number of colleges.

In 2009 the government introduced amendments to the ESOS Act pending a review. The amendments to the act made in 2009 required a number of things including re-registration of all institutions registered on the CRICOS. Two new registration requirements were introduced in an effort to strengthen the education credentials of education providers and have all providers list the names of their agents and comply with the regulations relating to them.

In just over a decade reforms and amendments to the ESOS Act have been implemented to ensure a fair treatment of the international student body. The proposed amendment bills that I am speaking on today will further potentially strengthen and reform the existing act. The ESOS Act exists to ensure that international students in Australia receive the education and training for which they have paid, to protect the reputation and integrity of Australia’s education and training export industry and to strengthen the public confidence in the integrity of the student visa program.

The ESOS review commented on course delivery that supports quality education experiences for international students. Currently, all of the courses open to international students must be registered on the CRICOS and there are specific requirements for courses for international students. These include requirements that the international student be located in Australia and that their primary purpose for being in Australia is to study. I note that these requirements are intended to support the integrity of the student visa program, and this was also noted in the ESOS review.
I would like to take this opportunity to expand on the importance of our reputation as an international education destination. The international education industry is suffering according to the latest Australian Education International data. Contributors to the current downturn include the strong Australian dollar and the current government's policies, which include tougher student visa conditions, tighter skilled migration and the crackdown on private colleges. The latest AEI data, for June 2011, showed international enrolments across Australia declined 9.1 per cent compared to the same time last year, and this compares to a previous annual growth rate of 11 per cent since 2006. According to the AEI, the education industry across Australia totalled $18.3 billion in export earnings in 2010. However, the full economic value to Australian businesses and local communities is considerably higher than this figure, which excludes international student expenditure on things such as accommodation and living expenses.

Our reputation is made vulnerable when international students feel we are taking advantage of them and our reputation becomes even more vulnerable when these students are victims of crime. In the review of education services for overseas students, Baird commented on this issue and raised the concerns of most Australians, including me, by saying:

The recent attacks, predominately on young Indian students, have saddened me as an Australian.

Baird consulted broadly and identified a number of concerns including:
Concerns raised during consultations included reports of: false and misleading information provided by some education agents, poor quality education and training, gross over-enrolments, lack of appropriate education facilities, providers paying exorbitant commissions to education agents, limited financial scrutiny of providers, ineffective application and enforcement of regulation, low English language entry requirements, poor social inclusion of students in their institutions and the broader community, inadequate complaints and dispute handling services and some duplication between Commonwealth and states and territories leading to confusion and unnecessary regulatory burden.

Many related issues raised were out of the scope of the review such as alleged workplace exploitation, migration and visa issues, deficient and expensive student accommodation, lack of transport concessions and health matters.

The Gold Coast cannot afford the impact of any negativity towards our international students. The education sector of the Gold Coast is well developed and currently includes four universities: Southern Cross University, Griffith University, Central Queensland University and Bond University. There are also 160 registered training organisations, 32 private schools and 64 state schools. In May 2010 employment figures showed that education institutions on the Gold Coast employ over 17,500 people. The Gold Coast's two largest universities generated more than $1.6 billion towards the Gold Coast's economy in 2010.

Two studies detailing the economic benefits of Griffith University and Bond University show both institutions contribute significantly to the Gold Coast community. Griffith University injects more than $1 billion annually into the local economy and accounts for more than two per cent of local employment. Privately operated, not-for-profit Bond University injects $600 million and 2,200 regional jobs. Importantly, these economic impact figures do not include development of human capital provided by the education of graduates or the flow-on effects of research and development conducted by the universities. Griffith University and Bond University together have over 20,000 students enrolled and many...
of the graduates remain on the Gold Coast after graduation, which increases the human capital and knowledge base of our community.

The depressed state of the Gold Coast's main industries in tourism and construction along with the above average unemployment rate highlights how crucial it is that the Gold Coast's education sector continues to develop. I would like to see the Gold Coast economy mature and broaden to include an excellent education and research industry to complement the existing emphasis on our industries.

Overseas students are clearly critical to the Gold Coast economy. They provide a very welcome boost to our tourism industry in particular. Where we are able to welcome the overseas students to the Gold Coast and they have an experience that is favourable towards them, they are most likely to encourage their friends and their relatives from overseas to visit and to holiday on the Gold Coast. So the flow-on effects of overseas students to the Gold Coast economy are in fact enormous.

The Gold Coast economy has been struggling for some time and we have been very dependent on two industries. Clearly, tourism is a major industry for us, as is construction. It is long overdue for us to develop a second layer of industry on the Gold Coast, but I should say that we are well on track to doing that now. The second layer comprises our manufacturing industry and, importantly for today's purposes, the education industry. We should be doing what we can to strengthen and develop the education sector on the Gold Coast.

In my electorate of McPherson, Bond University's international student population is around 30 per cent of total enrolments. So it is a significant proportion of Bond student enrolment. Safeguarding students' interests is key to the success of the international student sector. The global financial crisis has not helped this goal, as numerous providers have had to close due to events that are largely out of their control. Risk management is therefore important so that the interests of this sector and the wider economy are assured. The ESOS review commented that a provider's risk profile should not only guide entry to the sector but influence the level of regulatory resources dedicated to monitoring and supporting a provider.

We support the education sector and recognise that overseas students are a critical part of this industry. Therefore, I believe the changes are a step forward for the industry, the international students and our overall reputation as an education destination. As I indicated before, education is a sector that is crucial to the Gold Coast both now and into the future. I actively support the development and growth of our universities and tertiary education providers and give my commitment that I will work with them into the future to make sure that the Gold Coast is well placed to be an education centre of excellence.

Mr Ewen Jones (Herbert) (13:26): I rise to speak on the Education Services for Overseas Students (Registration Charges) Amendment Bill 2011 and the Education Services for Overseas Students Amendment (Registration Charges Consequentials) Bill 2011. The coalition, as an organisation and as parties, do not oppose these bills. As the member for McPherson just said, with education being such a vital level of our economy now, we have to pay a lot more attention to it going into the future. Places like the Gold Coast and Townsville rely so much on education facilities. In fact, James Cook University as an organisation has in Townsville an economic footprint of some $500 million per annum. That is just one organisation. James Cook University has a
campus in Townsville, a campus in Cairns and a campus in Singapore. Extrapolate that across the country and you will see just how big this industry is.

These bills aim to modify the charges for institutions registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students, CRICOS, to offer courses to international students. These changes will better reflect the costs involved with administering the registration process and supervising these institutions. The new cost structure is vital in ensuring that only reliable and trustworthy institutions are allowed to operate in the market of educating overseas students.

As my good friend and colleague the member for McPherson has just alluded to, the last thing we need to see as a city in Townsville, the last thing we need to see as a state in Queensland and the last thing we need to see as a country in Australia are pictures beamed home of international students being picked on, being vilified, being mistreated, being assaulted and worse. They are the things we have to watch out for. People must feel welcome when they come to this country.

The issue is of great importance to Townsville, where we have around 10 education providers registered to provide courses to overseas students. These are all exceptional institutions catering for both secondary and tertiary education. High schools such as Townsville Grammar School, The Cathedral School, St Patrick's College on the Strand, Ignatius Park College and Calvary Christian College all have a strong reputation for providing students with a rounded education that both local and international families have recognised. I pay special recognition to St Patrick's College, which offers a great boarding alternative for girls from the Torres Strait and from Palm Island and gives a great all-round education. The Strand is not a bad part of the world either. James Cook University and the Barrier Reef Institute of TAFE are also registered on the CRICOS. Both of these institutions are a credit to the Townsville education sector, offering high-quality tertiary education, often tailored to the region's unique tropical environment—one of the many factors that have helped them engage with students across the Asia-Pacific region. The beauty of TAFE is that it is across so many organisations; it goes so far.

It is often said that the nearest capital city to Townsville is in fact Port Moresby. We are closer to another country than we are to the city of Brisbane, our state capital. We as a city and as a region need to interact more with Papua New Guinea. Those states there need to be able to access our facilities in Townsville so that they can become better in their results when it comes to times of national crisis and emergency, becoming safer places when earthquakes, fires and cyclones hit. Those are the sorts of places from which students come to James Cook University. I was lucky enough to be present last night when the US ambassador spoke in relation to the universities all the way around Australia—from Flinders University to Murdoch University to Charles Darwin University to James Cook University to Griffith University—and the research that they are combining to assist with the way that we react to disasters and share information. I think it is a very positive thing.

I also want to acknowledge the work of Youth with a Mission in Townsville.YWAM is a global Christian movement that helps young people around the world. The Reef to Outback office in Townsville is run by Ken Mulligan, one of the nicest blokes you are ever going to come in touch with—but, by jingo, I will tell you he just does not
let up. He will go on and on and on to you about his programs and how good and organised they are. YWAM has reached out to young people throughout Australia and South-East Asia and are currently very active and connected in the Townsville community with Papua New Guinea, working to improve the quality of life for young people in Papua New Guinea and help that country achieve its Millennium Development Goals. Training young people is a big part of YWAM's role, educating them on how to reach out and help youth with serious problems around our part of the world and, in doing so, strengthening our relationships with our neighbours.

Straight after Cyclone Yasi hit Townsville—we were hit with a feather duster in comparison with Cardwell and Tully, but we had a lot of people with power out, and people were without power for two or three weeks—the kids from YWAM were straight on the road, going into people's backyards and helping little old ladies in West End and pensioner couples. They targeted those people and made sure to get into their backyards and clean them up. That is the sort of thing that YWAM will do.

In relation to training, YWAM has a ship that leaves Townsville and goes to places in Papua New Guinea that cannot be accessed by normal health measures and programs. They go to the places where there is no electricity and there are no buildings, and they see people. People like Daryl Holmes from the 1300SMILES dental practice go up there; Dr Holmes will perform four days of nothing but extractions. We have people going up there to put glasses on other people or to talk about immunisation. The work they do with TAFE, with James Cook University and with all people trying to get a better result for our friends in Papua New Guinea is to be admired. The boat has gone around Australia and we are working very hard towards securing another boat to do more in that region.

All of Townsville's CRICOS-registered institutions like YWAM play vital roles in the local community, welcoming and nurturing international students and businesses into the city. Townsville is a very diversified place and a transient place. We always say that there are two locals in Townsville; they both drink at the Bellevue and no-one speaks to them. It is a great place because we are all from somewhere else. The thing that we have in common with the Gold Coast is that we are a place that people come to. Two of my three children were actually born in Townsville, but they did not have any grandparents there. I think the one thing that draws us all together as a community is that we do not have family there so we must reach out and engage.

International students also play a key role in Townsville and in Australia's economy, with the overseas education market creating local jobs and helping these schools and institutions provide more services to all students. You will see that happen more and more in Townsville as local builders and industrialists try to engage more and more with our first Australians and with our nearest neighbours.

It is nevertheless important that all the institutions involved in this market be as reliable as possible and provide services of the highest standard. Those in Townsville do, and the government needs to ensure that this is always the case. I am married to a teacher, and so education is very high on the debate list at our dinner table. My wife is forever explaining to me my failings in the area of education and how much better the world would be if we just focused on early childhood, because then everything else would fall into place. I will let you know, Mr
Deputy Speaker, that she is in fact an early childhood teacher. Fancy that!

Australia's reputation for quality education is second to none, and rightly so. We have a great country and a great education sector, but we must continue to improve and we must never lose focus on that. That is why so many families overseas choose to send their children to our schools and why so many overseas students want to further their careers through tertiary education in our universities. But we cannot afford to take this for granted. As the world changes and becomes more and more global, institutions such as our universities will be challenged by other universities and other institutions to maintain a service that is needed in the country and in the world.

James Cook University, with its work with the Australian Institute of Marine Science, is founded on the premise of life in a tropical world. Every course it offers has to have an emphasis on how it operates in a tropical world. That is where most of the people in the world actually live, and that is where most of the problems going into the future will be and will come from.

The market for educating overseas students has been vulnerable to the setting up of dodgy institutions that do not mean Australia's high standards or are financially unstable; I think that is what the member for McPherson was alluding to earlier. We cannot let the ball drop. We cannot let people offer substandard institutions, because if that happens then we all suffer; everyone in the sector suffers. You need only one bad story to wipe out the 3,000 good stories that we have to tell.

Both major parties agreed to maintain our reputation with a more robust registration process, and tighter supervision of registered interests is required. However, while supporting this bill, I caution the government on the problems that this can cause, particularly for the smaller providers. I have spoken to a lot of Townsville's registered schools about their international students program. I concern they repeatedly raised was the burden of administration they faced in trying to encourage as many international students as possible. This one-size-fits-all approach makes it very difficult for schools with only a small international program. Ignatius Park College, for example, takes only one or two students every year and does so for reasons of social justice. It recently had a student from Papua New Guinea, who was supported by a local resident for years 11 and 12. The school enrolled the student but was frustrated by the extensive administration needed to admit just one international student. Many similar schools would be prevented from offering services to international students. Surely, there is a way that CRICOS administration can cater to schools with small international student populations. They say to me continually that whether you apply to have 100 kids or one child in the school the level of paperwork is exactly the same. Much of the administration they have to do is already their core business. They are already a recognised high school and already recognised as providing the correct curriculum, and why they have to go back over that, providing reams and reams of paperwork, is beyond anyone's understanding.

The other concern they raised with me is a problem associated with student visas. The high Australian dollar is already making it difficult for schools to encourage more international students and, to top that off, students have to wait much longer to get a study visa for Australia than elsewhere. As an example, a student from Hong Kong can get a study visa for America within a few days; for Australia it takes a minimum of three weeks. We have to be sharper at the
pointy end of providing services to make sure we are competitive. The United States of America, Canada and New Zealand all compete in this market, and it is far cheaper and easier for a student to get a visa to those countries than to come to Australia. I am not saying we should lower our standards; we just have to quicken the process. This is a hurdle that needs to be fixed if Australia’s overseas education industry is to continue to grow. These bills allow for adequate funding to administer the registration process and supervise CRICOS institutions to ensure that they meet the high standards that the Australian education sector should be expected to meet. For that reason I do not oppose the amendments, but we must be careful not to overburden institutions.

I cannot let the opportunity pass to warn this government of the dangers it faces when it comes to research funding. James Cook University and the Australian Institute of Marine Science have had their funding capped and have had incremental funding cuts. So, while they are getting grants to run the ocean simulator and their boats, their fuel costs have been cut. They have a great boat there, but they cannot use it as often as they should. If we are to tackle climate change correctly and if we are to do the scientists justice, we must have access to the funds needed to complete this research. A carbon tax is not going to make it any easier for institutions like the Australian Institute of Marine Science, which uses diesel. You can shake your head as much as you want, but a carbon tax will raise the cost of diesel to institutions that rely on science to answer the very questions that you are putting in front of us. If we want to act on climate change, we need these people to answer the questions for us and we need to give them access and funding to get out there and do the work. You cannot sit there and continue to make it harder and harder for educational institutions to do the research by cutting their funding.

Mr HAWKE (Mitchell) (13:41): I join with my colleague the member for Herbert in his wise and profound remarks on the Education Services for Overseas Student (Registration Charges) Amendment Bill 2011 and cognate bill.

A government member interjecting—

Mr HAWKE: Good remarks! The member for Herbert and I have been compared to Waldorf and Statler occasionally in question time, but we are actually funnier than those two, I think. This is an important piece of legislation and I do want to join with the member for Herbert in what he was saying about the smaller providers. Quite often when this government acts, there is a series of unintended consequences to its legislation it does not consider. The small player is often ignored by this government. While it may seem appropriate from the recommendations of the Baird report to review registration fees as proposed by this bill, there is a lot of diversity in the smaller colleges. Colleges with small overseas student numbers are delivering courses to overseas students for reasons related to expanding their educational mission, broadening the cultural mix of their campuses and not necessarily for a commercial imperative. It can often be counterproductive to increase such costs for smaller providers. Because of the nature of higher education there is often a diversity of courses offered by particular colleges. It is not necessarily the case that increasing fees produces the best outcome. Some colleges, for example, register fewer than 20 foreign students and they will face a sixfold increase in registration fees. That is not a desirable outcome.

This sector, we are told, is our third largest export industry, earning up to $17
billion—that is, before the recent turbulence in the industry. It is an issue we have to take very seriously, because there is an expanding middle class in Asia and wealth being generated in many countries. The international student market is very competitive and it is a market that Australia certainly wants to access. It is the role of government to recognise and promote the inherent worth of international and transnational education. This parliament has a great role to play by recognising it and encouraging it for our nation. Our economic and strategic interests in the region mean that we should be seeking to do everything we can to promote an international education focus in Australia to make us a regional hub for international and transnational education.

We do not oppose this legislation and we see some worth in increasing the registration fees and charges. Of course, there is a subset of issues that I have spoken about in this place before in relation to the private service providers, and colleges in particular. I think the member for Herbert elegantly explained that the colleges in his area, small colleges closer to Papua New Guinea than Brisbane—a very important point—are often the unintended consequences of these blanket pieces of legislation that we pass here in Canberra—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): Order! The debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 43. The member for Mitchell will have time to continue his remarks at a later hour.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Broadband

Ms GAMBARO (Brisbane) (13:45): Just over 12 months ago, the then member for Brisbane, Arch Bevis, proudly announced to the media:

Construction begins in Brisbane’s inner northern suburbs in the second quarter of 2011.

People reasonably assumed that their internet connection problems would be solved. That includes my constituents living in Grange who have contacted me because they have been unable to access or connect with ADSL services. Disappointingly for people eagerly awaiting a solution to their internet access problem, the second release site has been changed to Aspley, an outer northern suburb of Brisbane which just happens to lie in the marginal Labor seats of the members for Petrie and Lilley.

Minister Conroy has favoured Labor’s political interests over the national interest at every step of the NBN rollout. Why has the second release site been changed? Residents in my electorate of the CBD and inner northern suburbs deserve an answer—or are they the victims of shameless pork-barrelling? Senator Conroy must explain to these voters in inner north Brisbane why they were misled before the election with promises that they would receive the NBN before July 2011? It now could be many years away. The situation is indicative of the multitude of broken promises that are creating a rising concern among Australians that this government—

Belconnen Skate Park

Dr LEIGH (Fraser) (13:46): On 6 August, I was delighted to join my friend Chris Bourke MLA in opening the revamped Belconnen Skate Park, known as the Belco Bowl, a BMX and skate park that was partly funded by federal money under the stimulus program. It is located on the edge of Lake Ginninderra, which could remind skateboarders that their sport started when Californian surfers looked out on flat waves and decided they had to invent another sport. The original Belco Bowl was opened in 1990, just 14 years after the invention of the ollie. I am told that this revamp makes the...
Belco Bowl the largest skate park in the Southern Hemisphere.

At its best, skateboarding is a sport that does not care about your age, race, sex or religion—just what tricks you can do. The new facility combines some seriously steep walls with areas for first-timers, and I hope that more experienced skaters will use the chance to teach newbies some new tricks. Most Canberrans may not be up to doing kickflips, wheelies and pivots, but I know my two young sons watched with big eyes as they saw the skateboarders and BMX riders using the new facility.

I would like to use this chance to acknowledge the work of the ACT and federal governments, the skating community, particularly Luke Brown, the designers, particularly Julia Coddington, and the builders, who have made the revamped Belco Bowl a reality.

**Australian Asian Association of Bennelong**

**Mr ALEXANDER** (Bennelong) (13:48): I rise today to applaud the great work of the Australian Asian Association of Bennelong. Known as the AAAB, the association represents the cultural diversity of Bennelong and is the heart of the community, creating harmony and understanding in all parts of the electorate and across all ethnic and community groups.

This coming Saturday evening, I will be presenting the inaugural AAAB Multicultural Citizen of the Year Award to a person who demonstrates by their actions consistency with the objectives of the association: the promotion of multiculturalism, cultural harmony, tolerance, understanding and education, which build relationships across the community.

President Hugh Lee's and past president Brad Chan's commitment to maintaining strong relationships is well known in Bennelong and deserves formal recognition in this place. The AAAB run major festivals in Bennelong, including the Lunar New Year and upcoming Moon Festival celebrations. The association also communicates the views of local residents through their work with many local citizens clubs and business groups. The Eastwood Senior Citizens Club is one such organisation. It performs great work and will be celebrating its 20th anniversary later this year.

I thank the Australian Asian Association of Bennelong, their committee and their members, who work tirelessly and help to make Bennelong such a great place to work and live. I look forward to joining you at Saturday night's celebration.

**Same-Sex Relationships**

**Mr MURPHY** (Reid) (13:49): With respect to the member for Melbourne, I did not require any authority flowing from his motion to consult with my electorate about same-sex marriages. Since I was elected to this House in 1998, I have consulted and received feedback on many diverse issues from my constituents, virtually every day. I report to the House today that the majority of my electorate who have provided feedback to me believe that marriage is the union of a man and a woman, and they therefore do not want the Marriage Act altered. That feedback has come from a wide cross-section of the community that I represent in this place.

I acknowledge that in my electorate there is a significant minority who do not agree with this feedback. For the information of those who were not in this House in 2009, I supported and voted for 85 amendments to Commonwealth laws to eliminate discrimination against same-sex couples. Finally, I acknowledge that a small minority of my electorate do not support civil unions. I do.
Hughes, Mr John

Mr MORRISON (Cook) (13:51): I rise to mourn the passing and honour the memory of the foundation president and life member of the Elouera Surf Life Saving Club, John Hughes. John earned his surf-lifesaving bronze medallion at Bondi in the mid-1930s and honed his rescue skills on that iconic beach. He moved to the Sutherland shire in the 1950s with his new bride and built his house 200 metres, through the sandhills, from the surf. John surfed daily and carried out a number of solo surf rescues, plucking swimmers from the strong current.

For a number of years he continually petitioned the council to set up a further surf club in the Bate Bay area. In 1965 that vision was finally realised with the creation of the Police Citizens Boys Surf Life Saving Club at Elouera. John served as president for four tough years, leading the young club in its formative years. Under his guidance, its fortune and members grew. Elouera Surf Life Saving Club started out as a humble tent on a stretch of sand back in 1966. Now it is a thriving club and a vital part of our local community, providing a safe beach for thousands to enjoy and bringing people together from all walks of life and ages, from early infancy to 75 years old and beyond. John passed away in Sydney on 30 July, just prior to their annual general meeting. He was 90. He is remembered by all of his friends, his family, including his son Anthony, and our entire community. His legacy will be remembered down on Elouera Beach for a very long time to come. Today we have the opportunity in this place to pay homage to a great Australian and a great resident and citizen of the shire.

Fearnley, Mr Kurt

Dawes, Ms Christie

Ms GRIERSON (Newcastle) (13:52): I am extremely proud to inform the House that two Novocastrians—the mighty Kurt Fearnley and the wonderful Christie Dawes—won the inaugural male and female wheelchair elite category in last Sunday’s Sun-Herald City to Surf. This was the first time in the 40-year history of the event that elite wheelchair athletes competed. You can imagine how pleased Newcastle is that two Novocastrians triumphed.

Most of us able-bodied people do wonder with amazement at the feat of completing the 14-kilometre course on foot, but the thought of attempting this course in a wheelchair is quite daunting and amazing. Kurt's athletic exploits nationally and internationally and his tireless work as an advocate for the disabled are well known. Christie is also an athlete of distinction. She is an outstanding community role model. Christie competed in her first Paralympics in Atlanta in 1996, where she was named Young Paralympian of the Year. She subsequently represented Australia in the Sydney, Athens and Beijing Paralympics.

I congratulate both Kurt and Christie warmly on their awe-inspiring achievements. Their commitment, dedication and courage serve as a proud example to all Australians.

Apple Imports

Mr McCORMACK (Riverina) (13:53): Labor is a blight on Australia's apple industry. The government's rollover to allow the importation of apples from New Zealand opens the way for fire blight to become rampant in this country. At present Australia is fire blight free. At present New Zealand has the disease and it is not notifiable. Already seven permits have been issued for the importation of New Zealand apples. Four packing houses have been registered over the past 10 or so days. Kiwi apple growers have wasted no time. Already New Zealand apples are on their way.
Labor has sold out yet another proud, sustainable, viable Australian industry and placed the apple reliant town of Batlow in the Riverina at grave risk. When, not if, there is an outbreak of fire blight in Australia and it takes hold it will be on the heads of all those on that side who capitulated and did not make the protocols tough enough. Once it is here it will be all but impossible to eradicate. If we must allow New Zealand apples into Australia, it should based on quarantine not on trade.

Next Monday, 22 August, the shadow minister for agriculture and food security will introduce the Quarantine Legislation Amendment (Apples) Bill 2011 to safeguard against fire blight. Government members would do well to support this measure for the sake of regional Australia, for the sake of the environment and for the sake of our nation's economy.

Tasmanian Skills Institute

Mr LYONS (Bass) (13:55): I rise today to congratulate the Tasmanian Skills Institute on the opening of their new Green Skills Centre of Excellence. I recently had the pleasure of opening this magnificent facility and was thrilled to see firsthand the benefits this centre is having for both staff and students at the Skills Institute. The Skills Institute is a major contributor to vocational education in Tasmania. It employs over 400 people, operating from eight training hubs across the state, in trade and technical training. The institute supports businesses and organisations through increasing skills, knowledge and capability of employees, particularly apprentices.

The Green Skills Centre of Excellence is based at the Alanvale campus of the Skills Institute in the magnificent electorate of Bass. This state-of-the-art green star rated facility provides training for a combination of construction, furniture-making and allied trades. The centre will be a base for training apprentices and for upgrading the knowledge and skills of experienced tradespeople.

I was incredibly impressed with the new facilities and the way the green technology has been introduced. I look forward to seeing how this new technology is implemented not only within this building but also as a result of the training programs delivered at the Skills Institute. I congratulate once again the students, the staff and the employees at the Tasmanian Skills Institute.

Carbon Pricing

Mr BILLSON (Dunkley) (13:56): Just a few short weeks ago the COSBOA annual summit was held. There were some magnificent presentations. Probably the pinnacle was Malcolm Farr from News.com. He provided a very eloquent contribution to that summit, but what will stick in people's minds is what the Treasurer had to say. In his address he told the gathered audience that the carbon tax would be great news for retailers. He argued that there would be so much surplus of compensation for so many Australian households that people would be rushing down to their local retail stores and benefiting from this carbon tax inspired bonanza. If that were not bad enough, he then went on to say—and I will do my best Wayne Swan imitation here:

But I tell you this very sincerely—some of the best, most grounded information I get about conditions in our economy comes from our small businesses.

I do not know who he is talking to. I do not know which small business he is talking to. This is warped logic. A carbon tax has undermined consumer confidence. Survey after survey identifies it will undermine small business viability. There is a sales strike going on. Some 83 per cent of those surveyed by the Australian Retailers Association believe consumers will spend
less and 85 per cent of those surveyed by the ARA believe the carbon tax will have a negative impact on their business profitability and a third of them will be forced to shed staff. If this government wants to improve consumer confidence and give a boost to small business that is long overdue, axe the tax, Wayne Swan.

Qantas

Ms ROWLAND (Greenway) (13:58): I rise today to mention the concerns that exist in my electorate of Greenway regarding the recent announcement by Qantas that it will be restructuring its operations and as a result cutting Australian jobs. I realise that Qantas is a private company and the decision it has made to move jobs out of Australia towards the growth markets in the Asian region is a commercial one. I also acknowledge that I, like many members in this place, use Qantas services on a regular basis.

Over the past few days I have been contacted by scores of local residents who are very concerned about the job losses at Qantas. For every job lost there is a flow-on effect to other sectors of the aviation industry, from maintenance to hospitality. In Western Sydney many hardworking people make the trip to Mascot every day to work either directly for Qantas or for associated aviation industries. These people are concerned that Qantas's decision to move towards Asia will mean less work for them and the possibility of more redundancies. That is why yesterday I joined the National Secretary of the Transport Workers Union, Tony Sheldon, and the National Assistant Secretary, Michael Kaine, to express the concerns of the people of Greenway on this issue. I ask that Qantas listen to the concerns of the TWU and the other unions in the aviation sector and the hardworking Australian men and women who fear that these commercial decisions will negatively impact on their lives.

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

STATEMENTS ON INDULGENCE

Battle of Long Tan

Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Prime Minister) (14:00): Mr Speaker, on indulgence, the House should acknowledge that today is Vietnam Veterans Remembrance Day. A little bit earlier today I and the Leader of the Opposition, as well as Her Excellency the Governor-General, attended at a remembrance ceremony here in Canberra. In Brisbane, at Enoggera, the Governor-General today presents Delta Company, 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, with a unit citation.

It has been a long, long road to this day of recognition for these Australians who committed such extraordinary acts of gallantry during the Battle of Long Tan. On this day in 1966, the men of 6RAR were outside the wire, but they were not alone—they had their training, and they had their mates. Their actions in the now famous rubber plantation showed them to be more than worthy of their Anzac grandfathers, and it is worth remembering, in the Anzac spirit, that New Zealand's artillery was vital to their success. Long Tan was not the only important Australian action of the Vietnam War, but its anniversary has rightly become the day on which we remember all Australians who served in Vietnam.

Lest we forget.

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Leader of the Opposition) (14:01): I support the remarks of the Prime Minister in marking the 45th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan. We should, as the Prime Minister says, remember the extraordinary efforts of Delta
Company of the 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment. We should remember the sacrifices of that company then and the suffering of some of the ex-members of that company since. We should also remember on this day the importance of standing by our allies and the need for effective armed forces in an uncertain world. Above all else, we should remember that there is no finer calling than to serve one's country in the armed forces of Australia.

Reference to Main Committee
Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the House and Minister for Infrastructure and Transport) (14:02): by leave—I move:

That further statements on indulgence on Vietnam Veterans’ Day be permitted in the Main Committee.

I also personally associate myself with the comments of the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition on this important day.

Question agreed to.

MINISTERIAL ARRANGEMENTS
Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Prime Minister) (14:03): I inform the House that the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, Minister for Defence Science and Personnel, Minister for Indigenous Health and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on the Centenary of Anzac will be absent from question time today. He is attending the presentation of the Unit Citation for Gallantry that we both just referred to in the remarks relating to the Vietnam memorial, so he is at Enoggera in Brisbane with the Governor-General. The Minister for Defence will answer questions in relation to defence science and personnel. The Minister for Health and Ageing will answer questions in relation to Indigenous health and the Minister for Defence Materiel will answer questions in relation to veterans’ affairs and the Centenary of Anzac on his behalf.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Carbon Pricing
Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Leader of the Opposition) (14:04): My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer the Prime Minister to the Victorian government analysis showing that 23,000 jobs will go in Victoria alone by 2015 under her carbon tax. I ask: with Qantas, One Steel, Channel 10 and Westpac laying off hundreds of workers and with manufacturing, retail and tourism facing a serious downturn, how can this be the right time to make a bad situation worse by imposing the world's biggest carbon tax?

Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Prime Minister) (14:04): I have seen the media report that the Leader of the Opposition held up, and when you look at that media report it details so-called modelling performed by the Victorian government. But this so-called modelling does not take into account the billions and billions of dollars allocated through the carbon pricing package to protect Australian jobs.

I think we should be very clear about what is happening here. The Council of Australian Governments is meeting tomorrow. I am intending, at the Council of Australian Governments, to speak to the state premiers and the chief ministers about our obligations as the nation’s leaders during a time where Australians have seen turbulence on global markets. Many of them are understandably very concerned about what that means for them and their families: what that turbulence on global markets means for our nation.

I will be saying to the state premiers and to the chief ministers that now is not the time for the playing of petty politics. Now is not the time for falsely raising alarm and concern. Now is the time when the nation’s leaders should be speaking to the Australian community about the inherent strength of the Australian economy but also speaking to the
Australian community about the pressure points in our economy. We floated our dollar in 1983. It first hit parity with the US dollar in November last year. And now, of course, because of our exceptionally strong terms of trade we are looking at a strong Australian dollar as far into the future as the eye can see.

Yes, that does mean that there are pressures on some parts of the economy, and it does mean that we need to work with those sectors of the economy—and we will. But, of course, as we go about managing contemporary economic circumstances, what we need to do as this generation of the nation's leaders is have the same courage as earlier generations to stomp up and get done the reforms that this nation needs so that it has prosperity tomorrow. Ne of those reforms is putting a price on carbon, cutting carbon pollution and making sure we have the clean energy jobs of the future. If anybody is in doubt about the existence of those clean energy jobs then I suggest that they go to the Clean Energy Future display that is on in Parliament House today. There they will meet business people who have brought to Parliament House their clean energy innovations which are making money for them today and which will be the kind of clean energy technology that will make a long-term difference to our economy, creating the jobs of the future and bringing the innovation of the future.

On the question of modelling projections for Victoria, let us be very clear about this: Treasury modelling projects the economy of Victoria will grow by 30 per cent to 2020 alone and by 162 per cent by 2050. The modelling shows that Victoria maintains strong growth under a carbon price with agriculture, construction and services growing by 120, 170 and 246 per cent respectively to 2050. Strong growth, more jobs—that is Victoria's future.

Health

Ms SMYTH (La Trobe) (14:08): My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister outline the importance of reform for the nation's health system? What are the risks to this reform and how is the government addressing them?

Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Prime Minister) (14:08): I thank the member for La Trobe for her question. When the nation's leaders meet together tomorrow at the Council of Australian Governments what I expect that meeting to do is to work cooperatively on implementing the health reform agreement that we have recently signed—all states and territories coming together to reform the nation's hospital system. We will be announcing tomorrow, out of the Council of Australian Governments meeting, some important implementation measures. We will be announcing the chairs of the National Health Performance Authority and we will be announcing the chair of the Independent Hospital Pricing Authority. These bodies are critical to the reform of the hospital system as they will be there to provide greater accountability and transparency, and oversee the activity being undertaken in the nation's hospitals.

I had the opportunity last night to address the dinner of the Australian Medical Association. Whilst I was there I had the opportunity to outline the way in which health reform will change our health system for the future and that this is a once-in-a-generation reform of the size and scale of Medicare. What these reforms do is buttress our central principle of universality with the important principles of sustainability, transparency, high performance and value for money. This puts into our hospital system an extra $19.8 billion between now and 2020. It injects into the system $175 billion extra by 2030. Let us be very clear: this is
extra; this is not money the Commonwealth was obligated to provide. It will make us forever an equal partner in the growth in hospital costs and that is appropriate. It will ensure that between 2014 and the end of the decade alone our new funding will deliver 2.9 million extra cases in emergency departments, two million additional inpatient services and 19 million additional outpatient consultations.

This new money for these services being provided is associated with a profound reform agenda. We have secured the right to expect that every service is now delivered at an efficient price. We have secured the right to track where every dollar, state and federal, goes via the national health funding pool. We have secured the right to expect the health system's performance to be reported and available transparently not just to government but to ordinary Australians, so that they can see that reported by an umpire without fear or favour. And we have secured the right to the creation of local hospital networks; more local control, as is appropriate.

The significance of these reforms cannot be underestimated. We have secured these reforms in circumstances where we were able to see politics put to one side. It would have been easy for people to assume political divisions between the Commonwealth and the states would kill the prospect for enduring reform. It would have been easy to continue the blame game. It would have been easy to give money to the states via a blank cheque. But we have not gone down that low road because the Commonwealth is not an option in health. When it comes to health we will always do the right thing. It may be a very difficult thing to achieve, but we have achieved this health reform agreement and tomorrow we will take steps on its implementation.

**Employment**

Mr CHESTER (Gippsland) (14:12): My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer the Prime Minister to this letter from the Chief Executive of Loy Yang Power which was sent to all employees and states: 'Under the carbon price scheme, Loy Yang Power will be required to purchase $450 million in carbon permits each year.' And further: 'The scheme is threatening our future viability as not all of these costs will be recovered via increased electricity prices and the government's proposed generator assistance package.' Is the Prime Minister aware that Loy Yang Power is now offering redundancy packages to its workers? Prime Minister, how many workers in the Latrobe Valley will lose their livelihoods because of the carbon tax that she promised would never be introduced?

Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Prime Minister) (14:13): In relation to the member's question, our perspective about the future of the Latrobe Valley—and I have been there to explain it to people myself; I had a long meeting with a large number of workers at the Hazelwood power station, for example—

*Opposition members interjecting—*

Ms GILLARD: is that it has a very strong future and we will be working with the local community to achieve that. What I said when I was in the Latrobe Valley meeting with workers at the Hazelwood power station, local community members, representatives of the local council and the like was that our carbon pricing package includes a closure-for-tender process. We as a government will be calling a tender where those generators that are the dirtiest generators in the country—that is, they generate the most carbon pollution—can come forward with a proposal which we will assess on value-for-money criteria.
Mr Abbott: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order on direct relevance. How many Latrobe Valley workers will lose their jobs? That is the question the Prime Minister was asked and that is the question—

The Speaker: The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. There were other portions of the question—

Mr Chester interjecting—

The Speaker: Order! The member for Gippsland has asked the question.

Mr Abbott interjecting—

The Speaker: Order! The Leader of the Opposition!

A government member: You're not making a point of order; you're just debating!

The Speaker: The parliamentary secretary is warned! The ministers that complain—especially those who have had leadership status—actually know that from time to time leaders are given a bit of rope. I have indicated that that bit of rope has not much left to it today. The Leader of the House is standing patiently. He now has the call.

Mr Albanese: I rise on a point of order, which is that the standing orders provide for one supplementary question only each day. What we see is a supplementary question in the guise of a point of order from the Leader of the Opposition, and he is consistent in doing it each and every day.

The Speaker: A portion—whatever the number of words was—of the original question was used to support a point of order about direct relevance. My response to that had been that there were many other portions to the question. The Prime Minister is responding.

Ms Gillard: What I was explaining to the member and to the House—it was exactly the same thing I explained to the workers in the Latrobe Valley when I spoke to them personally—was that we would go through this contract for closure process, it would take a number of years, and obviously we would work with any regions affected with structural adjustment because we want every region in the country to have a bright future.

Opposition member interjecting—

Ms Gillard: The member who is now interjecting may want to direct his attention to our Clean Energy Future package, our carbon pricing package, and he will see there allocated $200 million for structural adjustment purposes.

The point of going through this, and my visit to the Latrobe Valley, is to verify that no matter where I am—whether I am in this parliament, in front of workers from a power station or talking to people who are very passionate about climate change and reducing carbon pollution—I say the same thing. And I think that that is appropriate. What I do not think is appropriate—and it bears directly on the member's question about jobs—is for the opposition to say different things to different audiences. So we have the shadow minister for finance, who says that the policy of the opposition is the closure of the Hazelwood power station. And then the Leader of the Opposition, when he was out there trying to be a friend of the workers—when he was in that guise, which is completely contrary to his 'friend of business' guise, completely contrary to his 'friend of farmers' guise and completely contrary to his 'friend of those passionate about climate change' guise—then said:

There will be no act of policy from the next Coalition government or from any Coalition government that I'm associated with that artificially foreshortens the life of these power stations.

The only way that these statements make sense is if the shadow minister is envisaging
a situation where the Leader of the Opposition is not associated with a future coalition government. I will allow them to explain that.

Health Reforms

Ms ROWLAND (Greenway) (14:19): My question is to the Minister for Health and Ageing. What progress has been made in implementing the government's national health reforms? What obstacles have there been to reform and what is the government's response?

Ms ROXON (Gellibrand—Minister for Health and Ageing) (14:19): I thank the member for Greenway for her question. I was delighted to be able to visit her, the member for Lindsay and the member for Reid last week to have a look at how health reform is already delivering to Western Sydney. Of course, the national health reforms that are being implemented, as the Prime Minister mentioned, are turning into very real services right across the country. In Western Sydney our health reforms will deliver an extra 232 beds, and 150 of those are already open. So I was able to visit, with the member for Greenway, Blacktown Hospital. They are going to have 48 extra beds—18 of those are already open and providing services to the local community. I went with the member for Lindsay to Nepean Hospital, where the $96 million investment means that the new ICU has opened this week and 26 of the 36 new beds are already open, providing services to that fast-growing community.

Of course, we are also increasing transparency, as the Prime Minister mentioned, for the performance of our hospitals—a measure that the opposition voted against yesterday in this House. From October this year for the first time the MyHospitals website will report infection rates at hospitals across the country. And yesterday we passed through this House legislation for the first national performance authority on health to be established. It will report not just on hospital services but also on services in both public and private hospitals and in Medicare Locals.

From all of this it is clear to Australians across the country what Labor is delivering in terms of health reform. It is clear when you look at our history what we believe about health—in terms of investing in Medicare, being the creators of Medicare and the creators of the PBS and now introducing these health reforms—but it is very hard to understand where it is that the Liberal Party stand on health reforms. They opposed the performance bill yesterday. They have not released any policies at all, and the Leader of the Opposition—

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister has the call.

Ms ROXON: The Leader of the Opposition did give us a little bit of a clue about the approach that he might take if he were ever to hold the office of Prime Minister. He said last night to the AMA: 'You all know what I was like as health minister. That's what I'll be like as the Prime Minister.' So let's just have a look at what that means.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order, those on my left! The minister has the call.

Ms ROXON: It may be that those opposite do not want to remember what the Leader of the Opposition was like as the health minister, but the public will. They remember a billion dollars coming out of our hospitals. They remember a cap on GP training places. They remember that six out of 10 Australians could not access a GP easily when they needed one. They
remember him, when he was the health minister, insulting a man dying of asbestosis. They remember what he was like, and that is what he would be like as the Prime Minister, if ever he got the chance.

If the Leader of the Opposition wants to say, 'That's what I'll be like,' where are the next set of health cuts coming from if he gets into government? We are clear where we stand on health. Where does the Leader of the Opposition stand on health?

Carbon Pricing

Mr BALDWIN (Paterson) (14:23): My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer the Prime Minister to the analysis by the New South Wales Treasury that shows her carbon tax will cost 18,500 jobs in the Hunter and 7,000 jobs in the Illawarra and will push up power prices for households and businesses by 15 per cent. Prime Minister, with job losses already occurring across the economy, with families struggling with rising costs of living under your government, how can this be the right time to make a bad situation worse by imposing the world's biggest carbon tax?

Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Prime Minister) (14:24): To the member who asked the question—we can see they have all got the same lines to chant today, which will probably be quite different from what they say tomorrow—what I would say is, first and foremost, my very clear recollection is that the so-called modelling you refer to, which I believe you probably saw in newspaper reports, was actually modelling on an earlier carbon pricing package. The so-called modelling was done not on the basis of the package that we announced and certainly not on the basis of the industry assistance measures that are in the carbon pricing package that we announced.

I would say to the member I think he has got a real responsibility to make sure that he tells people in his community the truth about the impact of carbon pricing, because I know that there have been attempts to mislead them. The member comes from a great coalmining district and there have been very direct attempts to mislead people who work in coalmining. The Leader of the Opposition was there one day at a Peabody mine saying to anybody who would listen that the coalmining industry had no future and it was going to be shut down. He was tremendously embarrassed when, the very next day, the very company whose jacket he had had on announced a major takeover, the biggest ever Australian takeover bid for an Australian company, because they saw such a long-term profitable future in mining coal.

So there have been all of these false claims made by members of the opposition and, yes, of course I expect that Liberal Party premiers will be following in their footsteps, in the lead-up to the Council of Australian Governments meeting, and trying to help their friends on that side of the House. But the member who asked the question should not confuse that with the truth. He should not confuse the Liberal Party's scare campaign with the truth, because we know it is not the truth.

With a price on carbon, our economy will continue to grow. With a price on carbon, there will be 1.6 million new jobs by 2020. With a price on carbon, coalmining will continue to grow. With a price on carbon—

Mr Abbott interjecting—

Ms GILLARD: He is still making misrepresentations about coalmining.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will cease interjecting and the Prime Minister will ignore the interjections.

Ms GILLARD: With a price on carbon, we will see a strong economic future for our country—and, of course, that economic
future will be strengthened because we will seize the clean energy sources of the future.

I would remind the member who asked the question, and I know that there are often attempts by the opposition to obscure this part of the debate, that most days of the week there is actually a bipartisan target between both sides of politics to cut carbon pollution by five per cent by 2020. Some days of the week the Leader of the Opposition walks away from it, but most days of the week he endorses it. Consequently, in this whole debate we are asking ourselves two questions: when to start and how to do it? Well, I am for starting soon and doing it in the most cheap way possible. You are for starting late and doing it in the most expensive way possible.

You come into this parliament with challenges about economic prosperity. Well, let me be very, very clear. The worst possible thing we could do for the Australian economy is start late, with expensive abatement, and then put on an extra tax of $1,300 per household to pay for it—your plan. We will keep with our plan: starting on 1 July, doing it in the cheapest possible way, a growing economy and more jobs.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER (14:28): I inform the House that we have present in the gallery this afternoon the Prime Minister of Tonga, Lord Tu'ivakano. On behalf of the House I extend to him a very warm welcome.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mining

Mr CROOK (O'Connor) (14:28): My question is to the Treasurer. Is the government aware of the expert independent modelling of the resource rent tax undertaken by the Western Australian university which illustrates a difference of at least four per cent in the effective tax payable by a small emerging miner as compared to an established miner? Is this discrimination against smaller producers an intended consequence of the MRRT and does the government intend to take action to address this inequity in tax burden between established producers and new entrants into the iron ore and coal markets?

Mr SWAN (Lilley—Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer) (14:29): I thank the member for O'Connor for what is a very important question because the MRRT only taxes highly profitable mines, irrespective of whether they are big or small. I am aware of the study by the University of Western Australia and I have had the Treasury have a look at that study. I am more than happy to have Treasury officials brief the member on their conclusions about what that study means, which do not accord with the conclusions which have been drawn by the member today. o the Treasury does not accept the conclusion that there is a discrimination against small miners in the system. In fact, we have explicitly set out to remove small miners from the system, and we have done that in a way that is acceptable to the great bulk of the industry. We have been through extensive consultation with the mining industry over this issue. The legislation will come to the parliament later this year. It is perhaps one of the most important pieces of legislation that this parliament will deal with in this term. It is important that all Australians receive a fair return for the resources they own—100 per cent returns which are coming from a mining boom—so that we can assist others elsewhere in the economy, in particular those in the patchwork economy, for example, because they are not in the fast lane of the mining boom.

So the revenue that will come from the MRRT, which is paid only by the highly
profitable companies regardless of whether they are big or small, will be used to give tax cuts to all companies right across Australia. There could not be a better time for that to be happening—to give a tax cut to many of those companies that are not in the fast lane, most particularly to give a significant tax cut to those struggling small businesses out there. The instant asset write-off is a very important tax cut that is coming to small businesses—2.7 million of them—courtesy of the fact that we are in a position to ensure that Australians get a fair return for the resources they own 100 per cent. In addition to that, we can make important investments in infrastructure, particularly in those regions where mining is strong and where there are capacity constraints.

That is why I say this is a very important discussion. The legislation coming up in the House later this year is absolutely critical to our future economic development, to strengthening our economy and to supporting jobs, particularly in small business. I am more than happy to sit down with the member and more than happy to have the Treasury sit down with the member to take him through our conclusions about that modelling, which demonstrate that the MRRT delivers a fair return to the Australian people and that that money is going to go back into important investments, not just in mining communities but right around Australia, to help small businesses in the whole community.

Health Services

Mr HUSIC (Chifley—Government Whip) (14:32): My question is to the Minister for Health and Ageing. Will the minister outline the investments the government is making into health services in Australia and how these compare with past investments? What reaction has there been to these? What is the government’s response?

Ms ROXON (Gellibrand—Minister for Health and Ageing) (14:32): I thank the member for Chifley for his question, because he and the member for Greenway, who asked the previous question, have been absolutely passionate advocates of health services in their electorates, not just in lobbying and arguing for investments in their local hospitals but also in e-health, in the Medicare Locals and in obesity programs like the Stephanie Alexander kitchen program. All of these projects are rolling out in their communities as we speak.

It is not surprising that members on this side of the House have been pleased by, and acknowledged and seen the benefits of, our early investments when we were elected to office—a 50 per cent increase in health expenditure compared to that paid by the previous government. Of course, then there are the historic reforms negotiated by the Prime Minister—another nearly $20 billion that is going into the system, with $3.4 billion of that right now. It is hard not to make the comparison that all these extra investments in beds, in GP services and in extra clinics, compared with when you pull money out of the system, are delivering benefits to patients—

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms ROXON: I think the members opposite do not want to hear about the past. Let us just talk about the promises that were made at the last election, because the promises that the Liberal Party took to the last election actually included a whole new raft of cuts to health services.

Mr Simpkins: You haven’t delivered on the superclinics yet.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cowan is warned!
Ms ROXON: GP superclinics were to be cut, the after-hours GP helpline was to be cut, e-health was to be cut, funding for GP practices was to be cut and funding for activity based funding was to be cut. If these were the promises made at the last election, and now we know the Liberal Party is looking for $70 billion worth of savings—

Mr Pyne interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Sturt is now warned!

Ms ROXON: let me just take the House through what that would mean in health: $70 billion worth of savings would mean that we cannot pay at all a Commonwealth contribution for the next four years for any hospital service in the country. That means 40 per cent of all hospitals would close, 20,000 hospital beds would close—

Mrs Bronwyn Bishop: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The minister is entitled only to answer for the responsibility she has in her portfolio. She is not responsible for opposition policy. She is out of order and should sit down.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Ms ROXON: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Obviously it is important for members of the House and the public to understand just how much money the Commonwealth does invest in various different health services. If people want to know, if you are trying to get to a total of $70 billion, the government would have to make a decision that not a single Medicare payment would be paid to any patient in the next four years. Or, as an alternative, what we could do is that, if you totally abolish the PBS and you totally abolish the private health insurance rebate, you still would only get to $58 billion. You still would not make the $70 billion that the Liberal Party are scratching around for. Last night, the Leader of the Opposition said to measure him on his record. His record in health was cutting services, and that is what he wants to do if he becomes the Prime Minister.

Member for Dobell

Mr KEENAN (Stirling) (14:38): My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer the Prime Minister to her expressions of complete confidence in the member for Dobell. Has the Prime Minister made inquiries to satisfy herself that she has been provided with all of the information by the member for Dobell in relation to the monetary amount of the gift that he received from the New South Wales Labor Party?

Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Prime Minister) (14:37): In response to the member’s question, yes, of course I have had a conversation with the member for Dobell. As I expressed in the parliament yesterday I have full confidence in him. I will happily repeat that today: I have full confidence in the member for Dobell.

A declaration was made that is there and transparent. Yes, it is true that it was made late and, as I commented yesterday in this parliament and am happy to comment again, it is not the first late declaration that has ever been made in this parliament—but people should abide by the rules.

Mr KEENAN (Stirling) (14:38): Mr Speaker, I ask a supplementary question. When was the Prime Minister or her office first consulted about the proposal by the New South Wales Labor Party to make a monetary gift to the member for Dobell?

Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Prime Minister) (14:38): Of course, there are assumptions drafted into that question, but I will put those to one side. It is not my intention in this parliament to comment on private discussions I had with the member for Dobell.
Mr Abbott interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! If the Leader of the Opposition does not want question time we can just go on to something else.

Economy

Mr Lyons (Bass) (14:39): My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer update the House on how the government is working with business to strengthen our economy and to deliver jobs? How has this approach been received, and what is the government's response?

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! I simply say to the members for Mitchell and Herbert that if they want to improve their Statler and Waldorf impersonation I can get them time outside to work on it. Otherwise, they should sit there quietly.

Mr Swan (Lilley—Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer) (14:39): I thank the member for Bass for a very important question, and one that is understood by everybody on this side of the House.

The government has been methodically putting in place a range of policies to deal with the challenges and the opportunities of a patchwork economy. That is why we are so committed to a tax reform package which will come to this House later in the year and which will deliver tremendous benefits to the 2.7 million small businesses right around this country.

We do understand how important it is to spread the opportunities of the mining boom right around our country, particularly to small businesses that are not in the fast lane of the mining boom. That is why we are so committed to the $6,500 instant asset write-off for multiple purchases by small businesses, to give them a real lift when it comes to their cash flow. That is very important for small business. It is the sort of tax reform that they have been looking for for years. It will be delivered by this government because we do understand the challenges of the patchwork economy.

It will deliver something like $1 billion to small businesses in 2013-14 and, of course, it is opposed by all of those opposite, who do not understand the challenges of the patchwork economy. That is why we are particularly putting in place a range of policies to deal with skill shortages and to deal with labour supply, because we do understand that for many businesses in Australia getting the supply of labour that is required can, from time to time, be very difficult. That is why we are putting in place a National Workforce Development Fund—that is very important. That is why we had, as the centrepiece of the budget, a whole range of reforms to increase workforce participation.

The one that I am most proud of, and which I know that everybody behind me is proud of, is the fact that we have increased substantially the tax-free threshold from $6,000 to $18,000. That is very important for second income earners in so many households right around this country. When they do work a few more extra hours they might get more in their hand. This is a fundamental reform that we have put in place but, once again, is opposed by those opposite.

We have put in place a range of other measures to ensure that many of those who are out of the labour market have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to get into the labour market, once again spreading the opportunity that flows from growth. So, that is what this government is committed to.

We are committed to putting in place carbon pricing and to assisting industry, particularly the trade exposed industries, because we understand that to be a first-rate
economy in the 21st century we do need to
be powered substantially by clean energy.
We are doing all of these things to grow our
economy and to respond to the challenges
from a patchwork economy.

But, of course, those on that side of the
House just continue to talk our economy
down. They talk it down whilst they are
digging a $70 billion black hole in their
budget estimates—$70 billion. We have a
plan to cut company tax; they have a plan to
send it up. We have a plan to increase tax
cuts to small business; they are opposing
those. But, most importantly, we have in
place strict fiscal rules and they have a $70
billion hole in their estimates.

Mr Hockey: You're a crack-up! You
make me laugh.

Mr Swan: A $70 billion hole; and you
do not find $70 billion, shadow Treasurer, by
putting your hand down the inside of the
couch and finding it there beside all the
chocolate wrappers.

Budget

Mr Hockey (North Sydney) (14:44):
My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer
the Prime Minister to the concerns she
expressed early this year about the impact
the Queensland floods would have on the
budget bottom line leading her to impose a
$1.8 billion levy on Australian families to
make up for the potential shortfall. Given the
government's own figures suggest her carbon
tax will create a $2.9 billion hole in the
budget this year, how does the Prime
Minister intend to make up for this shortfall?

Honourable members interjecting—

The Speaker: Order! The member for
Dickson, the member for North Sydney and
the Treasurer will sit there quietly or they
will have a conversation outside. The Prime
Minister has the call.

Ms Gillard (Lalor—Prime Minister)
(14:45): I thank the shadow Treasurer for
his question. Yes, earlier this year, working
alongside the Treasurer, the finance minister
and my cabinet colleagues, I had to work out
how, responsibly, we were going to finance
the rebuilding of the nation and most
particularly Queensland. We made the
determination that we would do that by
budget cutbacks and a large number of
budget cutbacks were made. They were not
easy but they were necessary to have the
resources to rebuild Queensland and the rest
of the nation. We also took what was not an
easy decision but was the right decision to
impose a flood levy which would
predominantly be paid by upper income
earners and we brought that legislation to the
parliament.

Mr Ewen Jones interjecting—

Ms Gillard: At that time the
opposition, the shadow Treasurer and the
Leader of the Opposition claimed—

The Speaker: Order! The member for
Herbert has had a warning. He will leave the
chamber for one hour under standing order
94(a).

The member for Herbert then left the
chamber.

Ms Gillard: that this would destroy
the economy, it would destroy families and it
would destroy everything in Australia—and
of course they have been proved absolutely
wrong.

Mr Hockey: Mr Speaker, I rise on a
point of order on relevance. I asked the
Prime Minister: how will she fund the $2.9
billion hole now created by the carbon tax
this year?

The Speaker: That was the last
portion of the question. The Prime Minister
has the call. She knows that she has to be
directly relevant and the question was more than what was just repeated.

Ms GILLARD: The question drew a direct comparison between decision making earlier this year on the flood levy and that on carbon pricing and so I am addressing the first part of the question. In addressing the first part of the question, we saw a fear campaign from the opposition and now they do not even utter the words 'flood levy', as far as I can tell. I have not heard them utter them once since 1 July, when it came into effect. It was an opposition fear campaign that just fell away, the same way in which the carbon pricing fear campaign of the opposition falls away piece by piece as the inconsistencies and untruths in it are revealed. In terms of the necessary decisions in relation to the budget, what we said, at the time of the announcement of the carbon pricing package, was that all of the figures were there for people to see and that we would do the necessary updating in the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook.

Mr Hockey: Where are the savings?

Ms GILLARD: What I would also say to the shadow Treasurer—who seems very interested in these matters and is now, quite remarkably, saying to me, 'Where are the savings'—is that when we announce the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook you will see yet again this government making savings. I would invite the shadow Treasurer on the same day to publish the opposition's figures including how they are going to cover the $70 billion black hole. If the shadow Treasurer is seriously interested in matters of fiscal consolidation and fiscal prudence then I think he will jump to the challenge and the opportunity to publish all of his figures on the same day as the government, including accounting for the $70 billion black hole. I would be very interested to see where the cutbacks are coming from, whether it is from pensions, hospitals, Medicare or defence. That $70 billion is the same as not paying the age pension for two years. Maybe that will be one of the Leader of the Opposition's decisions, but I will be very keen to see the facts and figures of it.

Carbon Pricing

Ms GRIERSON (Newcastle) (14:49): My question is to the Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government and Minister for the Arts. Will the minister inform the House why regional communities across Australia see the government's move to a clean energy future as an opportunity, not a threat? What recent efforts have there been to gauge community opinion and what is the government's response?

Mr CREAN (Hotham—Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government and Minister for the Arts) (14:49): I thank the member for Newcastle for her question because she, like me, was responsible for convening a forum in the Hunter.

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister has the call. He will be listened to in silence.

Mr CREAN: I thank again the member for Newcastle for her question. We convened a forum together in the Hunter to talk about the opportunities. This was one of 10 forums that were convened in the intervening break since the time the parliament got up. In all of those 10 forums there are two common themes that have come through.

Mr Dutton interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Dickson is warned!

Mr CREAN: One is the need for these economies to diversify their economic base and two is their preparedness to embrace a
clean energy future. In all of these communities, on the second point in particular, they are already making the change. They are seeing the opportunities in a clean energy future rather than the threats that they hear from the other side. They have shown real and positive interest in the package that we have announced. Whether it is looking at the opportunities in the Clean Energy Finance Corporation, the clean technology programs, the jobs package, the Low Carbon Communities package, the Biodiversity Fund or Carbon Farming Initiative packages, these are the opportunities they want to take because they have determined this agenda themselves. This is not imposed upon them; this is their agenda. They have determined the what and they are looking for assistance in the how. The package that has been announced by the Prime Minister provides that very assistance. One of these forums that I attended was actually in Whyalla. A couple of weeks before, the Leader of the Opposition had been to Whyalla and he had great news for Whyalla. He told Whyalla it would be wiped off the map. This was the rosy news he was giving Whyalla! That is not what the community in Whyalla was telling me. They saw real opportunity in this package for themselves. They are developing a green energy grid strategy. They have got a group that is looking for investment opportunities and skills. I visited two sites over there, a solar site which has a potential for in excess of 200 jobs and also a rare earths facility that has the opportunity of providing in excess of 1,000 jobs—hardly wiping them off the face of the earth.

This is the problem that we are dealing with here: an opposition that simply wants to run a fear campaign because it has got no policy substance. Its policy has been ridiculed by everyone who has had a look at it. In that policy it was the Leader of the Opposition that was going to close the Hazelwood power station until he went down there and spoke to the workers and said, 'Oh no, I'm not closing your power station,' walking as usual on both sides of the street.

Those redundancies at Loy Yang the Leader of the Opposition talked about before were announced back in March. This is old news, and trying to link it to the package is not just dishonest but running the fear campaign, which we will counter at every point and which we know the regional leadership will embrace. (Time expired)

Carbon Pricing

Mr HUNT (Flinders) (14:55): My question is to the Prime Minister. Does the Prime Minister deny that her own modelling shows the government will spend $3½ billion on buying foreign carbon credits in 2020? Does the Prime Minister deny that her own modelling shows that this will rise to $57 billion in 2010 terms or almost 1½ per cent of GDP by 2050, to be paid to foreign carbon traders? Given emissions in Australia will barely change over that period, is this not just all economic pain without environmental gain?

Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Prime Minister) (14:56): I thank the shadow minister for his question. Yes, the documents that go with our carbon pricing package, including the modelling, show that it is an internationally linked scheme—and, yes, to the shadow minister who asked the question, I understand he is in favour of an internationally linked scheme. He has been on the public record in favour of such a scheme. When he was on the public record in favour of such a scheme he was on the public record for exactly the right reason, because what the shadow minister said himself was that you have an internationally linked scheme so you get carbon abatement at the lowest possible cost. Absolutely right. So the
shadow minister used to support an internationally linked scheme.

I understand it now appears to the opposition that it best suits their fear campaign to be out there saying, 'Ergh, shouldn't trade with foreigners!' I do not know whether they sit with Rio Tinto and say that we should not sell them resources or whether they sit with BHP and Rio Tinto and say, 'Let's not sell them coal or iron ore.' I do not know if they go to Toyota, Holden or any of those companies and say, 'Let's not export the cars that we make.' I do not know if they sit in the boardrooms of law firms—

Mr HUNT: Mr Speaker, a point of order on a simple question of relevance: the question asked whether or not there would be $3½ billion spent on foreign carbon permits in 2020 and $57 billion in 2050.

The SPEAKER: The member for Flinders will resume his seat. The Prime Minister is responding to the question.

Ms GILLARD: We are a great trading nation and I understand that the opposition now are engaged in a lot of populist nonsense. For example, we have seen them bring forward a bill which would take us outside of the global trading order with the consequence of retaliatory trade attacks. Somehow they are going to try and justify this to the Australian people. We know that, if we are outside the global rules based trading system and the subject of retaliatory attack, all that will mean is lost jobs for Australians. Now, in the climate change area, they are going down the same path. Yes, it is an internationally linked scheme, because that is the lowest cost abatement for the Australian economy and we want to make sure we transform our economy at the lowest cost. Because you have determined not to have an internationally linked scheme, your already excessively costly polluters subsidy policy has moved from a per household cost—

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Tangney is warned!

Ms GILLARD: of $720 a year to a per household cost of $1,300 a year. We will do it in the most economically responsible way. It really amazes me that they can get the shadow minister to get up and ask these questions. It just goes to show how now throughout the opposition they have all succumbed to the Leader of the Opposition's culture that you will do or say anything in order to try and get political advantage, even if you said directly the opposite thing yesterday. I refer to the shadow minister's statements at a press conference of 10 July 2011:

I'll just make a brief point. Our emissions reduction fund is a very simple proposition. We will purchase the lowest cost abatement wherever it may occur …

In his National Press Club speech of 10 February 2010 he said:

… a tonne of carbon is a tonne of carbon. And that is all the planet knows.

That was said by the shadow minister. Never was a truer word spoken.

Parenting Payments

Mrs D’ATH (Petrie) (15:00): My question is to the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. How is the government supporting Australian families with a new baby, what risks have there been to this support and how is the government addressing these?

Ms MACKLIN (Jagajaga—Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs) (15:00): I thank the member for Petrie for her question. As she knows, this Labor government is serious
about helping families to support their family budgets. Also, most importantly, we have made sure we give newborn babies in families the best start in life by delivering Australia’s first Paid Parental Leave scheme. It was, of course, this Labor government that made sure that families, when they have a new baby coming into their home, can now get financial support to have a parent—a mum or a dad—stay at home with their newborn baby. I can let the House know that, since the scheme was introduced on 1 January this year, we have had 85,000 Australian families claim under the scheme—85,000 Australian families who have benefited. Right now we have more than 33,000 Australian families currently benefiting from our Paid Parental Leave scheme.

Of course, as those babies grow up, it is this Labor government that has improved support to the families where those babies are getting the benefits. They are getting the benefits of the extra childcare benefit and the childcare tax rebate that is now at 50 per cent compared to the lower figure that existed under the opposition. Of course, we have introduced the education tax refund, which is also delivering to parents to help with the costs of their children’s education. Very importantly—and this was never delivered by those opposite—we are making sure that, for those families that have older teenagers, from 1 January next year we will deliver much-needed additional assistance to those families. We will see around 650,000 teenagers who are staying at school getting extra support for their parents over the next five years. All of this demonstrates that this government is very serious about supporting families.

Of course, families know that the biggest risk to their budgets comes in the shape of this Leader of the Opposition. They know that this Leader of the Opposition went out with a thought bubble of a policy a couple of years ago—his paid parental leave policy, which was described by Heather Ridout as ‘the sort of policy you have when you’re not serious about having a policy’. That is exactly what this Leader of the Opposition is saying to families. He is saying to families that he intends to take $70 billion out of the budget. That is equivalent to 3½ years worth of family payments. That is what $70 billion is worth, and that is why Australian families have a lot to fear from this Leader of the Opposition.

**Carbon Pricing**

Mr CHRISTENSEN (Dawson) (15:04): My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer the Prime Minister to her claim yesterday that not-for-profit organisations like the CQ Rescue Helicopter Service in Mackay would be eligible to apply for carbon tax compensation through the Low Carbon Communities Scheme. I refer her to the fact that, with up to 600,000 not-for-profit organisations competing for those funds, each group might receive, on average, as little as $83 a year. Prime Minister, are you seriously suggesting that $83 will compensate CQ Rescue for a $20,000 a year increase in their fuel and electricity bills alone under your carbon tax?

Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Prime Minister) (15:05): Heavens above! It has been reduced to this. Of course that is not how the scheme will work.

Mr Hockey interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for North Sydney is now warned.

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Moreton might wait until the House settles down.
Transport Infrastructure

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (15:05): My question is to the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport. Will the minister inform the House of what progress is being made on reforming the national transport system? What are the risks to these reforms, and how is the government addressing them?

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the House and Minister for Infrastructure and Transport) (15:06): The Gillard government is indeed driving these historic reforms in the area of infrastructure and transport in Australia as part of creating a seamless national economy and as part of our productivity reform agenda. Tomorrow at COAG they will be considering the proposals in the intergovernmental agreements to move from 23 transport regulators down to three. There are real economic benefits for the nation, with a boost to national income of $30 billion over the next 20 years as a result of these historic reforms. For railways it means getting rid of seven separate regulatory authorities and 46 different pieces of state, territory and Commonwealth legislation, including seven rail safety acts, nine OHS acts and seven dangerous goods acts. Heavy vehicle operators will not have to deal with nine separate regulatory regimes to deal with their industry, supporting productivity and efficiency for operators. It will see one maritime regulator replacing 50 separate pieces of maritime legislation and seven separate state and territory regulators, each with overlapping and confusing regulation.

The benefits to these reforms to our national productivity are clear, and that is why the business community is sending a very loud, clear and unambiguous message to state and territory leaders, which is to sign on to these reforms tomorrow. There have been 10 separate meetings of the Australian Transport Council. We have crossed every ‘t’ and dotted every ‘i’. It is time for this reform. It is 100 years too late, but it is time to get this reform done. We are indeed back on track. This will be absolutely vital for getting rid of anomalies which are there. In rail, for example, red over green means caution in one state and full speed ahead in the state next door. There are different weights that are allowed on our heavy vehicles. The amount of hay you can put on the back of a truck in Victoria is different if the truck is in New South Wales and different again if it is in South Australia. If you operate, for example, in the Sunraysia region, then there is very confusing regulation there.

This is important reform. The opposition talked about this but did nothing about it for 12 years. We are going to get it done. In the maritime area, in which there has been some push back this week, I say this to state and territory leaders: if, for example, you are operating a commercial vessel in the gulf between the Northern Territory and Queensland, every time you cross the territorial waters you require different certification for the vessel and certification being redone for the staff of that commercial vessel. This is absurd in 2011. There are major gains: $30 billion over 20 years. This government has worked very hard to get the state and territories to the line where every transport minister throughout the country signed up at the ATC meeting in May. Tomorrow it is time for the premiers and the chief ministers to join with the national government in giving business the big win that it needs.

Carbon Pricing

Mrs PRENTICE (Ryan) (15:10): My question is to the Prime Minister. Can you confirm that a commuter who catches a bus, train or ferry to work from 1 July next year, and therefore reduces congestion and
emissions, will be hit by your carbon tax on the fuel used, while someone who drives a car, and increases emissions, will not?

Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Prime Minister) (15:10): I can absolutely confirm to the member that, as we announced, household petrol is out. It does not have the direct impacts from carbon pricing. We made a determination to do that and it is different to the earlier Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. Yes, of course there are flow-through impacts for rail, and I think buses were the other example you used, and all of that has been taken into account in the provision of household assistance—that is, it has all been taken into account in the less than one per cent rise in the consumer price index, which is an impact of less than a dollar in $100. It has all been taken into account. Consequently, because we saw that there would be that consumer price impact, we determined to have household assistance and major tax reform with the carbon pricing package. The way in which that assistance will work is that 1.8 million pensioner households will on average come out $210 in front. That is above and beyond what they need to compensate them for the flow-through impacts of carbon pricing.

People in the workforce who earn less than $80,000 per year will see a tax cut. We have associated that with major tax reform and the moving of the tax-free threshold from $6,000 per year to around $18,000 per year. What that means is that a million Australians will not have to fill in a tax return and many lower income Australians, people on a welfare-to-work journey or people who are second income earners will not see any tax taken from their pay packet. Week by week they will see the benefits of going to work. What these tax cuts also mean is that if you earn, say, $20,000 per year—many second income earners would, for example, because they work less than full time—you will see a tax cut of $600.

We have made special arrangements for families with children, with family payments increasing up to $110 a year. Special arrangements have also been made for self-funded retirees. If they are part pensioners, then they will see the same increase in the pension as full pensioners. Many of them will get the tax cut. There is also a change in the senior Australians' tax offset, which is of benefit to them.

So, if the member is interested in what things cost and the benefits that people get, I presume she would be desperately concerned that all of the assistance I have just referred to would be clawed back by the opposition.

Workforce Participation

Mr ZAPPIA (Makin) (15:13): My question is to the Minister for Employment Participation and Childcare and Minister for the Status of Women. Will the minister outline what action the government is taking to increase workforce participation, how this approach is being received and what is the government's response?

Ms KATE ELLIS (Adelaide—Minister for Employment Participation and Childcare and Minister for the Status of Women) (15:13): I thank the member for Makin, who I know shares this government's determination to ensure that, as we head towards a projected unemployment rate of 4.5 per cent, nobody gets left behind. This government is incredibly proud of the 750,000 jobs that have been created since we came to office. We know that they are having a very real impact on the lives of those individuals and also on the lives of their families and on their local communities. We are also determined to do more. We recognise the historic opportunity that we are now faced with: to reach out to those Australians who are on the margins, who are
on welfare and not currently experiencing the benefits that come with having a job. Our government is very proud that, over the next four years, we will invest a record $8.5 billion in Australia's employment services. Importantly, this now includes some $3 billion for disability employment services. This provides the opportunity to assist those who have been sidelined from the workforce to share in the benefits of having a job—the disabled, mature-age job seekers and the very long-term unemployed. We are determined that they will come with us and enjoy these benefits.

We are putting in place specific measures to assist this transition. As the Treasurer has mentioned, the increase in the tax-free threshold will have a major effect on the participation rate. But we have also announced some 35,000 wage subsidies for the long-term unemployed, new subsidies available through the Disability Employment Services, additional support and participation requirements to ensure that job seekers are job ready and able to take up these opportunities, and links through our mental health strategy to make sure that those suffering from mental ill-health are prepared for work. We are working with employers to remove misconceptions and discrimination which, sadly, exist within our community.

On this side we are taking an innovative and effective approach to achieve our goal of further increasing employment and of extending the opportunities that come with having a job for all of those in Australia who are at risk of exclusion. But what do we hear from those opposite—what do we hear from the policy-free zone? Where are their solutions, where is the innovation, where is the policy, where are their ideas, how are they going to tackle making sure that the excluded go into employment? Well, again, we are met by a policy-free zone, and the only thing that they come back to when talking about jobs is of course the return to Work Choices—the old Work Choices which they seem unable to break—

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister will wait until the House comes to order.

Ms KATE ELLIS: We do see the opposition come to life at the mere mention of Work Choices. But let us make it very clear: the way that we are returning those who have been excluded to employment is not through slashing penalty rates, it is not through slashing the wages and conditions of Australian workers and it is not through allowing unfair dismissal; it is through support, it is through resourcing and it is through new opportunities.

Australia's unemployment rate now stands as one of the lowest in the industrialised world, in stark contrast to that of all of our peers. We are proud of these measures in this government. We are pursuing these measures so that more Australians can enjoy the benefits of work and we are determined to continue doing so.

Parliamentary Language

Ms O'DWYER (Higgins) (15:18): My question is to the Prime Minister. Prime Minister, yesterday in the House your Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, Mark Dreyfus, called the shadow minister for innovation, industry and science, Mrs Sophie Mirabella, a name that is only ever directed at women and should never be spoken in this House. Will you abide by the standard that you set earlier in the year and ask him to apologise to Mrs Mirabella?

Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Prime Minister) (15:18): I understand that the Parliament Secretary for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency has indicated to the parliament that he did not use the word that the member
is referring to, but he did acknowledge that he used unparliamentary language and he withdrew it, which is appropriate.

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order—

Mrs Mirabella interjecting—

Mr Champion interjecting—

The SPEAKER: That includes the members for Indi and Wakefield. The House should tread carefully when there are other avenues that could be used if they wish to resolve this matter within the chamber. Carrying on a debate by interjection at question time is not the way which is appropriate. I think if you want to be actually true to the principles that are being exposed by the questioner and by the response then the other ways in which we deal with these could have been used by now.

Apple Imports

Mr MITCHELL (McEwen) (15:20): My question is to the Minister for Trade. Will the minister advise the House of the consequences for Australian farmers of rejecting the World Trade Organisation's ruling that New Zealand apples be allowed into Australia? What are the risks to Australian exporters and the economy in overturning this decision?

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! I simply say to all those that are interjecting—I assume on some occasions so that I take disciplinary action and they can go out and become heroes in their own electorates—that there are other avenues you can use to prosecute cases if there are differences. This is question time. A question has been asked. The Minister for Trade now has the call to respond to the question.

Dr EMERSON (Rankin—Minister for Trade) (15:22): I thank the member for his question. The World Trade Organisation ruled in November last year that New Zealand apples be allowed into Australia subject to scientifically based conditions. The government accepted that ruling in compliance with Australia's obligations as a member of the World Trade Organisation. Since that time, Biosecurity Australia, at arm's length from government, has been working on those scientifically based conditions. This has involved extensive consultation with stakeholders, from November last year until yesterday. Yesterday the director of quarantine announced the scientific conditions established as a result of those independent scientifically based processes. That does pave the way for the importation of apples from New Zealand. This morning, however, despite my urgings yesterday in this parliament, the shadow agriculture minister went ahead and announced that he will be proceeding with a bill that will overturn yesterday's decision.

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

Dr EMERSON: I hear, 'Hear, hear!' coming from members of the National Party. The opposition's bill is in direct contravention of the World Trade Organisation's ruling and would, therefore, put at risk Australia's agricultural exports by putting us in breach of the world trading rules. This would be the first time in Australia's history that Australia refused to accept a decision of the World Trade Organisation. Passage of the opposition's bill would open up Australian farmers to retaliation by New Zealand, which could legally apply tariffs of up to 100 per cent on Australian agricultural exports to New Zealand.

Of course, in seeking to score some base political points against the government, the coalition is signalling its willingness to
sacrifice the livelihoods of Australian farmers. The National Party should be ashamed of itself. Let us hear from an authority on this. Former Prime Minister John Howard once observed, when he was being urged to reject a World Trade Organisation ruling, that ‘Australia would be murdered in a trade war’. Those are not my words; those are the words of former Prime Minister John Howard: ‘Australia would be murdered in a trade war.’ He pointed out that we export four times as much agricultural produce as we import and that we could suffer four times as much damage in retaliation.

The present opposition leader has not prevailed over the shadow minister from the National Party because he has refused to show any leadership whatsoever. He is doing what he always does, and that is seeking opportunistically to harvest a few votes and to sacrifice the living standards and the livelihoods of innocent Australian farmers, who could be caught in the crossfire between Australia and New Zealand in a trade war. The opposition leader is willing to trash the so-called free trade credentials of the previous Prime Minister and of the Liberal Party. Why? Because he thinks there might be a few votes in it.

What about the farmers who would get caught in the crossfire? Why is the National Party not concerned about them? Why is the opposition leader so gutless that we have the National Party tail wagging the coalition dog? Show a bit of leadership. That is what you need to do. Show a little bit of leadership for once in your life. Resist the opportunism for which you are famous. You are cutting the throats of Australian farmers by not wanting to upset the shadow agriculture minister, because we know that the National Party determines the policies of the Liberal Party and that One Nation

advises you on your xenophobic, disgusting and appalling policies—(Time expired)

Ms Gillard: I ask that further questions be placed on the Notice Paper.

QUESTIONS TO THE SPEAKER

Questions in Writing

Mr HARTSUYKER (Cowper) (15:26): Mr Speaker, I ask you to seek a reply under standing order 105(b) to my question on notice No. 423 to the Minister representing the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy. The response is outstanding.

The SPEAKER (15:26): I will take action as required under the standing orders.

Parliament House: Tour Guides

Mr RANDALL (Canning) (15:26): Today I tried to organise a tour for people from Western Australia. The tour guides told me that the budget has been cut substantially, that they were unable to do it and that this has been going on for some time. Has the budget for the guides to provide tour services in this house been reduced? If so, what can be done about it so we can provide the hospitality necessary for our interstate visitors?

The SPEAKER (15:27): There have been readjustments, of course, in the apportionment of the resources to the Department of Parliamentary Services.

Mr Secker: Sir Humphrey!

The SPEAKER: I was trying to avoid using those sorts of words. I was going to indicate to the member for Canning that I will take his serious question on board and get back to him with a proper answer that gives him the detail. It may be that there is an element of truth in the question, but I will see what other avenues in that circumstance could be provided.
PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

Mr SECKER (Barker—Opposition Whip) (15:27): Mr Speaker, I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: Does the member claim to have been misrepresented?

Mr SECKER: Most grievously.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Barker.

Mr SECKER: Earlier today in the chamber the member for Wakefield verballed me and made the claim that I had attacked a $17 million package for the south-east of my electorate. I did no such thing. I merely pointed out that, if the government had had the right policies and followed the WTO rules, that package would not have been needed.

Mr HUNT (Flinders) (15:28): Mr Speaker, I wish to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: Does the member claim to have been misrepresented?

Mr HUNT: Indeed.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Flinders.

Mr HUNT: During question time today the Prime Minister asserted that I had supported the use of taxpayer funds to purchase foreign carbon credits as part of the coalition’s direct action policy to achieve a five per cent emissions reduction. This is incorrect. Firstly, the direct action policy at page 14, as released on 2 February 2010, expressly rules that out. Secondly, the Prime Minister quoted the Press Club speech of 10 February 2010. I will quote the full text:

… every dollar spent in achieving the 5% or 525 million tonnes target will be spent on reducing emissions in Australia.

Thirdly, the Prime Minister referred to the 11 July 2011 press conference with Mr Abbott. I will quote again from that. The words were: And the only other point on that is we would spend Australian taxpayers’ dollars in Australia. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister with both references refused to complete the reference and each expressly, clearly and absolutely rules out spending Australian taxpayer dollars overseas on foreign carbon credits.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member has made his explanation.

DOCUMENTS
Presentation

Mr ALBANESE: Documents are presented as listed in the schedule circulated to honourable members. Details of the documents will be recorded in the Votes and Proceedings and I move:

That the House take note of the following document:

Ministerial statement—Import conditions for apples from New Zealand—Senator Ludwig, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, 17 August 2011

Debate adjourned.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Carbon Pricing

The SPEAKER (15:30): I have received a letter from the Leader of the Nationals proposing that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely:

The adverse effect of the carbon tax on Australia’s economic prospects.

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

More than the number of members required by the standing orders having risen in their places—
Mr TRUSS (Wide Bay—Leader of The Nationals) (15:30): When the Prime Minister announced Labor's big carbon tax, she said she was going to wear out the shoe leather crossing the country to explain it to the Australian people. Well, it only took a few days and she has given it away. She did not have to dig too deep into Imelda Marcos's collection of shoes; I suspect the only pair she wore is still good to go to the ball. She is running away. She could not explain the carbon tax to the ordinary Australian people, and she has been unable to explain it to the Australian people in the parliament today. She could not explain how an $83 compensation payment would keep the Central Queensland helicopter service in the air when their extra bills were $20,000. She could not explain why someone with a factory had to pay a half a million dollars to buy permits for just one tonne of extra CO\textsubscript{2} emissions. She could not explain why she has a tax that is going to raise $30 billion over three years and yet end up with a $7 billion deficit arising from it, including $2.9 billion this year before the tax has even started. This is the calibre of this tax. This is the calibre of this government and the way in which it has endeavoured to sell this policy.

Labor's proposed carbon tax is a veritable birthday cake full of anomalies and contradictions. It is a carbon tax that looks like the camel designed by the committee that it is. There is a piece in it for everybody but it in fact delivers nothing for the Australian people. Labor says that the tax is designed to increase the cost of the things that we do so we will do them less and therefore we will save carbon dioxide emissions. Yet it then turns around and says, 'We'll pay compensation to people so that they won't be hurt by the changes.' So why, therefore, should they change their behaviour? The basic philosophy of this tax is flawed. It cannot possibly work to reduce CO\textsubscript{2} emissions, because it seeks to compensate for the penalties that might be incurred by ordinary householders. But it certainly does not compensate Australians who are going to lose their jobs.

Indeed, the document the government sent out to everybody explaining the carbon price—because the Prime Minister had not been able to do it one-to-one, she spent taxpayers' money to send out this document—makes it absolutely clear that jobs will be lost. It makes it absolutely clear that there will be damage to the Australian people. Indeed, in this 20-page document, only three pages are actually spent explaining the carbon tax. The whole of the rest of the document talks about compensation and what people are going to be paid. At the end of the line, it says 'On average, basically people will be 20c a week better off'—20c a week better off. A government that cannot get its billions right is suggesting that people should trust them when they say that they will be 20c a week better off.

Of course, the modelling was done on the wrong numbers. The modelling was done on $20 a tonne when the tax starts at $23 and goes up to $29, and then to $130 by 2050. The Australian people have been defrauded by this document because it simply does not tell the truth. Indeed, I am not sure that the government have all that much confidence in it either, because on page 3, right at the beginning and under the table of contents, it says:

The Commonwealth of Australia does not necessarily endorse the content of this publication.

So they have spent $4 million sending it out to the Australian people, but the government do not necessarily endorse the contents. How much confidence do they have in the scheme that they and their committee have designed?
This is a tax that is full of anomalies, and we are hearing about them day by day. A more efficient road network helps to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from trucks and motor vehicles, but the carbon tax will increase road construction costs by at least five per cent. That is going to add millions of dollars to the cost of completing the Pacific Highway and hundreds of millions of dollars to undertake the infrastructure projects that could actually achieve reductions in CO₂ emissions. That means many of these projects simply will not be built at all. Council rates will have to rise because the cost of building their roads, disposing of their garbage and doing all the sorts of things that councils are expected to do in their local communities will go up.

If Queensland sugar is shipped from Mackay to Melbourne, it will incur a carbon tax. But, if the sugar is imported from Thailand or Brazil, it will not, even though the carbon footprint for the Thai or Brazilian sugar and its transport costs will be very much higher. What kind of an incentive is that for Australian industry?

If you fly to Tasmania, Cairns or the Sunshine Coast for your holiday, you will pay a carbon tax. But if you go to Vanuatu, the USA or Fiji you will not. What kind of message does that send to Australia's struggling tourism industry? An airline in Asia will not pay the carbon tax, but an airline in Australia will. Is it any wonder that Qantas is looking to expand into Asia? No Asian country is proposing a carbon tax like this, but their operations in Australia will be taxed. Indeed, airline operators, particularly in regional communities, are very concerned about their capacity to continue those services. Rex have already identified eight routes that they believe they will not be able to continue once this tax is in place. The knock-on effect of the carbon tax will penalise everybody who wants to holiday in Australia. There will be higher taxes on top of a higher dollar. Now is most certainly not the time to impose this extra burden on tourism in Australia.

Let us turn to another area: motor vehicles. If you buy an imported car under Labor's tax you will not be paying the carbon tax, either on its manufacture or for the transport to Australia. But if you buy an Australian made Holden, Falcon or even a hybrid Toyota you will pay the tax. The car manufacturers have said the cost of building a car in Australia will go up on average by $400, a further disadvantage and a further difficulty in trying to keep the Australian car industry strong and viable.

The government says that it wants to reduce carbon emissions from motor vehicles. Indeed, in this booklet they say that the carbon tax will have the benefit of removing the equivalent of 45 million motor vehicles from the roads. Australia does not have 45 million motor vehicles; we only have 16 million. Where are the rest coming from? What roads are we taking them off? The government claim in the booklet that they sent to the Australian people that they are going to take 45 million vehicles off the roads—not Australian roads, because we only have 16 million vehicles. That is typical of the nonsense that this government is going on with. As we heard in question time today, if you take a bus, train or ferry to work you will pay a carbon tax on the fuel, but if you drive your own car to work you will not—except, of course, if it is an electric car. Then you will pay the tax. What is the sense in that? Are we really trying to reduce emissions or are we not? The New South Wales government has estimated that it will add $150 to the cost of public transport fares in that state.

If you buy New Zealand butter, canned Thai pineapples or Brazilian juice
concentrate you will not pay a carbon tax, but if you buy a product of Australia you will. How much do we care about our own industry? The Australian Food and Grocery Council tells us to expect grocery bills to go up on average by five per cent.

One of the government's other great anomalies—a nonsense in their carbon tax, and very much the centrepiece—is their determination to close down Australia's coal fired power stations. Coal fired power stations have given this country a strategic advantage. Our low-cost electricity has enabled us to attract industry from around the world. But the government say 90 per cent of these stations have to close by 2050. The Greens will not let us use gas either, so somehow or another we have to find some other way to produce our electricity. Yet the government insist that coal exports are going to double between now and 2050. Those coal exports will go to other countries so that they can build more coal fired power stations. For some reason or other Australian coal fired power stations, some of the most efficient in the world, have to close because they are environmentally evil, but it is quite okay for China and India to build hundreds more coal fired power stations and use our very own coal. We are exporting our strategic advantage, hurting Australia and doing absolutely nothing for the environment. This policy makes absolutely no sense.

During the break, I visited the Sunstate Cement facility at the Port of Brisbane. Australia's cement production is a world leader in low greenhouse gas emissions. When you factor in transport, it delivers the lowest possible CO₂ emissions for cement used in this country. It is a clean industry, but it is going to cop—as a result of this tax—direct emissions costs, higher electricity costs, higher fuel costs for shipping, higher fuel costs for heavy vehicle use. Its inputs are going to be more expensive. The lime industry faces a crisis. The Thais are already setting up facilities to export lime to Australia because high energy costs are involved in cement manufacture. None of our competitors will face these costs. Cement manufacture in Australia will eventually close, and we will then have to import our cement from countries like China where the emissions are at least 25 per cent higher than they are in this country. We will be destroying Australian jobs, but nothing will be delivered for the environment. Indeed, emissions will actually go up—there will be higher emissions—as a result of Labor's tax. None of this makes any sense whatsoever.

Tomorrow the state premiers are coming to Canberra to talk about the carbon tax. The New South Wales Premier, the Victorian Premier and the Western Australian Premier have made it absolutely clear that they are coming here to tell the Prime Minister that they do not want a carbon tax. They know it is going to cost jobs in their states and it is going to increase living costs for the people who live in their states. They know that state services are going to cost a lot more: $100 million extra to run the hospitals, $57 extra in electricity costs for every student in their schools, a five per cent increase in road building costs, $150 extra for transport costs. They know the carbon tax is bad for this country.

It will be very interesting to hear what the Labor premiers say when they come to Canberra tomorrow. The Tasmanian Labor Premier, Lara Giddings, said on 7 March:

You'd have your head in the sand to say there aren't going to be cost-of-living increases ... That's not fair.'

Now is the chance for the Tasmanian Premier to stand up for Tasmanians. She knows this tax is unfair. She must say it tomorrow and join the premiers of New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia.
in opposing this tax. The Northern Territory Labor government passed a resolution through the parliament on 4 May calling on:

... the Australian government to exempt the Northern Territory from the proposed carbon emissions taxes for at least 50 years …

When the Northern Territory Chief Minister comes to Canberra he must tell the Prime Minister that this tax is no good for Territorians. They want to be exempt for 50 years.

What is the Queensland Premier going to say? She made it clear on 22 May that she was going to look at the detail and make a decision about what is best for Queensland. What is best for Queensland? This tax hurts Queenslanders, pro rata, more than any other state. They will lose $250 billion worth of income. It is Queensland where the coalmines will be most affected. It is Queensland that has a large part of the manufacturing and minerals processing sector. Queensland will be badly hurt as a result of this tax. The Queensland Treasurer is demanding $1.7 billion worth of compensation for their power stations alone.

This is the opportunity for the Queensland Premier to stand up for Queensland—not just to mouth the Labor rhetoric and run the Prime Minister's empty lines, not to get into her unworn-out shoes but to actually do something constructive for Queensland.

But there is another premier that I would like to quote—a former premier. The former New South Wales Labor Premier Morris Iemma, when he commented on this carbon tax, said:

... it won't change the world, but it could change the government.

Let's hope it changes the government, and changes it quickly, to save our country from this insidious tax which will cost jobs and do nothing for the environment.

Mr DREYFUS (Isaacs—Cabinet Secretary and Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency) (15:45): This must be a very exciting day for the member for Wide Bay. It is a chance for him to relive his moment in the sun while the Leader of the Opposition was away on holiday last week, when we had commentary from the member for Wide Bay, the Leader of the National Party, on Australia's economic prospects. We had a little bit more today from the member for Wide Bay on his ideas about Australia's economic prospects.

We have just heard from the Leader of the National Party exactly the same lines as he was using when he was the acting Leader of the Opposition last week, when he and the shadow Treasurer tag-teamed in their hyperbolic rhetoric to try and convince the Australian public that Australia's economy is like that of Greece. That is right; that is what the Leader of the National Party would have had us believe last week. We are like Greece, where the economic situation is so dire that it has shocked the world. Greece is a country that was so deeply in debt that it was at risk of immediate default—a country that the International Monetary Fund and the European Union had to step in to bail out. It is a country that has had widespread rioting in the streets as a result of budget cuts their government put in place to scale back the debt.

That was what we heard from the Leader of the National Party last week. He compared our country to Greece, showing that he is only too happy to talk down the Australian economy and only too happy to talk down our prospects into the future. He is only too happy to falsely raise alarm and concern, and undermine the confidence in the Australian economy. Today we have again witnessed the spectacle of the no, no, no campaign, which is what we hear constantly from the Leader of the Opposition
and the Leader of the National Party, as they use the Australian parliament to again talk the Australian economy down. I am more than happy, however, to talk about the impact that the government's carbon price package will have on the Australian economy. It is a major reform that will prepare our economy for a clean energy future.

First, however, I wish to correct the Leader of the National Party on one small point: his suggestion that the Prime Minister has done anything other than criss-cross the country to go to every state and territory to explain the carbon price. He seems to have forgotten that the Prime Minister, just to name a few places, was in Townsville talking about our carbon price package, in the Latrobe Valley talking to workers—indeed the Prime Minister mentioned this in question time, earlier, when she spoke about the contract for closure, which is part of the carbon price package—and just last week in Esperance, Perth and other locations in Western Australia before returning from the winter recess, which she, unlike the Leader of the Opposition, has spent talking to the Australian people about the carbon price package.

It is also a bit ironic that we have had, just a couple of days after the Leader of the Opposition reportedly and somewhat laughably said that we needed to keep the political debate civil—you would have to laugh at this Leader of the Opposition saying that the political debate needs to be kept civil—the member for Indi, a frontbencher for the opposition, going to tell a group of protesters to maintain the rage. Far from keeping the debate calm, what we have seen today from the Leader of the National Party is anything but calm. We have heard from him nothing that in any way touched on the reason for a carbon price policy—nothing that touched on the reason for taking action on climate change at all. Instead we have had more misrepresentation, more whipping up of fear and more of the same no, no, no type of campaign—and not a word about the need for effective policy.

We say that climate change is a global problem. It is a problem of the most severe kind—an environmental problem confronting not only Australia but the planet. It is one that needs to be grappled with by cutting carbon emissions. Although one would not know it from listening to the Leader of the National Party here today or listening to the member for Flinders, the shadow spokesman on climate change, the Liberal Party and the National Party in this parliament have a bipartisan agreement with the government, which is to cut Australia's carbon emissions by five per cent from 2000 levels by 2020.

I see some of the climate change deniers sitting on the other side of the chamber, including the member for Dawson, who actually does not want to take any action on climate change. That is part of the problem that the Liberal and National parties have—they have among their number those who do not even agree with the pathetic inaction policy that the Liberal and National parties are presently supporting. Nothing at all is ever said by those opposite about why we are dealing with this problem and why they, at least on paper, agree that there is a need for action. I will repeat it: the policy of the Liberal Party and the policy of the National Party is to cut Australia's emissions by five per cent of 2000 levels by 2020. In doing so Australia will be at least going some way down the track towards doing our fair share to deal with this global problem.

The Liberal and National parties are turning their backs on the future. They are turning their backs on the opportunities that are presented to Australia, opportunities that
have been grasped by other countries around the world, opportunities to participate in the economy of the 21st century—not the economy of the mid-20th century or of the 19th century but the economy of the 21st century, which will be a low-carbon economy. It will be one in which countries that favour and promote low-carbon, low-emitting industries will prosper. Those who wish to see us stuck in the industries of the 20th century, let alone those of the 19th century, will see our country flounder. The Liberal and National parties have adopted a position which would be the equivalent of saying to tradespeople in the 1920s that they should not learn new skills as car mechanics but, rather, stay as blacksmiths and carriage makers.

We wish our country to compete in the 21st century, not have our economy frozen in the mid-20th century. That is why the Prime Minister said earlier today in question time that our economic future will be strengthened by the Clean Energy Future plan. Our economic future will be strengthened by guiding Australia to the economy of the 21st century, which is a low-carbon economy. Countries which are developing low-carbon, low-emissions industries and services are the countries which will be leading the world in coming decades. The United Kingdom has recognised this. Germany has recognised this. Other countries around the world have recognised this. We say it is simply wrong to think of the carbon price package and our Clean Energy Future plan, as it appears those on the other side do, as a trade-off between the environment and the economy. A carbon price will help us take advantage of the great opportunities that lie ahead as the world moves to cut its carbon pollution.

Just to give an idea of the extent of these opportunities, the low-carbon goods and services sector is estimated to be worth about $4.8 trillion globally and to employ 28 million people. It is a sector that is growing at four per cent a year and is expected to continue to accelerate. I will just quote someone who, on any view, comes from the inner ranks of business, Richard Lambert, who was recently in this country and also in New Zealand and is the former Director-General of the Confederation of British Industry. I heard him speak, and this is one of the things he said while he was here in July:

Taking carbon out of the atmosphere will require a whole bunch of new products and services to be developed, which will drive innovation and create new jobs and investment.

That's why companies like GE, Siemens, Jaguar Land Rover, Unilever and Marks and Spencer are not pushing back against carbon pricing policies. On the contrary, they understand that in the future they will need to be green to grow.

And that is, of course, why the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, David Cameron, wrote to our Prime Minister to congratulate Australia on the announcement of the Clean Energy Future plan on 10 July—because the British understand clearly that the future lies in adopting low-carbon processes; the future lies in putting a price on carbon.

But what do we have from those opposite? We have scare upon scare, misinformation upon misinformation. We have had more of the same from the Leader of the Nationals today. Extraordinarily, we had today in question time a question from the member for Flinders, who one would think from some of his past statements would know better, pushing what the Prime Minister rightly described as populist nonsense about the supposed problem of purchasing international carbon credits. This is the same member for Flinders who had supported, very directly, the purchasing of international
carbon credits. As he said, a tonne of carbon is a tonne of carbon.

We are looking for the lowest abatement cost for Australia. We have had confirmed by economist after economist, by the International Monetary Fund, by the World Bank and by other countries that the cheapest and most effective means of lowering carbon pollution in this country is through an emissions trading scheme. That is why our policy has at its heart an emissions trading scheme. By contrast, the Liberal and National parties, having now said with their populist nonsense that they would not be purchasing international permits or carbon credits, have turned their backs on lowest cost abatement for Australia.

The planet is not concerned with where a tonne of emissions is reduced. The planet is concerned with an overall reduction of the amount of carbon dioxide and the other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. The sooner those opposite begin to understand that that is the purpose of this policy, and that they need to have a policy that is capable of producing their supposed stated target, the quicker we will get to some level of rational debate in this country. The Liberal Party and the National Party, having ruled out the purchase of international carbon credits, are committing Australia to an on-budget cost that is vast—in the tens of billions of dollars. It would mean a cost of some $1,300 per household. It is a ridiculous way to proceed.

It is hard to believe that a party which supposedly prides itself on economic rationalism, which supposedly prides itself on a market approach to economic policy and which supposedly says that it does not like government picking winners and does not wish to have government throwing taxpayers' money at polluters has adopted a policy which does nothing other than that. Indeed, all economists have confirmed that the present inaction plan that the Liberal and National parties have is simply not capable of producing the emissions reductions that those parties have said they are signing up to.

We have had instead month after month of a scare campaign, month after month of nonsense from the Leader of the Opposition and nonsense from the Leader of the Nationals. We had the Leader of the Opposition out at a coalmine, which happened to be a Peabody mine, the day after the announcement of our carbon price plan and, embarrassingly, he said:

… the carbon tax is going to damage the coal industry … badly damage the coal industry … prejudice further investment in the coal industry … And so on. I say 'embarrassingly' because the same afternoon Peabody, an American coal producer, announced a $4.7 billion bid for Macarthur Coal, and some three weeks after that we had Rio Tinto launching a $10.6 billion bid for Coal and Allied—hardly the sign of an industry that is under threat. It is hardly the sign of an industry that is supposedly so prejudiced by this modest carbon price that is going to be imposed from 1 July 2012—that is, next year.

In question time today we also heard questions from the member for Gippsland referring to events in the Latrobe Valley and seeking to suggest that foreshadowed lay-offs in the Latrobe Valley, foreshadowed as of now, are something to do with the carbon price that is yet to be introduced. We hear from those opposite—the dishonest members of the opposition—that, in the coming months, they will seek to attribute every single dismissal, every single lay-off, in whatever industry to the carbon price even before it is introduced. That is an indication of the approach that they have taken throughout this debate.
Mr BILLSON (Dunkley) (16:00): What an embarrassment that was. The member for Isaacs talked about confrontations. Perhaps his confrontation with the member for Indi was why he was so chastened and so unable to address the purpose of this MPI—and that was the adverse impact of the carbon tax on Australia's economic prospects. He sat there and obfuscated about different data and about his interpretation, but the common theme that runs through everything this Labor Party say is that they are right and everybody else is wrong. Apparently the Treasury in New South Wales, which the former Labor government was happy to rely upon, now cannot be relied upon when they do their analysis of the impact of the carbon tax on the New South Wales economy.

Some time ago the Victorian Treasury, happily reporting to Premier Brumby, a Labor Premier, were the oracle of all thoughts, all accuracy or any analysis you could possibly have on the impact of a government policy on Victoria. But now when material is released from the government of Victoria you cannot trust it. What is really interesting is that you could even go to the Treasurer's own words. There were a lot of people at the Council of Small Business of Australia summit recently who just about choked on their little cakes over morning tea when they reflected on what the Treasurer had to say. The Treasurer said:

... some of the best, most grounded information I get about conditions in our economy comes from our small businesses.

This is what the Treasurer was saying. He was playing to his audience. He was there knowing that, for years now, this Labor government has failed to take into account any serious consideration that small business has had, and this has again played out when it has come to this carbon tax. Small business is at the pointy end of the impact of this tax. But, with all the compensation and the carve-outs that the member for Isaacs is happy to talk about, what does small business get? What direct assistance do they get? Absolutely nothing. What they are told by this government is that they have got to either suck up the extra costs that come from this carbon tax or pass them on to their consumers.

What small businesses are telling me is that consumers are very worried about their household budgets. Businesses that rely on other businesses are very concerned about the cost of their inputs. They are in no mood to take on additional costs at a time when, through the actions of this appalling Labor government, consumer confidence is at a very low level. Survey after survey points to a lack of confidence in the business community, and forward indicators about investment intentions and growth and plan acquisitions and future employment levels are all looking very grim outside the mining sector. But do you think the Treasurer wants to hear any of that? If he is listening to small business—and I hope that he is—I have something that small business would like to pass on to him. Small businesses in the retail sector are doing it very tough at the moment. So anxious are they about government policy that we are seeing Australian households doing what the government should be doing—that is, being very frugal in their expenditure and saving around 11 per cent of their income because they are anxious and uncertain about what this incompetent government is going to do to them next. All they can be certain about is that it will not be doing anything that is helpful.

If you go to the small businesses in the retail sector, as the Australian Retailers Association said, they can give you an analysis of what the impact will be of this carbon tax. And what was their analysis? Be mindful that the Treasurer says that he
listens, as the most grounded and useful information comes from small business. Well, I hope he listens to this: 85 per cent of the respondents in the retail sector believe the carbon tax will have a negative impact on their business, and 83 per cent believe that consumers will spend less. One-third of those in the retail sector anticipate that they will be forced to shed staff. They are the impacts in the retail sector of this carbon tax. What was most ironic is that the Treasurer started off by saying how he listens to small business and how sincerely he felt that. He was very sincere about getting such good advice from the small business community. If only he would listen to what small business has to say.

It is not just in the retail sector. Leading accountancy and business advisory firms like the Institute of Public Accountants have done their own work. Two-thirds of their clients said that there has not been enough consideration about the impact of the carbon tax on small business. Sixty-seven per cent think there is not enough information for small business to work out what the impact will actually be. One-third of them said that prospects for small business over the next 12 months are poor. They go on to say that the major sectors being affected—energy, manufacturing and construction and mining—are very anxious about the impact of this tax.

But what is interesting is when you then go to what the Treasurer has had to say: at that same COSBOA conference he actually said that retailers will be better off under the carbon tax. You should have heard the audience at that COSBOA summit. To quote John McEnroe after a bad line call, 'You can't be serious!' But the Treasurer was saying that this would be good for retail—let us put aside all the analysis and all the insights from the Australian Retailers Association, let us put aside the field of evidence as we walk down the main streets of our communities in this country and see shops close, and let us put aside the consistent survey results of any credible surveying firm from any source you care to point to that says retail is doing it hard and this is going to make it worse. This carbon tax is going to make retail, already in a difficult situation, even worse—but not according to Wayne Swan, not according to our Treasurer. In a bizarre twist, our Treasurer said that the government is doing such a good job in overcompensating people that people will race down to the shops and spend the extra windfall. That is what the Treasurer said. You could hear the jaws dropping at Homebush. People were sitting there thinking about what John McEnroe would say to the Treasurer: 'You can't be serious!'

It was the most extraordinary thing you have ever heard. And he went on to make the assertion that there would be such a minuscule impact on prices that consumers should not have to worry about it. But it gets worse: to try and keep up this fiction that the government run they have rolled out the ACCC. The Prime Minister has told the ACCC that if anyone puts their prices up by more than 0.7 per cent they will be charged with price gouging. What is this? Are we now stalking small businesses which—having been told nonsense by the government—actually speak frankly and honestly to their consumers that the price rises are more than 0.7 per cent as a result of a carbon tax, and so they risk a $1.1 million fine from the ACCC? What is going on with these guys?

This government is out of control. It cannot bring forward any meaningful analysis about the impact of its carbon tax on particular sectors, it cannot do it on any particular businesses and it cannot do it on any part of the economy, but it can do work
to help Labor MPs sell it to the households in their electorates. The only analysis that has been released is stuff to enable Labor MPs—many of whom are in this place under false pretences after they gained votes in their electorates from a deceit by the Labor Prime Minister Julia Gillard saying, 'There will be no carbon tax under the government I lead'—to run around telling households how good it is going to be for them.

Have they done any work on the impact on workplaces? No. Can they tell you which businesses will be passing on these costs and which ones will not? No. Can they tell you what the impact will be on particular sectors and industries, where those industries are going out and doing their own work, only to be abused by this Labor government for actually doing the analysis that the government should have been doing? No.

So what happens? Look at some of that analysis. In the great state of Victoria, in the two municipal areas of Frankston City and Mornington Peninsula Shire in my own electorate, figures were released by the Victorian government that show we will lose 1,000-plus jobs. Understanding the local economy, they are actually doing work on a geographical basis to see what the impact is. What happens then? The Victorian government then gets abused for doing that work. What is this government up to?

You cannot talk about the facts that others produce and argue that they are not right but not produce any information of your own. Everyone who is out there sees the field evidence of a carbon tax that builds and builds and builds at every stage of the production process and at every step of the supply chain, and for small businesses those supply chains are longer. They are going to have it building and building. Then the Prime Minister goes out there saying, 'Well, don't you put up your prices by more than 0.7 per cent. The ACCC will be after you with the threat of a $1.1 million fine.' The way that the government is going around verbalizing the business community, ignoring the small business community and talking absolute fiction about the impact of one of the largest carbon taxes on the planet, where most of the effort will be made by sending $3 billion offshore to buy the reductions from somewhere else, is outrageous. What a remarkable proposition.

This is worse than a placebo. A placebo actually has people thinking that something is going to happen, even though there is no active ingredient to bring about that change. This is worse because there is no active ingredient in the government's policy to bring about change, but the impact is disastrous. It is damaging, it is detrimental to the interests of this nation and our citizens, and the government and the Labor Party members do not seem to care a jot about it.

And now we have this ginger group, which says, 'We're really worried about the impact on our economy. We will go and have a gingerbread chat together and tell the minister we are really worried but do nothing to actually bring about change.' If the ginger group want to do something, come over here and vote with the coalition and axe this tax. (Time expired)

Mr HUSIC (Chifley—Government Whip) (16:11): I think that in all the hype and the confected outrage that goes on in this debate it is important for us to be able to go back clearly to why we are having to do the work we are in addressing climate change. Frankly, it is clear and without doubt that the activities of people over hundreds of years are contributing to the effect on and the change we are seeing in our environment.

It has been demonstrated quite clearly in the Climate Commission's work that was released earlier this year, The critical
decade: a report from the commission. It is evident that the atmosphere itself is warming, the oceans are warming, ice is being lost, the icecaps are disappearing, sea levels are rising and the biological world is changing in response to a warming world. And here in Australia, with less than one degree of warming globally, the impacts are being felt.

In the last 50 years the number of record hot days in this country has more than doubled. In this year alone in Sydney, for instance, we saw something that we had not seen—certainly not in my living memory and not in that of many others—a week of above 40-degree temperatures. I emphasise that this spanned an entire week. These types of events are more likely to be repeated than ever before. For example, the flooding we have seen will occur on a more regular basis. Sea levels are rising and have risen 20 centimetres globally since the late 1800s, impacting many coastal communities, and there will be another 20-centimetre increase by 2050. At the current projections it is feasible that this would more than double the risk of coastal flooding. The Great Barrier Reef, which we hold up as a world environmental icon, has suffered from nine bleaching events in the past 31 years.

These things do not happen miraculously or overnight. They are the result of hundreds of years of environmental impact brought about by our own actions, and we are unable to turn this around quickly. But, certainly, failing to do anything is not a recipe to see a better life for the people who follow us. This is why both the government and the opposition recognise that we are required to cut the levels of pollution by five per cent by 2020. This is ironclad on both sides of politics: a requirement that we must cut pollution by five per cent by 2020.

Through the actions that we seek to take we will see 160 million tonnes of pollution cut out of our atmosphere as a result of our actions. I note that the honourable member for Wide Bay did pick up on the point that that is the equivalent of taking 45 million cars off the road but said, 'We don't have 45 million cars on the road in Australia.' He is right; we do not. We have 12 million cars on the road in Australia and we will through our actions have, in effect, the ability to take out the pollution of 45 million cars. We are doing it in a way that is bringing in major economic reform and we will see environmental benefits flow out of it.

But we have heard many say—and we have had again the honourable member for Wide Bay claim—that this would have major impacts. The member for Wide Bay quoted people from the transport sector or said that transport would be affected as well as other sectors. He mentioned airlines as well. Let us look at some quotes from people from within the industry. For instance, Linfox Logistics in a joint statement said:

Pricing carbon is critical to provide business certainty and unlocking the jobs and investment that will accompany the transition to a prosperous, cleaner and internationally-competitive economy.

As the costs of action are outweighed by the costs of delay the carbon price should be implemented as soon as possible.

That is straight from them. We heard about impacts on the airline industry and on Qantas in particular. Let me quote from someone else who is very active in our domestic airline sector, namely Sir Richard Branson, who said:

Too often I hear commentators describe the battle against climate change as though it's a choice between growth and reducing our carbon output. This is wrong. Many of the fast-growing businesses of the next decade will be in providing
the fuels of the future and technologies to clean up and power our economies.

Indeed more than 50 per cent of today's carbon emissions can be profitably offset by technology that currently exists. The problem has been attracting and directing enough capital and talent to establish these technologies on a truly commercial basis.

That is exactly what we are trying to do by putting a price on pollution and creating a commercial incentive for those people who want to be able to bring in technology that is cleaner and has less impact on the environment.

The Australian Automobile Association in its media statement, I might point out, indicated that the carbon pricing package got it right in placing no extra financial burdens on Australian motorists. They said:

… it has been clarified that all fuels for light passenger vehicles will be exempt, and this is a good result for motorists.

The AAA congratulated the government on its efforts in terms of reducing carbon emissions.

That is what we want to do, but what do the opposition want? What they want is to effectively throw billions of dollars at polluters. Instead of taxing the highest polluters they want to throw money at them. As a result, we would have to see, as part of their direct action policy, trees planted over a surface area equivalent to five Tasmanias. They are going to find room to plant those trees. They have already, as has been indicated, said that there are all these areas that cannot be touched because of farming and ruled them out of the ridiculous debate that they have been engaged in between mining and farmers. They say one thing to one audience and another thing to someone else, but they are claiming that with their direct action policy, which will run out of puff 25 per cent of the way to trying to reach the five per cent target, they will be able to plant trees to get their way out of this, which is simply a farce.

There is this reliance on New South Wales as some sort of indicator of the impacts. The New South Wales government got a Frontier Economics study, dusted it off, handed it to Treasury and asked them to validate the figures. That is all that Treasury did. This was from a New South Wales government that said that a carbon price would cause a 20 per cent lift in electricity prices but then had to correct it under this very modelling to 15 per cent, when the reality is that it will be 10 per cent and it will be offset through the assistance that we provide. Who actually put this together? Frontier Economics founder Danny Price, who I remember at some point would actually back the coalition in providing some of its policies but, when asked whether or not he could with a straight face back the direct action plan, took a step backwards.

There is no economist in Australia, no plausible scientist, who would back the direct action plan. Name one. The re is a simple challenge: name one economist who would say that what they are proposing is economically feasible. Yet the opposition come in here claiming that this carbon tax will have an economic impact. The minute an economist says, 'In fact, your plans aren't going to do much,' they go out and rustle up a posse, hunting down all economists and slagging them off in public, claiming that those economists have no idea what they are talking about and then come in here claiming that there will be some economic impact as a result of the response that is required in environmental change.

The thing that gets me the most is that, if it were that side of politics on this side of the chamber, they would be saying that this is a national challenge we have to respond to and going all out for it. It is more likely than not,
as opposed to what they are doing now, that we would work with them just as we did in 2009. But, frankly, that side of politics has an elitist view that they are the only people who undertake national economic or environmental reform and that if anyone else dares to—if anyone else contemplates doing something of this scale—we are irresponsible in following that through. Frankly, on their side of politics, if they are not on this side of the chamber, the only aim they have is to wreck, to stop, to frustrate and to refuse reforms that are required for the benefit of this generation and those beyond.

**Mrs MARKUS (Macquarie) (16:21):** It has been interesting to hear the chatterings of members opposite. I noticed the member for Chifley was talking about our policy. Our policy will reduce emissions without destroying the economy, without destroying jobs and without pushing emissions offshore. I can say confidently about Labor's policy, the policy that members opposite support, that it will destroy jobs, it will push emissions offshore and it will do nothing to save or help our environment. People who have known me for many years know that I have fought hard for the environment of my electorate. I have worked hard to secure and save Cumberland Plain Woodlands. I have fought hard to deliver a Western Sydney conservation corridor, which members opposite did not vote for or support. I stand here committed to the environment—with many of my coalition colleagues.

Today's matter of public importance debate is about the adverse effects that a carbon tax will have on Australia's economic prospects. In particular, I want to focus on New South Wales, my home state. In March this year the people of New South Wales voted out the worst state government in history. Even though Labor is out of power in New South Wales, federal Labor are still damaging our state's economic prospects with the decision to implement a carbon tax. A New South Wales Treasury review has found that the federal Labor government's carbon tax will cost the state at least 31,000 net jobs and deliver a $3.7 billion annual hit to the state's economy.

Despite the Prime Minister's desperate attempts to mislead this parliament today, I can confirm that the New South Wales modelling has been done on a carbon price of $23 per tonne and that the job losses are net amounts. The same review has found that electricity prices will be forced up by as much as $498 a year for households. Businesses will bear further increases of between $927 and $4,191 a year depending on their usage. Many of the local manufacturers in my electorate are telling me that these are low estimates and that they are anticipating much higher increases and hikes in their power bills. What they are saying to me is they will have to consider either cutting jobs or increasing prices. Either they raise the prices of whatever they are producing or somebody loses a job.

These figures demonstrate without a doubt that Labor does not need to hold power in Macquarie Street to cripple the New South Wales economy. The damaging decisions being made in Canberra are reaching into every home and business across this nation. According to the state's Premier, Barry O'Farrell, and Treasurer, Mike Baird, New South Wales will be hit harder than any other mainland state. Mr O'Farrell has also said that a full review of the impact of the carbon tax by New South Wales Treasury has found that it would push up prices, cut jobs and slash growth in many industries.

State Labor pushed New South Wales to the brink of economic disaster. Now their friends in Canberra are trying to push us over the edge. The effect on New South Wales
will be felt right across the state, not just in my electorate of Macquarie, where I have met with many concerned manufacturers and small businesses, but also in places like the Hunter, the Illawarra and the central west, which will all be hit by a carbon tax.

Let me paint a bit more of a picture for you. As has been mentioned by the member for Paterson today, the Premier said that the carbon tax will result in the loss of more than 18,500 jobs in the Hunter region alone. These are people. These are individuals. These are people with families—husbands and wives. So 18,500 people will need to find another source of income to enable them to look after their families, to pay their mortgages and to deal with the rising cost of living for essential items like food, fuel and electricity.

The New South Wales Treasury estimates also show that 7,000 fewer jobs will be created in the Illawarra region and a further 1,000 jobs will be lost in the central west. The effect that these job losses will have on local economies will resonate not just in the local economy but throughout the state. The carbon tax will have a major impact on electricity prices. Mr Baird said that power prices in New South Wales are expected to rise by at least 15 per cent under a carbon tax. It is estimated that New South Wales government agencies will face combined power price hikes of up to $71 million. That does not account for other price hikes that they will experience.

New South Wales cannot afford the loss of revenue caused by job losses combined with this power price hike. This will affect the economic prospects of not only my home state but indeed the whole of Australia. It is not just the current New South Wales coalition government that can see how damaging the carbon tax will be. In fact, it is hard to hear the coalition government's concern over all the noise that ex-New South Wales Labor MPs are making about this diabolical tax. Former Premier Morris Iemma has come out and said of this tax:

One thing is sure—it won't change the world, but it could change the government.

John Della Bosca has also weighed in on the debate:

Action on climate change is one thing. Mr Della Bosca went on to say:

But I think the carbon tax is a mistake.

Mr Della Bosca then went on to label the carbon tax as the craziest thing the Prime Minister could have done. The Prime Minister is not listening to the people. When I am out and about in my electorate listening to pensioners, listening to families, going out and talking to small business and manufacturers, they say they do not want this tax.

The list of Labor MPs opposing this great big new tax grows daily. Current New South Wales Labor leader John Robertson has said that he will never publicly support a carbon tax. That is what he said one day. Of course, he did a complete backflip and the next day came out and backed a carbon tax. You could just imagine that phone call from the Prime Minister's office that night which led him to make a miraculous backflip. In fact, he learnt from the master of backflips, a Prime Minister who told us before the last election, and I repeat, 'There will be no carbon tax under the government I lead.' Labor are the same; it does not matter where they come from.

Earlier today the member for Greenway mentioned in a speech Tony Sheldon from the TWU. I wonder whether the member for Greenway would agree with his claim that, under the carbon tax, drivers will be forced to do long hours, sweat their trucks further, have less maintenance and that that means more deaths? Mr Sheldon said, 'How are we
going to meet the extra $100 to $200 a week when this tax starts smacking truck drivers right in the teeth?' I would encourage the member for Greenway to go and knock on the doors of some of the truck drivers in her electorate, many of whom I know. I would like her to ask them what they think about the carbon tax.

The list of people opposing the tax goes on. I want to talk about another group of people: small business owners, manufacturers, families and seniors that have raised concerns with me directly.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. Peter Slipper):** Order! The discussion is now concluded.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. Peter Slipper): Order! It being 4.30 pm, I propose the question:

That the House do now adjourn.

**Carbon Pricing**

Mr SCHULTZ (Hume) (16:30): I rise to speak with absolute disdain about the latest attempt by the Labor-Greens government to sell the carbon tax that the Australian people do not want and did not vote for. Over the last few weeks, my offices in Hume have been inundated with requests from constituents asking where they can return the taxpayer-funded carbon tax propaganda booklets that have been hand-delivered to households across the electorate. People are rightly outraged by the sheer hypocrisy of the Rudd and Gillard governments. The Labor Party once condemned taxpayer-funded advertising as a cancer on democracy but, true to form, this Labor government has gone back on its word, sending out millions of propaganda pieces wrapped in environmentally unfriendly plastic wrapping. As I have always said, never trust what Labor says; always look at what it does.

Where are all of the pro-environment groups such as Friends of the Earth and GetUp!? I would have thought that they would be screaming from the treetops to condemn the amount of carbon-neutralising forest that was cut down to make the millions of 20-page booklets or the emissions pollution created from the petrochemically produced plastic wrapping. In my book, silence equals complicity. Not only did the Prime Minister deceive the electorate before the election by stating, 'There will be no carbon tax under the government I lead,' but her government has now spent $4 million on the 20-page propaganda booklet as part of the overall $25 million taxpayer-funded advertising campaign to sell its carbon tax, which not a single Australian voted for.

Propaganda is exactly what this material is. I took the liberty of getting the Oxford dictionary definition of ‘propaganda’ just to make sure I was right, and it is as follows:

... information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view.

You can take the girl out of the Socialist Alliance but you cannot take the socialist out of the girl. The Prime Minister's carbon tax pamphlets are blatant propaganda pieces. There is no doubt this is information being used to promote a political cause or point of view, nor is there any doubt that the information contained in the pamphlets is biased at best and misleading at worst.

In the **Yass Tribune** yesterday, contributor Brian Millett, a person I do not normally agree with, summed up the biased and misleading portion of the carbon tax propaganda pieces:

The document claims that Australia generates more pollution per person than any other developed country including the United States.

This is certainly a frightening claim which becomes fairly meaningless when it is appreciated that Australia's population is about 7% of that of
the US and is spread over a huge area with over 22 million Australians against more than 320 million Americans in a similar area. Australia’s pollution, when viewed from this perspective, is almost nothing at all and is only 1.5% of the world's total greenhouse gases—and certainly not worth a radical carbon tax.

Mr Millett, your 'musings' are spot-on for a change. Australians are sick and tired of this government’s wasteful, hypocritical and reckless spending on pro-carbon-tax propaganda. Perhaps if Australians send their pamphlets back to the Prime Minister she will get the unbiased message from the Australian people, 'We don't want your pamphlets; what we want is an election.' I can say to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that I have reports from a number of post offices in my electorate who tell me that they are getting 'return to sender' parcels of these things back to them, and their junk mail boxes at the letterboxes in the post offices are overflowing on a day-to-day basis. I thank you for the opportunity to raise the issue.

East Africa Famine

Ms Parke (Fremantle) (16:34): At a time when Australian politics and debate seem to be characterised by relentless negativity and a kind of formless discontent, perhaps we should spare a thought for people who are today enduring terrible suffering, starvation and death on a massive scale. Shocking images and stories are filtering out to the world regarding the plight of people in the Horn of Africa—stories of women struggling into the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya with acutely malnourished children, having spent four weeks walking from Somalia. Many of them have been forced to abandon children along the way who were too weak from starvation and thirst to walk. These children are left still alive and alone on the side of the road in order to ensure that their siblings have a hope of survival. This is a diabolical choice that no parent should have to make. Even then it is sometimes too late by the time what is left of the family makes it to the overcrowded camp.

The worst drought in 60 years has wiped out crops and livestock and is threatening the lives of more than 12 million people in parts of Somalia, Kenya, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Uganda. The UN has declared famine in five of Somalia’s southern regions, with 3.7 million people in crisis, while in neighbouring Ethiopia an estimated 4.5 million people are in need of food relief. The United Nations estimates that 2.23 million children in the region are suffering from acute malnutrition—that is more than the entire population of Western Australia—with 25 per cent of those in imminent danger of losing their lives. For this reason UNICEF has labelled the crisis 'the children's famine'.

During the past months it has been estimated that as many as 2,000 Somalis are arriving at the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya each day. The largest such settlement in the world, Dadaab is designed to handle 90,000 people but currently holds nearer to 400,000 refugees. This overcrowding is creating problems of its own, with some refugees camping on the fringes, far from the life-saving services they need and exposed to exploitation. And these are only the people who have been counted. Relief agencies estimate that a further two million may remain out of reach of any assistance in conflict-ridden southern Somalia. Relief organisations are reaching only an estimated 20 per cent of people due to ongoing access restrictions and difficulties in scaling up emergency assistance programs, as well as funding gaps. More than 25 years ago the world came to the aid of people suffering a fate like this in Ethiopia. That famine threatened eight million people and prompted fundraising on an unprecedented scale. This current crisis promises to be
larger in every respect, with the sad exception at this stage being the level of donations. The UN estimates that $2.48 billion will be required this year to contain this crisis. So far less than half that amount has been committed.

It would be easy to simply put this underwhelming response down to donor fatigue, a preoccupation with worldwide financial fragility or the climate of fear and introversion that has ensued in the decade since the 9-11 attacks. Certainly the usual supporters of causes like this are right to question when we might see an end to such avoidable misery and to wonder if, through their efforts, history will stop being repeated.

The challenges in this part of Africa that comprise extreme poverty, food insecurity, political instability, civil war and the impact of more frequent droughts must be addressed and overcome for the medium and long term if we are to prevent future disasters such as the one unfolding before us now. But, in saying that, I am keenly aware that this is not a time for contemplation. As Woodrow Wilson said in his 1918 Armistice Day address to the US congress: 'Hunger does not breed reform; it breeds madness, and all the ugly distempers that make an ordered life impossible.'

Two weeks ago in New York I received a briefing from the head of UNICEF's Africa division, Louis-Georges Arsenault, who said that immediate action is needed to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe: the desperate hunger, ill health and potential starvation of millions of our fellow human beings, many of whom are children. I welcome the Australian government's timely boost of its emergency relief funding from $41.2 million to $83.2 million for emergency efforts across the Horn of Africa. We have doubled our commitment, and this is precisely the scale of increased assistance that is urgently required. I commend the Minister for Foreign Affairs for his willingness to act immediately and to fast-track Australian assistance for emergency relief through UN agencies as well as through NGOs, including Save the Children, World Vision, CARE, Caritas, Plan, Oxfam and RedR.

We need to continue with such efforts and go further or we risk this widespread food crisis and famine becoming one of the sorriest chapters in human history. Let us as a nation and as individuals remember the children in Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya and elsewhere, and retain a healthy sense of perspective on the things that matter.

Australian Noise Exposure Forecast 2025

Mr BALDWIN (Paterson) (16:39): I rise to speak on the Australian Noise Exposure Forecast 2025. The ANEF is a noise map promulgated to show the noise effect of the Joint Strike Fighter, which is due to be introduced at RAAF Base Williamtown in 2018. I have spoken on this issue in the parliament several times. However, this is the first time I have been able to say that the Gillard government has finally followed through on its ANEF promise, albeit eight months late. Last week, the government finally met its 2010 pre-election commitment to replace the ANEF over my electorate of Port Stephens. I am glad the member for Eden-Monaro is here because he is the person that actually made the promise to the people in my electorate. This is a huge victory for my constituents, who faced severe losses of property value and quality of lifestyle through no fault of their own and despite their own due diligence.

I point out that the great majority of people in the electorate want the RAAF base to stay exactly where it is; it is a critical driver of our local economy. After all, 25 per cent of all RAAF personnel are based at Williamtown. Residents only ever wanted
the RAAF to be a good neighbour. The new ANEF 2025, released last Wednesday, 10 August, proves that the RAAF and local people can be good neighbours. In that vein I would like to pay tribute today in the parliament to the community groups that worked so hard to help achieve the new ANEF, which alleviates the unfair noise burden created by the previous version of the ANEF 2025 noise map.

To Andrea Pitt and the Save Our Castle group, to Paul Le Mottee and the SAFE-EARS group, to the east and west Medowie groups, to those from the Salt Ash Weapons Range group and to the first residents panel to set up on this particular matter, the Save Oyster Cove group: on behalf of the people of Paterson I say thank you. This outcome would not have been achieved without you and the support of the RAAF.

While there has been fantastic progress on this issue, there are some lessons for the future and I would like to make a point of them here today. Firstly, the Gillard Labor government and Defence must learn to consult with local people when implementing such life-altering restrictions. From the concepts of the original map to the final promulgation of ANEF 2025, residents were simply not kept informed. Many people did not even know how the map would affect their properties until a public meeting I attended in Raymond Terrace. To make matters worse, when Prime Minister Julia Gillard visited Raymond Terrace on 19 August 2010, just days before the election, she chose to visit the pub just down the road rather than attend the ANEF meeting with almost a thousand affected people. In fact, she drove by the meeting. The Prime Minister chose to have a beer rather than listen to and consult with those people that were affected. That is just not good enough. I will certainly be working to ensure the government adequately consults as the map is moved through the environmental impact study stage.

Secondly, there is a lesson for the Gillard Labor government in taking swift, decisive action. The Prime Minister promised to replace the ANEF by the end of 2010, yet just a couple of weeks ago still nothing had been done. By the time the new noise map was promulgated, the Prime Minister was 222 days late on her own deadline. That is 222 days of anxiety, stress and fear which was completely unnecessary.

Thirdly, there is a lesson for local government. I say to Port Stephens Council, as I have said so many times before: you should not continue to rezone rural land that is directly under the flight path. To do so places future residents at risk. It also jeopardises the long-term operations of RAAF Base Williamtown, which is vital for the economic health of our region. Every single Port Stephens councillor voted in favour of the new Kings Hill development going ahead, placing a brand new subdivision directly under the flight path, and that includes councillors who live among the community already affected by the implications of noise maps. You would not build a house in the middle of a freeway, so why would you build a township directly under a major flight path? It defies logic.

Fourthly, I will continue to pursue the New South Wales government to instigate a grandfathering clause which would protect the existing property use rights of those who live in and around the RAAF base. Finally, I would like to place on the record for the people of Port Stephens that I will continue to fight for them on this issue. Despite the great development, there are still some issues that need to be finalised and I will pursue them with vigour. Once again, I thank everyone involved for their hard work. That includes the community and the RAAF.
Live Animal Exports

Mr KELVIN THOMSON (Wills) (16:44): Earlier today this House voted on what have become known as the Bandt and Wilkie bills, to end and phase out, respectively, the live animal export trade. I did not vote for those bills. In fact, only two members of this 150-member House did. Some calls and emails to my office have been critical of my not supporting these bills. What I need to say in response to this view is that I am a member of the federal parliamentary Labor Party, which took a collective decision not to support these bills and voted collectively not to do so. The Labor Party has a 100-year plus history of debating and voting collectively on bills. If a Labor MP votes against a caucus decision concerning legislation, which is referred to as 'crossing the floor', the usual penalty is suspension or expulsion.

I have a proud history of over 36 years as a Labor Party member, and for the past 30 years I have continuously represented the Labor Party at local, state or federal level. I respectfully suggest to some of my constituents and correspondents that it would be unreasonable to ask me to throw that 30-year plus history out the window for the sake of these bills and unreasonable also to ask my colleagues to do so. To do that would have been both an exercise in futility and a breach of faith with our electorates—an exercise in futility because crossing the floor would not have enabled these bills to become law. There were only two votes out of 150 in support of these bills, and no number of Labor backbenchers crossing the floor could have changed the outcome.

Crossing the floor and getting ourselves suspended or expelled would also have been a breach of faith with the hundreds of Labor Party branch members and campaign workers and the thousands of constituents who campaigned for us and voted for us, not because of our outstanding personal abilities and qualities—impressive as they may be—but because we were the Labor candidate and they wanted to get a Labor representative and a Labor government. Whatever the attractions people feel from time to time of becoming an Independent, such as political freedoms and, in this hung parliament, access to the corridors of power, many of my constituents would, with good reason, feel cheated were I to do such a thing, and I will not be doing it. They voted for a Labor member in this parliament, and they are getting one.

Now let me turn to the footage released today showing the hoisting of cattle and sheep prior to slaughter in Turkish abattoirs. These practices are unacceptable. I personally found them sickening. To have animals thrashing around after their throats have been cut is a disgrace. It is a clear breach of the OIE animal welfare standards and standards of common decency. Both the government and the industry must take action to ensure that Australian animals are not at risk of this inhumane treatment.

There is a clear message for both government and industry from this footage. Until it becomes universal practice to stun animals during the killing process, we are going to continue to see atrocities like the ones we have witnessed in Indonesia and, now, Turkey. I cannot understand why the live export industry still has not grasped this and has not acted to ensure that all animals are stunned. No doubt this will cost money, but the trade is going to be shut down by force of public opinion unless it is done. When you look at it that way, it is a pretty cheap investment.

The industry bodies Meat and Livestock Australia and LiveCorp have failed to do the job they are paid to do: ensure proper animal
welfare standards and the good name of the industry. They are letting Australia down. Their senior people should resign, and, instead of paying levies to them, the industry should look at paying levies to animal protection bodies with actual credibility—like the RSPCA, Animals Australia and the World Society for the Protection of Animals—to do the job of ensuring that the abattoirs to which we export animals comply with the expectations of the Australian public.

The government has established a caucus working group which is considering live animal export issues. It has also commissioned the Farmer review of the live export market that will cover all animals and all markets. I understand the review will provide its report and recommendations by the end of this month. Given these opportunities, I will be working hard to secure the decent and humane animal welfare outcomes to which I know many Australians aspire.

As I have said before, I personally think the live export trade should come to an end, and I believe both animal welfare interests and our economic interests would be better served by our processing all meat domestically, as New Zealand does. But, while this trade continues, both government and industry must move to implement stunning on all occasions because, until this happens, this issue simply will not go away.

**Carbon Pricing**

_Mrs MARKUS (Macquarie) (16:49):_ I want to draw the attention of the House to the adverse effects that the carbon tax will have on all of Australia and, more particularly, many of the people that live in my electorate. Those that I have talked to in recent weeks, particularly small business owners, manufacturers, families and seniors, are deeply concerned about how the tax will impact them directly. These are good, hardworking Australians who try on a daily basis to make ends meet to provide both for themselves and for their loved ones. Many business owners with vision, with plans and ideas not just for their future but for the future of all those that work for them and for their families, are putting those ideas to one side. They are concerned about the effects that the carbon tax will have on their capacity to build their businesses and to build businesses that will be able to employ and build the lives of workers that are part of their workforce.

A local bed and breakfast owner in Faulconbridge is worried about how the carbon tax will affect his electricity prices and his already very low margins. A local manufacturing company that has operated for nearly 20 years, based in Mulgrave, is another example. This company specialises in distributing mining related products and has seen a marked decrease in customer inquiries as miners begin to put jobs on hold. Another company in South Windsor who employs around 30 staff members has seen electricity prices skyrocket. They are uncertain about how they will be able to pass the costs on to their consumers and keep all their workforce if electricity prices continue to rise, particularly as a result of the carbon tax. There is also a particularly wonderful woman, a senior citizen, who lives in Springwood who is deeply concerned about how she and her friends are going to be able to afford to keep themselves warm in the middle of winter in the mountains. I want to highlight one thing: there is no compensation for small business. To implement a carbon tax would damage the economic prospects of our great nation, of these small business owners and of every pensioner and family that resides in the seat of Macquarie.
Today is Vietnam Veterans Day. Ex-service men and women around the country today and on the weekend will be conducting ceremonies to mark this occasion. This will happen in my seat of Page in the memorial park in Grafton today at five o'clock and in Lismore on Saturday. In my seat there are some wonderful veterans and their families who do really good work to support all veterans in the community, not just Vietnam veterans. Sheldon Maher, the secretary of the local sub-branch of the Vietnam Veterans Association, said that they were expecting a good crowd on Saturday and that is likely to include veterans who have shied away from the event in previous years. He also said:

Each year we have someone come who's never appeared before. They've stayed away partly because of the way the troops were treated when they came home from the war.

An article in the *Northern Star* quotes Lismore padre Graeme Davis as saying that the hostility shown to the returning soldiers was 'a blight on our history'. He was 20 years old when he was wounded at the Battle of Long Tan. He later became a major and went on to become a Catholic deacon. He is a good man. They both are. Padre Davis said:

We must never again as a nation allow our defence force people returning from active duty and/or peace-keeping duty to be treated as Vietnam veterans were.

We do not. As a nation we treat our veterans accordingly and properly. I know all people in this place are with me on that.

I also want to talk about a local issue in my electorate—that is, the Pacific Highway. Today the member for Richmond and I called on the O'Farrell-Stoner government to turn their pre-election words into action and significantly increase the New South Wales government funding for the Pacific Highway. Andrew Stoner in the *Coffs Harbour Advocate* on 30 March stated:

The NSW Liberals and Nationals are committed to road safety and plan for the upgrade of the Pacific Highway to be completed by 2016.

Mr Andrew Stoner also said in a media release in February:

... the NSW Liberals & Nationals will immediately fast-track the upgrade of the Pacific Highway if elected in March.

They have been elected, so we are waiting for the fast track to happen. Mr Andrew Stoner said in February 2011 on ABC mid North Coast radio:

We've committed an additional $5 billion … to fast-track vital projects. And I can't think of any more important than the Pacific Highway. Both Barry O'Farrell and I are absolutely committed to getting the job done on the Pacific Highway.

The member for Richmond and I also today launched a petition calling on the New South Wales coalition government to significantly increase their funding to the Pacific Highway and at the very least stump up an additional $750 million in their first budget, due on 6 September, to ensure that work can continue to ensure that the highway is fully duplicated by 2016 as agreed.

The Gillard government is doing the heavy lifting to fix the highway and make it safer for all motorists. Our 2011-12 federal budget announced an extra $1 billion in funding for the highway upgrade. We are now making a record $4.1 billion investment in the Pacific Highway over seven years, more than triple the $1.3 billion the former Howard government contributed over 12 years. The question now is: will the New South Wales coalition walk the walk after years of talking the talk? The New South Wales government is contributing only $500 million towards the Pacific Highway compared to the federal government's $4.1 billion. When in opposition the now Premier,
Deputy Premier and New South Wales Minister for Roads all claimed they would make the Pacific Highway a priority in their first budget if elected. We are waiting. The budget will come down soon. The time has now come for them to put their money where their mouth is.

This issue is too important to play politics with. The New South Wales government needs to step up and match the Gillard government’s record investment for this road. This upgrade is about saving lives and making the Pacific Highway a safer road for motorists. Both governments working together can achieve this.

**Online Shopping**

Mr FLETCHER (Bradfield) (16:57): In recent months a number of retailers have expressed their considerable concern about facing a loss of business to competitors over the internet, including competitors based overseas. Naturally, any businessperson is concerned to maximise their market opportunities. After comments were made by a number of retailers and a campaign was commenced late last year, an inquiry was commissioned by the Productivity Commission. It found, for example, that the online share of retail sales in Australia is six per cent versus eight per cent in the US and 11 per cent in the UK. It also made the point that online commerce is rising inexorably—from $35 billion in 2003-04 in Australia to $140 billion in 2009-10.

While there is nothing wrong with retailers making the argument they have, I do not agree with their argument. I believe it is not appropriate nor likely to be effective to seek to hold back the online tide. I think it is effectively futile because online commerce is transforming just about every industry, including retail. I also think it is undesirable because it would deny consumers choice and, based upon some of the arguments that have been made, risks returning Australia to seeking to protect Australian businesses behind tariff barriers.

I argue that it is the wrong approach because the better approach is for the retail sector to embrace the opportunities which the online revolution offers. Yes, you are now open to global competition but you also have a global marketplace. There are plenty of terrific Australian success stories in online retailing and in online business. I want to congratulate and commend all of those Australian businesses that are working so hard to succeed in the online marketplace by delivering offerings that better meet the needs of consumers and by offering attractive pricing.

**House adjourned at 17:00**

**NOTICES**

The following notice was given:

Mr HAYES: to move:

That this House:

(1) notes that the month of August is Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) Awareness Month;

(2) further notes that:

(a) 52 Australians die each month from this rare genetic motor neuron disease;

(b) SMA is the leading genetic killer of infants under the age of two; and

(c) this debilitating disease can occur in both adults and children;

(3) expresses support for:

(a) the Spinal Muscular Atrophy Association Inc.; and

(b) all Australian families affected by this incurable disease; and

(4) calls for the Government to:

(a) lodge SMA as a keyword with the National Health and Medical Research Council;

(b) provide support for practical initiatives for those affected by SMA; and

(c) promote awareness of SMA.
Thursday, 18 August 2011

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. Peter Slipper) took the chair at 09:37.

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Bennelong Electorate: Spurgin, Mr John

Mr ALEXANDER (Bennelong) (09:37): One of the great aspects of this new career is the chance to meet inspiring people. One such person came to discuss some matters with me recently in my electorate office in Bennelong. John Spurgin is not a name renowned around the nation and yet he left me with the feeling that here is a person who is the embodiment of a great Australian.

John told me of the new career he had begun with the Australian Taxation Office some 10 years ago. Soon after, he found he was not receiving his due superannuation payments. This was soon rectified and John received all that was owed. Then, a few years later, his superannuation payments were erased again. This time there was no satisfactory result and John continued to work at the ATO but did not receive any super. In June this year John Spurgin's employment with the ATO was terminated. There was no issue of performance and his record of punctuality and attendance was admirable to the extreme. The very essence of being an Australian is having a sense of fair play—a fair go—especially for the underdog, the battler.

John Spurgin has battled against discrimination for a fair go since he began working for the ATO. John holds no bitterness for his plight of wanting to work but not being wanted. John does not belong to a racial minority. He does not face any obstacles due to gender or sexual preference. He is able-bodied, married, physically fit, intelligent, educated, hard working and has a marvellous sense of humour.

John's great failing is that he has experience—too much experience. John is now 80 years of age. He was 70 when he started his last career. The law gave the ATO the option to pay his superannuation, from the age of 70 to 75, but then made it effectively illegal for this to be paid afterwards. In March this year the member for Mackellar introduced a bill for the abolition of the age limit on the super guarantee. This was rejected by the government and three Independents, due to a disagreement on whether this constituted a supply bill. Since then the government has been silent on both this issue and its election promise to lift the guarantee to age 75. It is not good enough for us in this place to hide behind technicalities and play politics with the precious future of those in our community like John Spurgin. For the first time in our history we are facing two generations of retirees, and any way that policy can be used to maintain active employment within these generations will be to our nation's great benefit. In Australia we laud our champions. John Spurgin should be equally lauded and given an equal chance to play, judged by no other criteria than his ability to do the job. John is a great champion and a great Australian. I watch with interest the commencement of his next career and certainly hope he gets a fair go. (Time expired)

Corio Electorate: Geelong Cemeteries Trust

Mr MARLES (Corio—Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs) (09:40): When we think about the story of Geelong and the way in which it is preserved and recorded, we
rarely give a thought to the rich resource in our cemeteries. The Geelong Cemeteries Trust manages 13 cemeteries in Geelong and on the Surf Coast. Each is special and significant, not just as a place of burial and solemnity but as a place to remember those who came before us and helped make our city what it is today.

_A division having been called in the House of Representatives—_

Sitting suspended from 09:40 to 10:00

Mr MARLES: For instance, the Geelong Eastern Cemetery is in fact Victoria’s oldest working cemetery: its earliest burials date from 1839, when Geelong was barely a town.

Some of our city’s and indeed Victoria’s oldest families are buried here. The stories of their lives, their successes and their failures are our stories: the stories of our city and region. Sir Charles Sladen, one of Geelong’s earliest settlers and a former Victorian Premier, is buried in Geelong Eastern Cemetery, as is James Harrison, who founded the _Geelong Advertiser_ in 1840 and who was famous for pioneering refrigeration technology through the first use of a compressed ether machine in 1844. One of the city’s most important pieces of road infrastructure bears his name: the James Harrison Bridge.

We have Alfred Douglass, an enterprising Englishman who prospered on the goldfields and then took a punt on a prefabricated house sitting unclaimed on the Geelong wharf, to thank for the enduring elegance of Corio Villa, one of our city’s most significant buildings. Thomas Austin is widely blamed for introducing rabbits into Australia. His graveside is now surrounded by those furry pests in Geelong Eastern Cemetery, where a resilient population continues to create a nuisance by burrowing around trees and digging holes in footpaths. Then there is the Armytage family, who owned Melbourne’s Como House. Thirteen family members are at rest in lead lined coffins in their superbly crafted family vault. Charles Brownlow, the Geelong captain whose legend lives on through the AFL’s greatest individual accolade, is also buried here.

We can trace our multicultural history through our cemeteries. Not only has Geelong Eastern Cemetery many early Chinese graves but it also has a Jewish section of historical note. When the land was granted in 1849 it became the only Jewish cemetery in Victoria outside Melbourne. In Grovedale the graves of the early German settlers remind us why Grovedale was once called Germantown. And King Billy, known to us as the last of the Barrabool tribe, is buried in the Geelong Western Public Cemetery. During his lifetime he defended his right to live on the land of his people, the Wathaurong, and saw Geelong grow from little more than a camp to a major agricultural centre.

The Geelong Cemeteries Trust reminds us that cemeteries are places of remembrance. For many people they are places of grief and for all they are solemn places. But with this in mind the trust encourages us to visit its cemeteries respectfully and to pay tribute to those who have gone before us. I echo this sentiment completely, and urge Geelong people to get in touch with our history and to honour our past by seeing these extraordinary places. On beautifully worked headstones we read the stories of love and loss, of children mourned and parents missed, which bring alive our history.

Mandie, Mr David AM OBE

Ms O’DWYER (Higgins) (10:02): Today I rise to pay tribute to a remarkable Higgins resident, a man who was a remarkable Australian who led a remarkable life. Yesterday
morning we learnt of the passing of David Mandie AM OBE at the age of 93 years. There are some people who do not enter public life, yet they have a profound influence on it. One of those people was David Mandie. David had three great passions in life: his family, his football and his community. Let me touch on the last one first.

David understood the importance of strong and accessible healthcare system for all Australians and put his time and support into achieving this. He started this lifelong commitment as a young man, serving as appeal president for the Jewish Young Men's Society to raise funds for hospitals. David also went on to serve on the appeals committees, raising funds for the Alfred Hospital, the Peter McCallum Cancer Institute and the Baker Institute for Medical Research, and was a life governor of Prince Henry's Hospital in Sydney. David was also a significant benefactor to the Epworth Hospital, and its entrance bears his name. David was founder and past president of the Armadale Auxiliary, organised for the sole purpose of raising funds for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for Mothers and Babies in Carlton.

Only the other week I was speaking with the chief executive officer at the St Francis Xavier Cabrini Hospital in Malvern in my electorate of Higgins and was reminded of David's contribution when I walked through the Minnie and David Mandie family entrance. David was also a dedicated member of Rotary, and was awarded the Paul Harris Fellowship for his service to Rotary as a member of the Rotary Club of Melbourne. He was a grassroots organiser, having brought together concerned residents to form the Stonnington Democratic Group for Home Owners, of which he was chairman.

His love of sport was legendary. A keen cricketer himself, he was a first XI player and captain of the Prahran Cricket Club, and went on to serve the club as treasurer and vice-president before becoming a trustee, life member and patron-in-chief. He was chairman of the Australian-Israel Olympic Games Committee in 1956 and was honoured by Maccabi Australia when they inducted him into their hall of fame. David was integral to strengthening the relationship between Australia and Israel through his work as the founding treasurer of the Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce and his support of that organisation, which is now one of Australia's most pre-eminent international chambers of commerce.

There can be no doubt that David was an optimist—after all, he was chief barracker for the Richmond Tigers for over 80 years and No. 1 ticketholder for decades! On Sunday, David watched the game with his grandson Andrew, and I know that he was delighted when his beloved Tigers beat Sydney. His service as chairman of the Victorian football league task force, which was formed to investigate all aspects of the VFL, culminated in the successful establishment of the Australian Football League.

David was a successful businessman. He started out on his own when he purchased a liquor shop in Abbotsford in the 1950s before building a strong family company that now employs 2,300 people in three separate countries. My own grandmother, who is 94 years of age, tells me that she dealt with David's business when she ran my grandparents' store, Dixon Liquor, in Chapel Street in South Yarra.

David's legacy will live on through his children, Evelyn, Ian and Stephen, and through their children. His legacy will also live on through the people he inspired and the causes he touched and nurtured. David lived his life by the tenets of hard work, humility, service and family. He is an example to us all to live a life and live it well. David will be sadly missed.
Franklin Electorate: Schools

Ms COLLINS (Franklin—Parliamentary Secretary for Community Services) (10:06): I rise to congratulate a number of school communities in my electorate of Franklin. It is pleasing that the member for Lyons is here with me. I know that he is supporting schools in his community which spent a considerable amount of time and effort recently trying to save themselves from closure.

Unfortunately, in June this year the Tasmanian state minister for education, Nick McKim from the Greens, put forward a list of 20 schools in the budget that were on a hit list for potential closure. This upset the local school communities. They had had no indication before that such a hit list was being drawn up or that they were going to be on it. There were four schools in my electorate on this list: Dover District High School, Franklin Primary School, Geilston Bay High School and Warrane Primary School. These schools were typically small and vulnerable and in most cases catered to regional communities, particularly Dover and Franklin.

Along with the other 16 schools in Tasmania, these schools were given just four weeks from the time of finding out that they were on the hit list to each provide a large submission to the state education department as to why their school should not be closed. Local community leaders engaged us, their local MPs, as they tried to fight to save their schools.

Certainly the process was not fair. Certainly I was deeply concerned, as I know some of my federal Labor colleagues were, about the timelines for these school closures. We were concerned about the consultation process—there was not adequate time for school communities to assess what was in the best interests of their students, there was no time for local communities to talk about the important and valuable role that schools play in their local communities and there was not, in my view, an assessment done on the best educational outcomes for the students. Instead, the process was based on raw numbers; there was no profile of the students that these schools catered to.

I congratulate the local school communities. They deserve all the credit for the change of mind by the state government. I also congratulate the state Premier for intervening in the matter and instigating a proper process of consultation to look at school communities in Tasmania and talk to the school communities about what is in the best interests of their students. I look forward to the outcomes of the review of this process, and I will be putting into the review a submission about how a proper process should go.

I have never said that no school should ever close, but I have certainly said that proper process should occur with school communities and that the best education outcomes for students should be the priority. That is what I will continue to stand for for my local schools as the review of the process is undertaken in Tasmania. All credit for where we are at now should go to the local school communities. They did an outstanding job.

Macquarie Electorate: Elizabeth Evatt Community Legal Centre

Mrs MARKUS (Macquarie) (10:09): I rise today to draw attention to the exceptional work done by the Elizabeth Evatt Community Legal Centre and to highlight the value that more funding would have for the centre and for the local community. The Elizabeth Evatt Community Legal Centre at Katoomba has been providing legal information and advice to disadvantaged residents in communities from the Blue Mountains to Bathurst for over 25
years. The service includes a tenant advocacy service and a women's domestic violence court advocacy service. Demand is high for all the centre's services and that demand always exceeds the centre's capacity to respond. The need for additional capacity is particularly acute in tenancy services, but the pressure on staff working in family law and domestic violence is also great.

The incidence of domestic violence in New South Wales rose 1.2 per cent in the 24 months to March 2011, a trend which has been reflected in the increasing workload of the Elizabeth Evatt Community Legal Centre. The centre offers many needed services to the community, including community legal information seminars where residents can attend and receive information on a range of areas, such as elder law, family law, domestic violence and wills. The centre also offers face-to-face consultation for residents who have more specific needs and this is a valuable source of information for all members of the Blue Mountains community.

Currently, the Elizabeth Evatt Community Legal Centre supports 13 very hard working staff members. We live in a time where many are struggling with cost-of-living pressures. These pressures were exacerbated during the winter months. The Elizabeth Evatt centre has seen a marked increase in residents who are suffering through financial hardship and in some instances homelessness. The centre works very hard to ensure that the needs of these people are met. It is important to recognise the increased workload of the team.

With this in mind, it is vital that the Elizabeth Evatt Community Legal Centre receives appropriate levels of funding. I have previously lobbied the Attorney-General on behalf of the centre to acquire funding from the Commonwealth Community Legal Services Program. The centre received $360,703 in Commonwealth and state grants under the program. The current financial hardship of many in our community has placed severe strain on the centre. I urge the government to respond to the needs that this centre is responding to.

I conclude by thanking all the staff at the Elizabeth Evatt Community Legal Centre for all the valued work that they do for the Blue Mountains community. The services they deliver are indeed greatly needed and greatly appreciated.

Lyons Electorate: Kentish Municipality

Mr ADAMS (Lyons) (10:12): Recently I had the privilege of visiting a small community in my electorate of Wilmot. A historical shed, which had been down by the Forth Falls and used as a picnic shelter and change room for the swimming hole, has been revived. It was a hayshed when Lake Barrington was formed and the falls went under the lake. This shed has now become part of the Wilmot Museum.

Its interest is in the names of the children who had carved into the back of the shed 50, 60 and 70 years ago. Many of those people were able to attend the opening of this shed and it was great for them to go through the names of people that they had forgotten, had swum with and had played with at the old waterhole. It was a very pleasant thing to be a part of. The shed had been taken away and used as a hayshed on a farm and was brought back and put together by volunteer labour in this wonderful community of Wilmot. There was a bit of a cost to using a carpenter to get it back up so they auctioned a painting of the Forth Falls which hung in the museum. Fortunately the purchaser of that painting donated it back to the museum and it was hung back where it came from.
Also in this local area, the Kentish municipality, there was a wonderful occasion for the local school due to the BER federal stimulus money. They were able to shift the infants' school back onto the full campus of the high and primary schools. That left the old infants' school available for the state government to give to the municipality to turn it into a health centre, with the federal government donating $1.7 million to allow this health centre to be built. The council was very bold and took on the leadership role. Just recently I was there when we opened the first stage of this, which is to have the local GP, Dr Kissalev, there with his staff and allied health workers. This health centre is a wonderful opportunity to get consulting rooms, a dental clinic, X-ray facilities, an allied health treatment room for the elderly, a disabled day service centre, community health and education and of course a little gym for the older people of the community. This is a wonderful thing to have occurred. I look forward to getting the rest of it up and running very shortly.

Petition: Fire Blight

Dr STONE (Murray) (10:15): Yesterday was a tragic day for people in the Goulburn Valley, where we grow 80 per cent of Australia's pears and a very big proportion of Australia's best apples. We have a lot of food factories that use pears, in particular, as a fundamental building block for their products. Yesterday was the announcement of the end of a decades-long battle to stop fresh apples coming from a fire blight infected zone, New Zealand, into this country. Yesterday we heard that we were not to have a strong protocol. The problem is that fire blight is an incurable disease. Once it gets loose in the orchards of Australia, it will take out the pear industry altogether. New Zealand is not going to export pears to Australia—they do not have them for that purpose—but they are saying to Australia, 'Don't worry.' Their scientists assure them that the fire blight bacteria cannot piggyback on a fresh apple into this country and, via bees, wind or water, get into Australian orchards. Well, our Australian scientists say that, yes, live bacteria can be transferred from an orchard with a problem to anywhere else that apple finally ends up.

The protocols that are to be imposed in New Zealand, which have now been ticked off, say that you can be actively out there in your orchard with chainsaws and streptomycin sprays trying to control your fire blight while your pickers are on the next tree taking the fruit off to put in a box to go to Australia. We are saying that that is absurd. Given that this bacteria gets spread, as I said, by insect, wind and wind-borne rain, how can we just stand back and not even expect or require that an orchard has been fire blight free for a period of time before the apples are able to be brought across to Australia? As I say, we do not have fire blight in Australia at this time. Miraculously, Australia has remained fire blight free.

There are two other pest species involved in this protocol—European canker and twirling leaf mite—neither of which are in Australia now. This protocol says that, if people make sure they are actively using the appropriate sprays in New Zealand, they can just pop their fruit in the boxes out of those orchards and send it across to Australia. This is a serious problem for us.

I have with me a petition. It has hundreds of names on it. There are thousands more sitting in my office ready for me to bring into this parliament. I wish to table this petition. It comes from the heart of the people of the Goulburn Valley and northern Victoria, who are saying, 'Please, there is one last hope for us.' A motion is going to be brought into the House to make
this protocol a disallowable instrument. If we can receive the support of the Greens on this matter, maybe there is one last hope for the Australian apple and pear industry. (Time expired)

The petition read as follows—

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

This petition from certain citizens of Australia draws to the attention of the House: The failure of the Gillard Government;

- to acknowledge the very serious threat to Australia's biosecurity through the importation of fresh apples from New Zealand which has fire blight;
- to implement strict quarantine regulations to guard against fire blight.

We therefore ask the House to instruct the Government to;

- immediately put a halt to the importation of fresh apples from New Zealand;
- direct Biosecurity Australia to establish strict protocols to protect Australian apples and pears from the fire blight disease.

from 413 citizens

Petition received.

Queensland Floods

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (10:18): I rise to update parliament on the steady but painful progress of flood recovery in my electorate. Five thousand two hundred properties in Moreton—4,200 homes and 1,000 businesses—went under in January. Queensland Premier Anna Bligh represents suburbs in the state parliament that are also in Moreton. The Brisbane River is our boundary. I still recall Premier Bligh's courageous words as the floodwaters rose to their peak and claimed more and more houses:

As we weep for what we have lost, and as we grieve for family and friends and we confront the challenge that is before us, I want us to remember who we are. We are Queenslanders. We're the people that they breed tough, north of the border.

With those inspirational words, Premier Bligh galvanised all for the recovery ahead. I am proud to say we are still standing—some of us a little shakily but we are still standing. It has not been easy. Some of us are lucky enough to be back to life as it was before the floods. Some battles with insurance are still ongoing and many people are still waiting for the builders to repair their flood damaged homes. For others, there are tougher times. The Premier's disaster relief funding, as well as federal government disaster payments, have been a godsend to many, along with some generous community groups. I thank the many generous Australians who supported the Premier's appeal. While countless thousands pitched in to do what they could, some went above and beyond. When Premier Bligh said, 'We are bred tough in Queensland,' she was talking about people like Michelle and Carl Matolat, who opened their home to an elderly couple left homeless by the floods. She was talking about people like Kylie and Shelby Robinson, who converted their basement into a flood relief centre to coordinate food parcels and replacement goods for their community. Then there are heroes like long-time Chelmer resident George McLachlan. George's cheerful and optimistic attitude was a great inspiration to his neighbours in the aftermath of the flood. He sadly passed away last week at the young age of 97. I am proud to have met him and to have recognised him with the Moreton Australia Day Award this year, presented in conjunction with Lady Killen.
As the recovery continues, there is much we can learn from the flood. The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs, which I chair, is conducting an inquiry into the operation of the insurance industry during natural disasters, because there seems to have been such a range of advice, support and service given to my constituents. Obviously this is not a witch hunt. We all know that we need a strong insurance industry. However, we also want to ensure that we can respond appropriately to future disasters from the lessons we have learnt from recent disasters. This is what happened after Cyclone Larry. The insurance industry was shocked by the scale of the disaster and changed a lot of practices. The Insurance Council of Australia shares this view and I welcome their generous cooperation and leadership in this regard.

The inquiry comes to Graceville in my electorate late next month before heading to the flood affected communities in Ipswich, Toowoomba and the Lockyer Valley. Then we head to Cairns and Innisfail to hear about their experiences following Cyclone Yasi and Cyclone Larry. I look forward to reporting back to the House in the months ahead on the outcome of the inquiry. (Time expired)

Cowan Electorate: Woodvale Secondary College

Mr SIMPKINS (Cowan) (10:21): I take the opportunity today to talk about the visit to the parliament on Tuesday by students from Woodvale Secondary College. We know that there is a lot of effort and cost involved for schools to come to Canberra, particularly for those who come from the outer areas of Australia, and Perth in particular. It is not undertaken lightly. There are a number of schools that are committed to taking the opportunity for the education of their students. Woodvale Secondary College, once known as Woodvale Senior High School, is one of the schools that has a good record in making their way to Canberra for the educational opportunity.

On Tuesday it was good to be able to welcome the school to the parliament and to move around with them as they engaged with the great Parliamentary Education Office's role-play scenario. I thank the Parliamentary Education Office for that. They were also guided through the Senate and the House of Representatives. During the parliamentary role-play I took the opportunity to say to Sheryl Hudson, the leading teacher of the tour, that we could look behind the scenes in the House of Representatives if she wanted to. She asked students who was interested in progressing past year 10 to study politics and a number of students put their hands up. It was good to be able to take them around and show them some of the things that the ordinary person does not get to see when they visit Canberra.

Very quickly I will name the students: Connor Bates, Natalie Travis, Connor Mallis, Katelyn Cole, Alex Kelly, Triahna Coombs, Rebecca Davenport, Lauren Turnbull, Rachel Newton, James Carr, Louise Counsel, Hetsvi Patel, Grace Holloway, Gemma Bailey, Albert Arulnamby and Jocelyn Bishop. As I said, it was good to be able to engage with these year 10 students, listen to the questions they had and help them with their enhanced study here in Canberra and their movement around Parliament House. I included the great decor of the basement, as it is one of the things that not many people get to see, or would want to see, but at least they had that as well. It was a great effort by the Woodvale Secondary College, and I thank the students for their interest in our great country.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. Peter Slipper): Did the honourable member show the students what used to be the cells downstairs?
Parliamentary Behaviour
Petition: Live Animal Exports
Petition: Definition of Marriage

Ms HALL (Shortland—Government Whip) (10:25): The contribution by the member for Cowan brings to mind the importance of bringing people to Canberra to see how our great democracy works and to understand that members of parliament come to this House to try to bring about change and make Australia a better place.

What has upset me enormously in recent times is the level of debate taking place within Australia. I have been involved in politics for a very long time and I am very fearful about where the vitriol that has crept into politics in recent times will end, and it is not only in politics; it is generating out into the community. A person like me who has been around for a long time can handle people being very angry and upset, but as members of parliament we have a role to show leadership and to encourage people to engage in debate in a civilised way. Unfortunately, in this country things have changed so much that the level of debate has descended to abuse and to the lowest common denominator. I am not necessarily saying that it is only within this parliament, but it happens within this parliament. I would like to think that we can raise the level of debate, show some leadership and move away from where we are at the moment.

I am the greatest advocate for freedom of speech that you will ever come across. I believe that people should have the right to express their views, no matter what they are. I accept that a lot of people have views that are different from my own, and I think that is great because that is what a democracy is about. It is about people having different views and being able to express those views, but that does not mean that people can abuse, threaten, denigrate or trivialise other people. So I say that it is time now for all politicians to show a bit of leadership and get out there and lift the level of debate in the community.

I have two petitions that I wish to submit to the parliament. These are petitions that I do not necessarily agree or disagree with, but they are the thoughts of the people who signed the petitions. One petition calls for an end to live animal exports, which was sponsored to a large extent by Temple Eyre. The other petition asks for the definition of marriage to be retained as being between a man and a woman. I seek leave to table these petitions, and in doing so I encourage all in this House to lift the level of debate, stop denigrating other people and show some leadership. (Time expired)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. Peter Slipper): The honourable member does not need leave to present a petition, under standing order 207(b)(ii). However, my understanding is that these petitions have not yet been approved by the Petitions Committee so the receipt of the petitions will be on the basis that they are in order. If they are not in order, the honourable member will be able to return and seek to table them as a document, with the consent of other honourable members.

Ms Hall: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: In accordance with standing order 193, the time for constituency statements has concluded.
BILLS

Industrial Chemicals (Notification and Assessment) Amendment (Inventory) Bill 2011

Second Reading

Debate resumed on the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Dr SOUTHCOTT (Boothby) (10:29): I rise to speak on the Industrial Chemicals (Notification and Assessment) Amendment (Inventory) Bill 2011, which amends the Industrial Chemicals (Notification and Assessment) Act 1989. This act originally established a notification and assessment scheme on a national system for the regulation of industrial chemicals. It was designed to provide protection for people's health and safety when dealing with these chemicals and provide for registration when people propose to introduce industrial chemicals. The act is administered by the National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme, or NICNAS. The bill before us makes two main amendments to the Industrial Chemicals (Notification and Assessment) Act 1989. The first is to allow for a mechanism to transfer chemicals from one government regulatory agency to NICNAS. The second set of amendments are designed to improve the efficiency of the scheme's internal processes. I would like to briefly cover these in a little more detail.

The main amendment contained within the bill before us will create a mechanism to transfer the chemicals from regulation under one government agency to the Australian Inventory of Chemical Substances under the management of NICNAS. It will achieve this by allowing the director of NICNAS to add to the Australian Inventory of Chemical Substances chemicals which have been transferred to the industrial chemicals framework from other Commonwealth regulatory schemes. Currently, in the absence of this transfer mechanism, introducers of chemicals to the Australian Inventory of Chemical Substances which were previously regulated under other Commonwealth regulatory schemes have been forced to meet the requirements of the framework and the associated notification and assessment costs. This amendment will remove this extra burden created by the government decision to transfer regulation of certain chemicals from one regulatory framework to NICNAS.

The second amendment formalises the notification and assessment arrangements for UV filters in secondary sunscreen products. These arrangements have been in place since October 2008 and these amendments just formalise that process. When cosmetics were transferred from the TGA to NICNAS in 2007, it was agreed that the data requirements under the TGA relating to UV products be maintained. This bill updates the NICNAS schedule to this act to cater for the additional data requirements relating to UV products.

The third and more technical amendment contained within this bill removes the requirement for NICNAS to publish summary assessment reports. Summary assessment reports were originally used when the full chemical assessment reports were not publicly available unless they were purchased in hard copy. The summary assessment reports provided a summary of the report and were available free of charge. The full NICNAS assessment reports are now freely available on the internet, making the need for summary reports obsolete. Removing the requirements for NICNAS to duplicate reports should increase the efficiencies of the scheme.
It is a rare thing to see the government decreasing the regulatory burden on business and industry, and making their departments smaller and more efficient, but this bill seems to do exactly that: it decreases the regulatory burden while increasing the efficiency of the scheme. For this reason, the coalition will be supporting this bill through the parliament. I can only hope that we start to see more reductions in red tape from the government.

Ms SMYTH (La Trobe) (10:33): I am pleased to support the Industrial Chemicals (Notification and Assessment) Amendment (Inventory) Bill 2011. The bill amends the Industrial Chemicals (Notification and Assessment) Act 1989, which established a national system of notification and assessment of industrial chemicals used in Australia. The National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme administer the act, and the activities of NICNAS underpin essential advice to other government agencies which make up Australia's regulatory system for industrial chemicals. The bill underpins the completion of the cosmetic regulatory reforms which were largely implemented in 2007. It completes the reforms to the cosmetic therapeutic interface and it puts in place significant technical changes to enhance the administration and efficiency of the industrial chemical scheme's assessment processes.

In 2007, to facilitate the transfer regulatory responsibility for certain low-risk cosmetic products from the Therapeutic Goods Administration to NICNAS, the NICNAS cosmetics standard was introduced. The standard enables NICNAS to set standards for certain cosmetics and impose penalties for noncompliance. However, a mechanism to transfer the chemicals in these cosmetic products from the TGA to NICNAS was not developed. This bill establishes that mechanism, allowing the transfer of these chemicals to AICS as well as enabling NICNAS to legally impose the same controls that had previously been applied by the TGA. The transfer process will be open and transparent, with any proposal to transfer a chemical onto the inventory being published by the director of NICNAS, with this also open to review by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. In the absence of any transfer mechanisms some introducers of chemicals have had to meet the more stringent requirements of the new chemicals framework with the associated notification and assessment costs or reporting obligations.

The bill also includes technical amendments to the act in relation to NICNAS's assessment processes. The act currently requires the director of NICNAS to prepare and publish separate summary reports for all of the organisation's chemical assessment reports. This practice was introduced at a time when the full assessment report had to be purchased and was only available in paper form. However, NICNAS now publishes the full public report on its website for all interested parties to download free of charge. To facilitate public access to these reports, NICNAS will also publish a short notice outlining the key content of new assessment reports in the Chemical Gazette with a link to those reports. The bill also includes technical amendments to the act's schedule to improve the consistency of Australia's data requirements with other national and international assessment schemes, particularly those requirements that apply to UV filters in cosmetics.

The cosmetics reforms in 2007 included the transfer of regulatory responsibility for secondary sunscreen products which are applied to the skin—for example, moisturisers containing a suncreening chemical. NICNAS has assessed the UV filter chemicals in these products by requesting on a case-by-case basis the additional data required for sunscreens
under the TGA. The bill allows the more efficient collection of data by creating a new section in the schedule of data requirements, including requirements specific to UV filters. The intent of this amendment to the schedule is to formalise current arrangements and maintain a consistent approach to the assessment of these chemicals across regulatory schemes. The proposed amendments will not place any significant additional requirements on the industrial chemicals industry, contrary to the remarks of the previous speaker. The bill has been developed in consultation with stakeholders and as a result of the collaborative approach adopted by the government, industry and the community. The amendments enable NICNAS to regulate chemicals transferred from other agencies and to ensure consistent data requirements and administrative processes to provide a much more efficient process and maintain transparency.

These amendments deliver on the Gillard government's commitment to ensure the most efficient regulatory system is in place for industrial chemicals while maintaining existing levels of worker safety, public health and environmental standards. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms KING (Ballarat—Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure and Transport and Parliamentary Secretary for Health and Ageing) (10:37): I thank the members for Boothby and La Trobe for their contribution to the debate on the Industrial Chemicals (Notification and Assessment) Amendment (Inventory) Bill 2011. The bill does fulfil a range of government objectives by continuing to protect public health and the environment; by reducing the regulatory burden on industry; by providing more information on chemicals in use in Australia; and by maximising the efficient use of NICNAS resources. The bill enables finalisation of the government's reform of the regulation of cosmetics, thereby creating long-term, sustainable and competitive advantage for the cosmetics industry while ensuring the continued safeguarding of health, safety and the environment. While the ingredients in certain cosmetics transferred from the TGA have been regulated by NICNAS as industrial chemicals for some time, these ingredients have been regulated as new industrial chemicals with the attendant notification and assessment costs of reporting obligation. The bill makes the necessary changes to the Industrial Chemicals (Notification and Assessment) Act to recognise these chemicals as existing chemicals through entry on the Australian Inventory of Chemical Substances. These mechanisms will also provide a regulatory pathway for future reforms that involve the transfer of regulatory responsibility for chemicals to NICNAS should a need be demonstrated.

At the same time the amendments also address a public health gap for chemicals in transferred cosmetic products by ensuring that the previous TGA controls become conditions of use under the NICNAS inventory. Further safeguards are built into the transfer process, with the bill providing the director of NICNAS with the discretion not to place chemicals on the inventory should they pose an unreasonable risk. The transfer process will be open to public scrutiny and subject to review by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. Moreover, chemicals can only be transferred to the public section of the inventory and not the confidential section, further ensuring public scrutiny of the transfer process.

The bill will also formalise the application by NICNAS of the TGA's data requirements for UV filters in certain products transferred from the TGA—namely, in secondary sunscreensing products such as moisturisers. The schedule of the act lists data requirements for new
chemicals that must be provided by industry. However, UV filters have some additional data requirements that are not covered by requirements already in the act. NICNAS currently obtains this data through an existing power in the act which allows NICNAS to seek further data not in the schedule. The bill will create a new part in the schedule for these additional data requirements so that industry will know upfront the data required for the assessment of these particular chemicals. This will deliver greater efficiencies and certainty for industry, improve the utilisation of NICNAS resources, and maintain consistency of approach across regulatory schemes responsible for UV filters.

In addition to implementing cosmetics reforms, the second objective achieved by this bill is to make technical amendments to improve clarity and consistency within the act. These proposed amendments do not place any significant additional requirements on the industrial chemicals industry but instead provide some added efficiencies by clarifying NICNAS data requirements in accordance with international best practice.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the support of stakeholders for the proposed amendments and their ongoing cooperation and assistance in the development of this bill. As a result of the collaborative approach adopted between government, industry and the community, I believe we have been able to achieve a well-considered and appropriate piece of amending legislation. I also acknowledge the work of NICNAS staff and thank the opposition for their support on these bills. I commend the bill to the chamber.

Question agreed to.
Bill read a second time.
Ordered that this bill be reported to the House without amendment.

Horse Disease Response Levy Bill 2011
Horse Disease Response Levy Collection Bill 2011
Horse Disease Response Levy (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2011

Second Reading

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

Mr JOHN COBB (Calare) (10:42): I rise to speak in support of the package of three bills to establish a horse disease response levy. The outbreak of equine influenza was only four years ago, in August 2007, and horses on thousands of properties were reported to have been infected over that time. In response to the emergency, Commonwealth, state and territory governments worked with the horse industry and horse owners to eradicate the disease. On 30 June 2008 affected areas of the country were officially declared free of the virus as no new cases had been reported for six months, since 25 December 2007. During this outbreak the Commonwealth government provided through various assistance packages about $227 million of the $268 million committed to individuals and businesses whose primary source of income had been affected by the outbreak and the subsequent movement restrictions.

This is why I strongly support the package of three bills to establish the horse disease response levy. The combination of these three bills will ensure that, if there is a combined
national emergency response, at the end of the day, the industry is able to fund that, subsequent to government dealing with it.

The first bill, the Horse Disease Response Levy (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2011 amends the Australian Animal Health Council (Live-stock Industries) Funding Act 1996 to enable a horse disease response levy to be appropriated to the Australian Animal Health Council. The Commonwealth will ensure that assistance is given to the industry to help in progressing R&D activities and/or the promotion of maintenance of horse health.

The second bill, the Horse Disease Response Levy Bill 2011, imposes a levy on manufactured horse feed and worm treatment for horses to enable the horse industry to repay amounts paid by the Commonwealth on behalf of the horse industry in response to an emergency animal disease outbreak affecting horses. The introduction of this levy is an important mechanism for the horse industry to recoup costs if the need arises. It will only— and I stress, only—be used or acted upon if there is an emergency animal disease outbreak affecting horses. The third bill, the Horse Disease Response Levy Collection Bill 2011, will enable the collection and administration of a horse disease response levy on manufactured horse feed and worm treatments for horses. The Commonwealth will be able to impose penalties for unpaid levies and the remission of any penalty for late payments as well as enable the collection of information and documents as specified by the Commonwealth.

These bills have come to fruition under this government after a typical initially half-baked approach which led to a failed attempt to pass legislation in 2008. While their motives were correct, the government's delivery of policy outcomes was less than perfect. A bill inquiry was conducted in relation to the failed 2008 bill. Horse owners identified the cause of the EI outbreak as a result of a breakdown in quarantine arrangements and the importation of shuttle stallions. It was because of these findings that the industry argued that a levy should be imposed on those most likely to contribute to future disease outbreak and who would ultimately benefit from any resulting compensation. The committee recommended the passage of the bill. The committee has indicated support for compulsory registration for all horses in the establishment of a national register. The legislation was ultimately reintroduced and defeated in the Senate on 4 February 2009.

Since then, there has been extensive consultation with the industry, with a constant stream of stakeholders coming through both the minister's and my own offices. Finally, on 3 March 2011, the peak horse bodies—the Australian Horse Industry Council, Harness Racing Australia, the Australian Racing Board and Equestrian Australia—each signed up to the EADR, an emergency animal disease response agreement, to fund dealing with future horse outbreaks like horse flu on behalf of the horse industry. The agreement means that the Australian government will pay for all costs associated with disease outbreak but then the industry has 10 years to pay back its share of the costs.

The horse industry had previously disagreed on how to collect its funding share. Recreational horse owners, understandably, had concerns that a compulsory levy would disadvantage them, but now the industry has agreed to place a levy of about 50c on manufactured feed and wormers. While there is not universal support, it is widely accepted that this is the best and fairest available option to collect the levy across the horse industry.

As previously mentioned, with the recent outbreak of the Hendra virus in Queensland and the discovery of the deadly disease in a dog, there is a very real need for the Commonwealth
to impose measures to assist in combating outbreak. Having said that, the Hendra virus has an awful outcome on humans and I would not want people to think that the animal industry is expected to fund those exotic diseases that have a serious human component, like Hendra. I do not want to confuse the issue there. But it does show how we have to act when a disease comes under our skies.

We on this side of the House are concerned about quarantine and biosecurity defences having been significantly downgraded. We need to be ready for an outbreak that will inevitably come. Labor's 2009 federal budget took another $35.8 million from the quarantine and biosecurity budgets, leading to the loss of 125 jobs and reduced inspections of arriving passengers and cargo. Fifty-eight million dollars was slashed from the Customs budget, leading to 4.7 million fewer air cargo consignments being inspected each year and 2,150 fewer vessels being boarded on arrival.

Science is taking a back seat as federal bureaucrats find reasons to ignore warnings due to funding shortfalls and there has not been sufficient support from Minister Ludwig or Minister Burke before him. I have serious concerns about biosecurity and quarantine measures in our country. Ignoring the myrtle rust and Asian bee incursions are two recent cases in point. New South Wales and Queensland tried, but neither got sufficient back-up from the Commonwealth government—that is, Minister Ludwig or Minister Burke—who pretended it was not really happening. Then there is yesterday's decision on New Zealand apples.

I strongly support the introduction and combination of these three bills. I think we have got to a point where, as much as is humanly possible, it is fair. It imposes a lesser burden on recreational animals and a far more serious burden on those who spend most on manufactured feeds and wormers, which, undoubtedly, the racehorse industry, the jumping industry and the professional horse industry do.

Mr CHAMPION (Wakefield) (10:50): It is a great pleasure to be speaking, finally, on the Horse Disease Response Levy Bill 2011 and related bills. I spoke on the previous bill in the previous parliament, in 2008. For all that time, the Australian horse industry has been left in a state of insecurity because we did not have arrangements in place to allow the industry and the government to adjust to any outbreak of disease that might occur. This comes after a decade of insecurity and indifference by the previous government to the risk of equine influenza. In my previous speech, I talked about that quite a bit: how the member for Wide Bay had basically adopted a 'she'll be right' attitude to the potential threat of equine influenza, despite being warned by people in the industry.

So this is unfinished business. It is a great pity that it did not come to the House before this. It is a great pity that the opposition rejected the bill in its first incarnation. I thought it was a profoundly fair bill, a bill that protected Australia and the horse industry and provided that industry with the same level of security that occurs in other livestock industries. We have potential levies in place for chicken meat, honeybees, cattle, dairy, chickens, sheep, lambs, goat and pigs. This was not a new concept in the previous bill. It was a perfectly reasonable arrangement.

I am pleased that the opposition has finally seen sense and we have finally been able to get levy arrangements on which there is a greater level of agreement. But I think we need to understand that we are never going to have universal approval for levy arrangements. There is always going to be someone out there who regards it as an impost on their business or on their
individual liberty. But levies, taxes and prices on carbon are all arrangements that are necessary for civilisation, for stable government and for security. They are the great compromise we make between our individual liberty and our collective security. I do not mean to fire up the opposition, but after a decade of their indifference and ignoring all these problems it is nice for them to finally come to a conclusion and say yes. It must be a heart-warming thing for the opposition—such a novel experience! One hopes that saying yes might be catching. You might get some warm fuzzies! We can only hope that this might be part of a new era of civility in our public life and that the warring parties might give it a rest. We can only hope.

Dr Mike Kelly: You have got to stop smoking that stuff!

Mr Champion: I live in hope. I am a great believer in cooperation. But it is good that we have some agreement on this bill and some agreement about how the levies will be imposed. They are going to be imposed on manufactured horse feed and worming treatments for horses. It will be a levy on consumers; we cannot not get away from that. People will not like paying it in the event of a disease outbreak. Initially, of course, the levies are all set at zero, so there will not be an impost unless there is an outbreak of disease. It is worth noting that the previous outbreak of disease cost the government—and therefore cost the community—some $249 million because of the financial assistance that had to be made to individuals, organisations and businesses. And that is not counting the significant losses that were experienced by people outside the reasonably strict framework that had to occur because of the high costs and the failure to have a levy. One constituent of mine, who made ribbons for horseshows—the prizes for the winners at pony clubs and many horseshows in my electorate—received no compensation and there was a great impact on her business. I remember her plight very well.

It is worth acknowledging the great contribution horses do make to our rural life and the culture of rural life—and I note that we have the member for Eden Monaro in the chamber. Although I do not have any spectacular jumps in my electorate—we have got plains for the most part—there are many pony clubs. My sister participated in one. There is a very famous rodeo in Marrabel in my electorate. Marrabel is a great little town. I got a six per cent swing there last election, and got 17 votes rather than 11. So I thank the one family who might have changed sides for their support. It is a great town and I have very fond memories of going to Marrabel in my youth and going to the rodeo there. It is interwoven with rural life and interwoven to the culture of it. When equine influenza hit, everything stopped for a while. All the horse components of country shows were cancelled, and you noticed that. It made a big difference in my hometown of Kapunda.

It is worth acknowledging that these great insecurities are out there. We know that we cannot put up the shutters and have a 'fortress Australia'. We live in an interconnected world, and that means that we must resist the siren song of protectionism and this idea of a 'fortress Australia'. That will not provide security; it will just cost us jobs, trade and opportunity. We have to acknowledge that we need to seek security in different ways—firstly, through prevention and, secondly, when we do have issues we need to respond to them quickly.

I commend this bill to the House. It is certainly nice to see the opposition finally saying yes. I look forward to these arrangements coming into place and making my constituents more secure in the event of any disease outbreak.
Mr BRUCE SCOTT (Maranoa—Second Deputy Speaker) (10:58): I rise to speak on the Horse Disease Response Levy Bill 2011 and related bills. I of course have a great interest in it, particularly because the trigger for this bill relates to a quarantine outbreak of equine influenza in Australia. I think that is the reason we have this bill before us today. As a consequence of what happened with the equine influenza outbreak, the industry had to look at how it will respond should a situation like that occur in the future and what the costs will be and who will bear those costs.

We would not be discussing this bill, I believe, were it not for a breakdown of quarantine in Australia. That breakdown in quarantine was a result of shuttle stallions coming, I understand, from Japan and carrying the equine influenza being transported to Australia to a quarantine facility at Randwick Racecourse in Sydney. It was from that facility, a quarantine facility, that the disease escaped into the domestic horse industry across Australia—and it spread rapidly.

In my electorate of Maranoa there is a big horse event at Morgan Park in Warwick. Race meetings in the outback were underway. The circuit had started. As result of it being identified, word got out into the horse industry, and not just around Sydney; it was identified in Warwick at Morgan Park, because horses had come from the Hunter. It demonstrates how quickly a disease—an exotic disease in this case, influenza—can spread when it gets out because of a breakdown of quarantine.

The whole of the landmass of Queensland was in quarantine lockdown. I mentioned Morgan Park at Warwick, for instance. There were people travelling with their racehorses from Mount Isa and Longreach to the Birdsville races; they were overnighting with their horses, I recall, at Windorah. They could not move; they were locked down there, 1,500 kilometres away from where the outbreak had been identified and had spread to, in this case Morgan Park in Warwick in my electorate. The races had to be cancelled—the Birdsville races, for instance.

Those races in the outback raise significant funds for the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Sure, the outback race circuit out there is a great event, but let us look at all the other benefits of it, not only for local tourism and commerce but the funds they raise for the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

Horses were stranded at Bedourie, Windorah and many other parts of Queensland, because, when the lockdown occurred, no permits were given to move horses from that facility. I remember the event clearly, because it was one of those issues where people said, 'Well now, this is a breakdown of quarantine in this country.' We were in government at the time; I remember it well.

The question is: where were the quarantine facilities and those associated with the administration and control of quarantine? How can a disease such as this escape from a secure quarantine facility in Sydney? If it can escape from a quarantine facility, what does it say about our other quarantine measures around Australia? Shouldn't we be running up the red alert in relation to quarantine generally? This was a breakdown in our quarantine.

It was contained because of the lockdown, but it affected some 8,000 properties around Australia. Compensation and measures to assist people affected—some $250-odd million—was just for the equine influenza incident affecting the horse industry. There are many other businesses associated with the horse industry that did not receive any compensation. It
occurred at the very start of the breeding season, if I can put it that way, with our domestic blood horse industry. I have blood horse studs in the east of my electorate—exceptionally good studs—for the racing industry. They had mares about to travel to the property. They could not come, so the service fee that those stallions would have generated in income for those studs was not realised. The mares were not able to travel. Those that were there could be joined, but those that were travelling over the next month or six weeks were not able to travel. So it affected the bloodstock industry. Pony clubs, rodeos, camp draughts, farriers and the transport sector were all affected by this—and I go back to the original point—because of a breakdown in quarantine in Australia. We should be running the red alert out on quarantine.

If a simple equine influenza and a breakdown of our quarantine can occur in relation to the horse industry, what does it say about the new protocols in relation to New Zealand apples coming to Australia? I know what the decision is, but I have to say: not only should we have the red alert out there; we should also make sure that quarantine here in Australia and in New Zealand is of the highest and strictest standards. The very fact that equine influenza has entered Australia through a quarantine station—and the cost to the horse industry and to associated industries has not been measured—demonstrates to me that, if fire blight comes to Australia as a result of Quarantine saying the protocols for New Zealand apples coming into Australia will not lead to an outbreak of fire blight, which I do not accept, we will have it forever. This levy bill resulting from equine influenza in the horse industry must demonstrate to us all that our quarantine protocols are not strict enough, and I do not have confidence in the protocols for New Zealand apples coming into Australia. This very bill should be shining a red light on our quarantine protocols. What does this also say about the possibility of foot and mouth disease entering Australia through our quarantine entry points?

I have to say that I am very, very concerned about our quarantine. I am very concerned about the decision yesterday to allow New Zealand apples into Australia. I witnessed the accidental, as it were, introduction of equine influenza that escaped detection through a secure quarantine station. So what does that say about apples coming from New Zealand in a container? Are they going to go through a quarantine station? Are there going to be any inspections here in Australia? If fire blight were to get here, we would have it forever. It would destroy the apple industry. Governments would then have to pick up the costs to the industry and the costs to individual families and orchardists across those regions.

I know the reason for this bill. It will certainly raise money and it has received agreement from the industry itself. But if we had quarantine protocols and quarantine policing, this bill may never have come before the House because we would never have seen a shuttle stallion coming from Japan to Australia, which obviously led to the outbreak of equine influenza. I acknowledge it happened on our watch as a government, but it should send to both sides of the House a red alert that our quarantine protocols can never be compromised. I fear that, with the agreement to allow apples in from New Zealand, we have allowed a compromise. There is no such thing as zero risk when you allow the physical product—no guarantee that it will not appear. Whilst this bill has the support of the industry, we must remain vigilant.
I can assure the House that I have got the red light shining on our quarantine right across Australia at every entry point, and I will certainly not be taking a back seat when it comes to keeping up scrutiny on this whole issue of quarantine. If we ever saw a breakdown in relation to foot and mouth disease entering Australia, I fear what it would do to our magnificent livestock industries in Australia. I am not wanting to lay the blame on anyone. It was on our watch as a government that this occurred. We have to make sure that we do not see a repeat of the mistakes of the past.

This levy has been agreed to by the industry to provide funds if circumstances warranting their use arise; they may never arise but, if they do, we will be prepared. Let us keep that red light shining. I will not be taking a backwards step at any stage in relation to quarantine. I thank the House.

Mr RANDALL (Canning) (11:09): I am pleased to speak on the Horse Disease Response Levy Bill 2011, which is being debated cognately with the Horse Disease Response Levy Collection Bill 2011 and the Horse Disease Response Levy (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2011. I do so because I have an abiding interest in all things equine. Just to give you a background as to why, Madam Deputy Speaker, right from a young person I spent a lot of time on the back of a horse. In fact, in my younger, sillier days I used to ride in rodeos in the circuit around Western Australia. I recall being on the front page of the West Australian riding the feature horse at the Western Australian Royal Show. It was not a very good picture because I was coming off at the time, but I did enjoy my involvement in those days. I further went on to semiprofessionally train thoroughbred racehorses for seven years, having my own stables at Ascot around that racecourse in Perth. I had some success in the city and the country training thoroughbreds.

When you extrapolate that into my electorate now, the Canning electorate is the home of much of Western Australia's horse industry. We have breeding facilities and probably the most pre-eminent is the Heytesbury horse stud, which is owned by the Holmes a Court family. We have many standardbred studs. We have the Pinjarra Trotting Club, which is probably the best trotting track in Western Australia. We have the Pinjarra Race Club, which has one of the best all-weather tracks and layout itself. Many of the hobby trainers, both at a standardbred level and at a thoroughbred level, operate within the electorate of Canning. For example, Byford has a training track, and if you were to fly over the area you would see that most of the five-acre lots spread throughout the semirural areas of my electorate have a trotting track in there for exercising by the hobby trainer with one or two trotters. The beaches are not too far away for those who want to exercise their horses on the beaches. Not only that but we have every form of equine activity there. We have the pony clubs, the polocrosse, the polo, the dressage—every form of equine activity is located within the Canning electorate.

So this is very important to my electorate and that is why I wish to speak about this issue. A new initiative is the Coolup equestrian centre, which the Shire of Murray in my electorate is endeavouring to get off the ground, based on the Australian equine livestock event centre in Tamworth, which cost $30 million. You have got to start somewhere, and a covered and indoor dressage area at Coolup is being promoted and is something I would like to get behind, given the opportunity through Regional Development Australia or some form of federal funding to help them continue. I helped open a riding for the disabled arena which had been sponsored by the local people in the shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale recently. On that basis this
is a very important industry to me. As a horse tragic, I have just had another ordinary racehorse. I paid a lot of money for it. It won a race and placed several times in the city. But it was a $100,000 horse which I am going to have to give away because it is not of much value anymore, having ran last at its last run. That is the tragedy of being involved in horses. As they say, poverty is owning a racehorse.

Many people whose livelihoods depend on this industry are involved in this industry, right from those who sell feed, veterinary supplies or gear to those who train semiprofessionally as hobby trainers or those who train professionally. One of the leading trainers in Perth, Adam Durrant, operates in my area. Ross Oliveri, one of the best trainers in Perth at the moment, has his stables in my electorate, in the standardbred area. Probably Australia's pre-eminent reinsman, Chris Lewis, an Inter-Dominion winner, has his stud within the electorate of Canning.

All those people are very interested in the biosecurity issues surrounding thoroughbreds. When this EI outbreak first happened in 2007, or it could have been slightly earlier—I stand to be corrected on that—it was a surprise to Australia. We thought that as an island nation we were immune from the equine influenza virus. This is the case with Australia's location in respect of many of the exotic viruses that have been mentioned by the member for Maranoa, whether they be in the agricultural area, like fire blight, or with animals. Let us recall that we have had a long-term industry in which shuttle stallions come to Australia, generally from Europe, and we had not had a problem. We have lifted the quality of thoroughbreds in Australia by selective breeding by Northern Hemisphere shuttle stallions, largely from Britain—thanks to the magnificent breeding industry in Britain. If you look through the Australian on a Monday morning and check out the winners on the British racecourses you will find that many of the stallions that have sired the winners in Britain have sired the winners at Rose Hill or Flemington on the same day.

The member for Maranoa is quite correct: this outbreak happened as a result of a careless error in a quarantine facility. Let us recall the instance. A young track rider working in the facility was not properly washed down or disinfected before he left for the weekend. He then went to a pony club type of event, I believe it was, or a dressage event in northern New South Wales, and that is where the spread happened. As the member has also said, a standstill instruction was then given to all horses around Australia. They could not be moved, even in Western Australia, which EI did not reach. People from my electorate went to campdraft meetings around Carnarvon and were not allowed to shift for days and weeks. They were camped up there with their horses, which they were not allowed to move, and their vehicles were not allowed to move. The disruption to Western Australia was only minor, because we did not have the outbreak there. We did have some thoroughbred and standardbred meetings cancelled, but it was not like in the eastern states, where the movement restricted the breeding opportunities in that breeding season. Mares could not be taken to studs, and stallions could not be shifted around studs, because of the standstill instruction.

So it had a devastating effect, as a result of something as minor as a guy not washing down properly and then going to ride horses in a recreational sense on the weekend. I must say, it was a bit of a cheap shot for the member for Wakefield to say how terrible it was that it happened under our watch. Yes, we admit that, but we quite rightly believed that Australia was somewhat immune from equine influenza. If you recall, just a year before, two Japanese
horses quinellaed the Melbourne Cup. That is where the virus is believed to have come from, because Japan has quite a history of equine influenza virus. I recall that the winner was Delta Blues, ridden by a Japanese jockey. I know that because I backed it, and I got the quinella, and because Damien Oliver rode the horse that came second—Alcopop, I believe its name was. It was an outstanding result, but the Japanese horses have not been back since, largely because they are an area of serious equine influenza infection.

I know others have talked to the details of this bill. The measures that have taken place had to happen in terms of the costs associated with not only monitoring but also eliminating this virus and other horse viruses. Of course, the first time this came through there was a knee-jerk reaction: we were going to hit everyone with a levy. Was the levy going to be collected in a certain way, how was it going to be managed, who would be responsible for it, what was going to happen to the interest, how would it be disbursed et cetera? The industry was not very happy about it. The casual recreational rider who has a horse in their backyard and just wants to ride in the bush on the weekend, or wants to go to a local pony club event, was being hit up largely for the standardbred and thoroughbred industries, and they were not happy about it. This measure that the industry now has been consulted on is far fairer and far more reasonable. If there is any outbreak like the equine influenza virus, the government will stump up the money and then, over a 10-year period, collect it back from the industry through a 50c levy on manufactured feeds, wormers and other veterinary supplies. That has been agreed to by the industry and as has been said not everyone is happy, but it is the fairest way. No money is being collected now. The levy is zero now because there is no biosecurity emergency in this area. Should there be one, the government would involve itself in committing to certain levels of payment. I understand, for example, that should there be another EI virus, like this, the government would pay 75 per cent of the levy and the industry would pay 25 per cent.

I would imagine all those details are in the explanatory memorandum of this bill. It has been well consulted and I want to congratulate all those involved. Senator Back, a pre-eminent vet from Western Australia and now a senator, is somebody who had a lot to do with this. I want to congratulate him and his committee members who inquired into this because it really is bringing a resolution to future outbreaks.

There are other issues which surround this. There are brumbies, for example—certainly not the Brumbies that play rugby for Canberra, because I understand they are not going too well. In the alpine regions of our eastern seaboard we have brumbies romantically wandering around the high country. Should they contract the disease, who is responsible for that? I suppose this levy clicks in on that. I was at Kakadu earlier this year. There were a heap of brumbies wandering around the wetlands there. It is a potential time bomb sitting out there for the equine industry because of these feral horses—or any feral animals. I read in the paper this morning about the goat industry—and dare I say, live export industry—involving goats from the sheep stations of Western Australia. The Middle East countries want to put a ban on that at the moment because they are concerned about rabies.

There are a whole lot of exotic and traditional diseases that surround our livestock but in this case, in the equine industry, we need to be ever vigilant. As an island nation we have been well regarded because of our lack of disease and the lack of impact it has had on our industry. It has been managed well until now. I think the mechanism that is in place now and
obviously has bipartisan support is fair and reasonable and deals quite appropriately with any future crises that we may have in this industry.

Ms MARINO (Forrest—Opposition Whip) (11:22): Like the member for Canning I have an electorate that has a similar spread of equine activities. We who breed, train and race a few thoroughbreds were, like so many around Australia, directly affected by the EI outbreak. We had a mare in New South Wales at that time and were unable to move her so, like for a lot of other people, that incurred a lot of additional costs and a number of challenges. That was replicated right around Australia. There is a very strong equine industry in my part of the world and it very much reflects that of the member for Canning. I commend him on his speech because he talks from very direct personal experience. It is the practical nature of his and Senator Chris Back's experience that is very important in this debate.

This Horse Disease Response Levy Bill 2011 was really brought about by the outbreak of equine influenza in 2007. It is by way of negotiation that we have got to this point and I commend the government on getting here and getting consensus, which has not been easy and has been quite protracted. However, the various species related influenza viruses have long been known as relatively host-specific but highly contagious pathogens. It is also well known that mutation of the virus is common—and that has been the concern with this—and has resulted in the development of cross-species infection and increases in morbidity and mortality.

Mutated influenza viruses are the ones that are likely to produce the pandemics. Those we have seen in human history—such as the Asiatic flu, the Spanish flu, the Hong Kong flu and even the swine flu—have killed millions. Influenza is also a concern for the threat of avian flu, known as bird flu. So it is a very real threat. This is a genuine threat. It is easily transmitted. It is transmitted through respiratory aerosol. It is also impossible to control where hosts are within range of exhaled air. That is the issue. It can spread so quickly and so easily.

The virus will survive in the environment long enough to be spread by other vectors, including humans, as we know from the EI outbreak which moved from one animal to another. I would think members in this place who have attempted to avoid the flu in here, out in the community or even with their children at school know that it is almost impossible to avoid, as we just heard. In any form, influenza is almost impossible to control once it arrives. It is very difficult.

That was so in 2007 with the outbreak which started at the Eastern Creek quarantine station. Four racehorses were imported from a country that had just experienced the equine flu outbreak from the quarantine station. This is something that does concern us all. It is an ongoing concern for me how we manage this quarantine issue.

I know that former judge Ian Callinan was asked to investigate and his response noted that:

The objective of biosecurity measures at a post-arrival quarantine station for animals, such as Eastern Creek, is to prevent the escape of disease that might be present in the station. It is therefore essential that people and equipment having contact with the animals are adequately decontaminated before leaving the station. That was not happening at Eastern Creek in August 2007. Had such biosecurity measures been in place, it is most unlikely that there could have been any escape of equine influenza from the Quarantine Station.

He said that was a consequence of a number of acts and omissions and that fundamental biosecurity measures were not being implemented in what was the largest government...
operated animal quarantine station in Australia at that time. It was a very serious breach. He also noted that there were people who needed to take responsibility—the Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine and the person who, under the minister, was charged with the Quarantine Act 1908.

Ian Callinan described Australia's quarantine system as inefficient, underfunded and lacking diligence. It really does concern me. I share the views of the member for Maranoa, of those expressed right throughout the parliament, on our side particularly, and of the member who commented:

This comprehensive report is a disturbing commentary on Australia's quarantine and biosecurity arrangements for horse imports before August last year. That was said by the then Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the member for Watson. He said that, while changes have been made, the commissioner has highlighted serious and systemic failures in the system and that the government is acting urgently to fix them.

The review of biosecurity by Roger Beale was well underway at that time. I am really concerned that the equine influenza outbreak was caused by a failure of quarantine protocols and that the government's response at that time was to basically just focus on the Beale quarantine and biosecurity review. But, by and large, the response has been to ignore the majority of that. There is real concern and not a lot of confidence in the government being able to maintain Australia's biosecurity to keep out pests and diseases in the future. There is no wonder when we address the bill that we see that we will be paying for an inevitable failure when it occurs. I will talk later about the risks to Australian apples and biosecurity beyond this.

The bill apportions the clean-up costs beyond the actual outbreak to various sections of the horse industry by relying on levying feed and worm treatments on the basis that all horse owners need them and use both. Whilst this might not always be necessarily considered a perfect method—and I do not know that there is one—it is a solution that has been accepted by equine enthusiasts and industry bodies, which is very important. The bill is neither groundbreaking nor unique. Many animal and plant industries in Australia already have legislation and schemes in place that have the industry pay for border protection failures. I note that, under the Constitution, particularly in section 69, the federal government and the parliament are responsible in relation to quarantine.

I am very concerned, as is the member for Maranoa, about how seriously the government takes its responsibility. Too often we have seen the breakdown of Australian biosecurity and the incursion of pests and diseases. We have seen government tell Australian businesses, producers and the community, 'We have failed you again at the border and, again, you will have to pay for that failure.' The dereliction of biosecurity duty will be exacerbated into the future as our quarantine policy continues to give ground, and that is what we saw yesterday by way of the recent decision to import New Zealand apples, in spite of the risks of fire blight, leaf curling midge and European canker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms AE Burke): The member for Forrest will stick to the legislation before her, which is about horses.
Ms MARINO: Yes, it is, Madam Deputy Speaker. But it is also about biosecurity and the very great need to protect that and how important that is right across the board. It touches on a range of issues. As we know, the quarantine policy of Australia should not just be about preventing the incursion of diseases and pests; it should not allow, as we saw following the Prime Minister's announcement, what occurred yesterday.

Our policy has been watered down to reduce the risks of incursion and, as we saw unfortunately yesterday—and I take the Deputy Speaker's comments on board—it will not eliminate the bacteria at all. That is an issue for biosecurity and that is what this bill is about. It is about maintaining our biosecurity and maintaining our disease- and pest-free reputation—our so-called clean, green, competitive advantage in a frequently tainted world. That is one of the opportunities we have, but we have to protect it at all costs. We certainly need the types of legislation and support from the government of the day to do so. We must reduce the risk.

Unfortunately, I have seen too much funding removed from our quarantine, Biosecurity and Customs budgets over the last few years. That really concerns me. It was $58 million one year and $38 million prior to that. That really allows me to pause and to think: how can that provide the government and the agencies we charge with the responsibility of managing our border security and issues such as equine influenza and other pests and diseases the capacity to do so? I say to the government: we must value Australia's agricultural and food production, and our biosecurity is a critical part of that.

Again, the government is responsible for quarantine and in this bill we have seen a way through in managing the expectations and the issues facing the industry across the board. While we are talking about equine matters, as the previous speaker, the member for Canning, said, we do have very vibrant industries in our parts of the world. Any outbreak of pests and diseases in the equine sector would and did have a major financial and economic impact.

By way of a final comment, I encourage the Yalyalup Pony Club, which is doing its best to make a bid to run the Quilty endurance event in my part of the world. That would be wonderful encouragement. On the basis of encouraging equine activity and the biosecurity measures to ensure that that can still happen, I support the bill.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I thank the member for Forrest for her ingenious coming together to be relevant to the bill! The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

Dr MIKE KELLY (Eden-Monaro—Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (11:34): I appreciate all the contributions that honourable members have made in this debate and I certainly acknowledge the passion and interest in their electorates that they have reflected via their involvement in the issue of biosecurity and of course, in particular, the magnificent horse culture that exists in this country. I will comment more on that in a moment. To summarise, we have been talking—and the discussion has ranged widely—about the Horse Disease Response Levy Bill 2011, the Horse Disease Response Levy Collection Bill 2011 and the Horse Disease Response Levy (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2011, which provide for a mechanism to impose, collect and appropriate new levies on manufactured horse feed and worm treatments for horses. These levies have been requested by the horse industry, it is important to note, which has decided that the simultaneous application of a levy on worm treatments for horses and manufactured horse feed would provide the most equitable coverage of the industry.
The levies will be payable on the disposal of manufactured horse feed and worm treatments for horses from one party to another, and will be appropriated through the Animal Health Australia organisation. The levies will be set at a rate of zero, but the bills allow for regulations to be made to set a positive rate when required. This will provide the horse industry with a funding mechanism to repay the Commonwealth for moneys expended on its behalf in responding to an emergency outbreak of an animal disease affecting horses. The bills provide arrangements for governments and the horse industry to effectively and efficiently fund a quick, coordinated response to an emergency horse disease outbreak.

Members have made many interesting and passionate contributions—and I acknowledge the honesty of the member for Maranoa, who reflected that the equine influenza outbreak in August 2007 occurred on the previous government's watch. But we have approached the resolution of this issue in a bipartisan spirit. Members have commented on the significance of the horse culture in Australia, and I guess there is no region in the country that reflects that more than my own, as the home of the man from Snowy River. In fact, my family's first farm in Eden-Monaro, back in 1847, was on the Snowy River.

We have a big horse culture and industry in Eden-Monaro, with many equine schools, showjumping and horse racing. It is such a vital part of our community that you could not imagine Eden-Monaro without our horse culture. So that period from August 2007 onwards was devastating. All of our country shows were adversely affected through that period. It was so sad to see the absence of horses at those shows and the scrambling to try and fill that void with motorcycle displays and the like, dog races et cetera. As thrilling as they were, the absence of horses really left a hole for us and knocked a lot of people around across a broad range of activities—not just horse racing but the leisure industry as well. For me personally it was a big issue that we had to confront, and we have confronted it, as I mentioned, in a bipartisan way. As has been commented on by members, the majority of stakeholders do support these arrangements.

Members also commented on biosecurity and whether or not we are adequately addressing that issue, and I feel that I should make reference to what this government is doing in that space, from the lessons that we have learned. It is important to note that, in the 2011-12 budget, the government has committed very high and significant levels of spending—$425.4 million, in fact, over four years, for our border control, quarantine and biosecurity operations, including $205.6 million for Customs. In that budget, there is also $15.4 million for continuing eradication programs, $4.2 million to improve information access and communications in relation to our biosecurity systems and $19.1 million for staged investment for post-entry quarantine arrangements. In addition, there is work in progress relating to the budgeting for and expenditure on future post-entry quarantine arrangements for land acquisition.

This government stands with a proud record of addressing the biosecurity issues that have emerged. I note the comments that have been made in relation to the apple situation, but we are dealing with a decision that has been handed down by the World Trade Organisation. This government has been, as previous governments have been, out there solidly and aggressively advocating for the liberalisation of trade in the agricultural sector. There is nothing that would benefit our country more than the liberalisation of trade, and we were aggressively arguing this case only very recently as I attended the agricultural ministers meeting of the G20; we
pushed this case very vigorously. The sole focus of that meeting was on food security and price volatility. The research that was done to underpin that meeting focused squarely upon the issue of trade liberalisation, as did the FAO meeting that we had in Rome following that, where Kofi Annan gave an impassioned speech about the devastating impacts of subsidies to agriculture, now approaching $400 billion—a massive distortion of the trade, and a holding back of countries like those in Africa, which has 60 per cent of the world's uncultivated land. To meet our food security needs pushing towards the huge population expansion we will see by 2050, and to feed a hungry world, we have to break down those barriers and eliminate those distortions, and there will be massive opportunities for our own farmers in that space.

I note the comments in relation to the risk and threat of fire blight. Prior to the last election, Batlow was in my electorate. I have met with great farmers like Greg Mouat and his crew. The concern about fire blight is a genuine one, and the security measures that we will put in place will certainly be targeted at and focused on that threat.

I thank members for their contributions and I welcome the fact that we are now able to step forward on this issue to meet the threats that we face to our horse culture and the fact that we have a mechanism to address it adequately in the future while maintaining our agricultural production and exports as well as the environment and public health.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Dr MIKE KELLY (Eden-Monaro—Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (11:42): by leave—I present a supplementary explanatory memorandum to the bill and move government amendments (1) and (2) as circulated together:

(1) Clause 3, page 2 (line 23), omit “both”, substitute “all”.
(2) Clause 3, page 2 (lines 27 to 33), omit paragraph (b) of the definition of worm treatment, substitute:

(b) there are instructions for use of the product that:

(i) are approved by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority under those Codes; or

(ii) accord with an established standard for the product under those Codes, if the product is a registered listed chemical product;

(c) those instructions:

(i) are for use of the product for treatment of horses for internal parasites; and

(ii) are not for use of the product for treatment of other animals, except other members of the horse family (Equidae), for internal parasites.

This amendment is a minor technical amendment to the definition of ‘worm treatment’ in the Horse Disease Response Levy Bill 2011. Following the introduction of the horse disease response levy bills into parliament the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry arranged to meet with affected industries, including the Animal Health Alliance, the Veterinary Manufacturers and Distributors Association and the Stock Feed Manufacturers Council of Australia. The purpose of the meeting was to give the organisations an opportunity to discuss any concerns they may have with the proposed legislation. The need for the
amendment was identified in discussions with the Animal Health Alliance and the Veterinary Manufacturers and Distributors Association. These organisations provided advice that the original definition of 'worm treatment' was too broad.

The amendment is intended to more clearly identify the products that will be captured by the levy. The amendment clarifies that the levy will not apply to multipurpose worm treatments that have instructions that the product can be used to treat other animals—this was the issue—such as cattle, sheep and goats, as well as horses. However, the levy will apply to products that have instructions for use for horses and/or other species within the horse family Equidae, such as donkeys—I know you are a big fan of donkeys, Madam Deputy Speaker. The amendment was prepared in consultation with the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority. Animal Health Australia and the horse industry are aware of the amendment. I commend the amendments to the House.

Question agreed to.
Bill, as amended, agreed to.
Ordered that this bill be reported to the House with amendments.

Horse Disease Response Levy Collection Bill 2011
Second Reading

Debate resumed on the motion:
That this bill be now read a second time.
Question agreed to.
Bill read a second time.
Ordered that the bill be reported to the House without amendment.

Horse Disease Response Levy (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2011
Second Reading

Debate resumed on the motion:
That this bill be now read a second time.
Question agreed to.
Bill read a second time.
Message from Governor-General recommending appropriation announced.
Ordered that the bill be reported to the House without amendment.

STATEMENTS ON INDULGENCE
Evans, Mr Cadel

Dr SOUTHCOTT (Boothby) (11:46): I would like to add my congratulations to Cadel Evans on his outstanding, unprecedented achievement in winning the 2011 Tour de France. Since the establishment of the Tour de France in 1903, 98 different cyclists have won the race. Almost exclusively, they come from continental Europe. There are two Americans who have won, Greg LeMond and Lance Armstrong, and now the first Australian to win, Cadel Evans, has added his name to that prestigious list.
There are a number of Australians who have distinguished themselves in the Tour de France but never won the general classification. Sir Hubert Opperman, the federal Liberal MP for Corio for 17 years—from 1949 to 1966—rode the Tour de France in 1928, and it is fair to say that his Malvern Star would be light-years away from the space age bikes they ride today. Phil Anderson was the first Australian and actually the first non-European to wear the yellow jersey in 1981, and he wore it for nine days in 1982. I can remember visiting France in 1993, when he was still riding the tour, and having conversations with people in rural France who spoke very fondly of ‘Skippy’, the Australian they knew who rode the Tour de France. Stuart O’Grady has finished second in the points classification for sprinters of the Tour de France on four occasions. Robbie McEwen is a three-time winner of the points classification for sprinters of the Tour de France and has won several stages of the race.

To win the Tour de France, you have to be an exceptional all-round rider. You have to be able to climb, you have to be able to sprint, you have to be good on the road, you have to be good in the mountains. But you also need a very good mind; you need to be able to implement tactics and strategy. If ever we had an Australian who was likely to win the Tour de France, it was Cadel Evans. He has shown over a long period of time how good he is on the bike. In 1998 and 1999, he was first overall in the mountain bike World Cup, the equivalent of the world champion. In the Tour de France he has had high placings: in 2005, he was eighth; in 2006, he was fourth; and, in 2007 and in 2008, he came second—very close, one of the closest runners-up in the history of that race. In 2009 he won the Road World Championships road race. Watching this year’s Tour de France, it was one of the most captivating cycling races I have ever seen. Going into the three-week race, for the first two weeks anything that happened it looked like Cadel Evans had the other riders’ measure. The race was completely shaken up in the last four or five days when Andy Schleck took off in the Alps and made two or three minutes on the rest of the pack. In responding to that the next day, Cadel Evans had to deal with mechanical failure but with his team he was able to see that he lost no further time on that stage. It is usually said that the Tour de France is won in the mountains but, while Cadel remained in touch in the mountains, he won it in the time trial right at the very end.

As a South Australian member, one of the great benefits of being South Australian is the exposure we get to professional cycling. It was the idea of former Premier John Olsen and also Olympic champion Mike Turtur that we establish a road race in South Australia, the Tour Down Under. It was established in 1999 and it achieved pro tour status. Over the 13 years that it has been held so far we have seen that race going from strength to strength and most of the professional cyclists have appeared at that race. When Lance Armstrong came in 2009 and 2010, and I think 2011, it took the race to another level. The crowds have been massive. I think it was 780,000 people that turned out on the roads to watch this race. Cadel Evans has raced the Tour Down Under as well. In 2002 he won a stage. He won the mountains classification, such as they are in South Australia, in 2006. I well remember taking my family to watch the race up Willunga Hill and watching Cadel Evans and other cyclists of his calibre charging up Willunga Hill.

Cadel has said that he has not made a decision yet about whether he will attend the Tour Down Under and we cannot be selfish because it may not fit with his program and his training and what he wants to achieve next year, which is much more important. But I know that when
he does next appear at the Tour Down Under the crowds will actually rival those which saw Lance Armstrong.

I should also congratulate SBS on their magnificent coverage of the Tour de France. Fifteen years ago watching the Tour de France was probably a bit of a niche activity; it was not as widely watched as it is now. I think over the last three or four years they have seen their coverage double each year. Phil Liggett and Paul Sherwin come to South Australia every year for the Tour Down Under, where instead of commenting on French chateaux they are commenting on the South Australian vineyards and pointing them out as people go around the tour. The SBS coverage has been compelling and very insightful, and Phil Liggett and Paul Sherwin always find something interesting to inform the general viewer about what is going on in the race.

I would like to congratulate Cadel Evans. He is a magnificent Australian and his is really a fantastic achievement and one we should all be very proud of.

Dr LEIGH (Fraser) (11:54): I rise to speak of a truly Australian story, of a man whose courage, strength and pure determination embodies the Australian spirit. Through Cadel Evans and his spectacular win in the Tour de France, the world's toughest endurance race, all Australians can be truly proud. Cadel Lee Evans was born in Katherine in the Northern Territory, and he spent the first four years of his life in the tiny Arnhem Land Aboriginal community of Barunga, 80 kilometres outside Katherine. When the locals saw him pedalling around town on his BMX, none of them probably foresaw his triumphant rise to the top of the cycling world and his elevation to the pantheon of Australia's great sporting heroes. Evans has lived all across this great land, from the dusty outback to the urban metropolis of Melbourne. He is an everyman, someone whom all Australians can aspire to be.

He describes himself as having been 'completely unsuitable for almost all Australian school sports' while at school, but, despite his small stature and lack of speed, he persevered with cycling. He was originally a rising star of the mountain-biking world, having competed at the junior world championships and finished second. Assisted by his coach, Aldo Sassi, Evans then switched to road racing and continued to excel.

When I was in high school I competed in some triathlons, but it is my brother, Tim Leigh, who is the avid cyclist of the family. He has followed Cadel Evans's journey from the beginning. He is the kind of person from whose bleary eyes you can always tell when the Tour de France is on. I know Tim celebrates the fact that an Australian has finally won his favourite race, the Tour de France, as does Josh Orchard, a sports fan who interned in my office this week and assisted with this speech. I use this chance to pay tribute to the many local cyclists in my electorate who have been inspired by Cadel Evans's win, including Dan Ashcroft, Damien Hickman and Tony Shields, and to the work locally of Pedal Power ACT, an organisation which is campaigning for better bike paths for all Canberra cyclists.

Cadel Evans first tasted success in the tour of Austria in 2001 and again in 2004 as well as in a Commonwealth Games time trial victory in 2002. He followed this up with impressive performances in other road races, including our very own Tour Down Under in the Adelaide Hills. I think that pretty much everyone expected he would go on to compete for cycling's greatest and most challenging prize, the Tour de France.
In 2006, Evans rode his first tour. While noted by many cycling enthusiasts as Australia's greatest hope, his first tour did not garner the media attention now showered upon him. His strong performance ensured that his 2007 campaign was watched by millions of Australians willing him along the road. We experienced the highs and lows of the day's stages and the eventual heartbreak that Evans must have felt after racing for over 90 hours to fall just 23 seconds short of Alberto Contador. After a disappointing race in 2008, Evans regrouped for the next year. However, in 2009, Evans again fell painfully short of the grand prize, finishing second in a strong performance. In 2010, Evans suffered a hairline fracture in his elbow and had to halt his campaign.

This year millions of Australians tuned in to the characteristically excellent tour coverage provided by SBS. We watched Evans battle through the tour as he constantly chased down breakaways, especially on the 19th stage in the French Alps, where Evans launched a stunning fightback after mechanical problems caused him to fall more than two minutes behind. We cheered and we cried when Evans demolished the penultimate stage—a time trial—and took the lead, and we cheered and cried even more as he cycled into Paris. We watched as the man pulled on that yellow jersey and took his place on the podium. For the first time, an Australian had won the Tour de France.

At 34, Cadel Evans is the oldest tour winner in the post-war era. In his acceptance speech, Evans dedicated his win to his late mentor, Aldo Sassi, who died of cancer in 2010 and was the very man who had helped convert Evans to road racing. Evans is a champion of sport, not only because of his success but also because of his perseverance and determination. Even when he has fallen behind, he has refused to give up. In a sport sometimes tainted by doping, Evans refused to accept anything less than a clean win in the greatest tour of them all. He defied age and he defied expectations. He embodies the Australian spirit: a spirit to win, to play fair and to be a proud yet gracious winner.

Mr CRAIG KELLY (Hughes) (11:59): Mia Freedman, whose columns I often enjoy reading on Sundays, has questioned whether it is appropriate to describe Cadel Evans as an Australian hero. When achieving something that no-one else has done before, as Strzelecki did when climbing to the peak of Mount Kosciusko, their efforts do elevate them in the eyes of their countrymen. The only reason Strzelecki would not be called an Australian hero was that he was Polish, but certainly his achievements made him an Australian icon. Cadel Evans has not climbed Mount Kosciusko, but by becoming the first Australian to win the Tour de France and by becoming the oldest winner in postwar times at the age of 34 Cadel Evans has climbed Mount Everest.

Cadel Evans was 14 when he first announced his goal of winning the Tour de France; 20 years later he became the first Australian to win the most prestigious prize in cycling. While it is 20 years since a young Cadel voiced his desire to win the tour, it is only 10 years since Cadel switched from mountain biking to road cycling at the urging of the late Aldo Sassi, in part to put Cadel in the position to enter the prestigious grand tours of cycling like the Tour de France and the Giro d'Italia. It was in the latter that the previous two-time winner of the mountain biking world cup made his mark first in road cycling, briefly holding the magella rose or pink jersey in the 2002 tour.

Fast forward four years to 2006 when Cadel put himself in the running to win the Tour de France, finishing fourth. The next year he improved his position but came up just short,
finishing a heartbreaking 23 seconds behind the winner, Alberto Contador, in second place. He repeated this result in 2008, finishing second this time to Carlos Sastre. In July this year, Cadel finally reached the summit, holding the leader's yellow jersey through to the final stage of the Tour de France and winning cycling's Everest. Cadel's magnificent victory came just 30 years after the groundbreaking ride of fellow Australian Phil Anderson, who became the first non-European to hold the leader's yellow jersey, a feat Anderson repeated for nine days the following year.

I am pleased to take this opportunity to add my voice to that of the parliament in congratulating Cadel Evans on his great historic achievement. His inspiring efforts and courage are a fine example of what can be achieved if you follow your goals and believe. Cadel will shape a generation of Australians with his courage.

Now we are seeing the phenomenon known as the Cadel effect. Just three weeks after his triumph on the roads of Paris, bicycle stores across the nation have sold out of many lines of stock and cycling clubs are being inundated with new members. None of this is surprising. Cadel is a hero who has made a contribution to Australia by inspiring our youth and genuinely showing them that if you have a dream and if you are prepared to make the sacrifices and if you are prepared to work towards it you can succeed. This is the message that Cadel Evans sends out to young Australians and this is why our nation salutes his efforts.

Ms OWENS (Parramatta) (12:03): I realised just two days ago that I think I am finally recovering from the Tour de France. Like many Australians, I was up very late night after night after night—I missed only one stage. It is the same every year, and has been for many years now, and it takes me quite a while to recover—not that my effort was anywhere near as significant as those that actually rode it. I have been watching the tour now for many years and Cadel's victory was particularly sweet not just because an Australian won it but because Cadel won it—and I have been a fan now for many years. Even if he had not won it this time, I have still enjoyed some of the most extraordinary racing in watching Cadel over recent years.

It is worth reminding people who have not been following Cadel of who this man is. Even ignoring the win in 2011 in the Tour de France, this is one of our most extraordinary bike riders. He is the only bike rider to have won the world championship on a mountain bike and on a road bike. He won his first mountain bike world championship in 1998. By that stage, he had already been second in the mountain bike world championship as an under 19 in 1993, he had been third in the individual time trial juniors world championship as an under 19 in 1995 and he had won the Australian mountain bike championship in 1996. So he already had a substantial career. He won the world championship in 1998 and again in 1999. I have to say that the smile he finally gave after he won—after that look of slight punch drunkenness, I would have to say—that was amazing. He looked totally stunned for a while and then someone said something and then a smile emerged on Cadel's face. It was the first time that I had seen Cadel smile that way since he first won that mountain bike championship so many years ago. It was a smile of pure joy after the effort that he had put in for all of those years to reach that level.

After the world mountain bike championship, he turned to the road. In 2002, he was first in the individual time trial in the Commonwealth Games. And I am really only reading the highlights here. There are lists of wins every year for Cadel. He was first and King of the
Mountains in the Tour Down Under in 2003. He was first in the Tour of Austria in 2004. He was eighth overall in the Tour de France in 2005. For those of us who were watching back then, a top 10 performance by an Australian was extraordinary. In 2006, he was first overall in the Tour de Romandie and he was fourth overall in the Tour de France. He was again King of the Mountains in the Tour Down Under. In 2007 and in 2008, he was second, as we know, in the Tour de France. In 2009, he won the world championship on the road, an extraordinary effort. He was the first Australian to win that one, by the way, and the first cyclist ever to win them both. In 2010, he defended his world championship rainbow jersey in Geelong in one of the most extraordinary races I have seen for a long time. He did not win but the courage that he showed in defending that jersey in 2010 in the breakaway in the last kilometres of the race was absolutely astonishing.

That reminds me of one of the things that I really like about Cadel: he honours the sport and he honours the jersey that he wears. I admire Cadel so much for the way that he rides when he cannot win—when that possibility is over and when the only person he is racing is himself. We saw that in 2010 when he was wearing the yellow jersey and crashed in stage 8. Then in stage 9 he rode up the cul de Madeleine in the yellow jersey, lost the yellow jersey and fell back to the peloton and was dropped on the mountain stage, which is not like Cadel. His management said later that even though he knew by that stage that he had fractured his elbow in the crash the day before he did not feel that it was right to say so while he was wearing the yellow jersey. He honoured that jersey until he lost it, and then the story came out that he had fractured his elbow.

I do not think any of us can imagine what it is like to ride up a mountain with a fractured elbow. But I really cannot understand what it is like to ride down a mountain with a fractured elbow. It was interesting hearing him talk about that descent again in the interviews that he did after he won this year. He picked up quite a bit of time down that same descent this year. He commented that last year he found it very scary because he had fractured his elbow. For those of you who ride a bike, when you watch how hard they brake on those corners you understand how extraordinarily frightening that must have been. This is a man of extraordinary courage who has found a capability in himself that most of us can only imagine.

People say that you win the Tour de France in the mountains, but you actually win it with perfect preparation day after day, year after year. One of the enduring images for me from the whole coverage of the Tour this year was an image of the primary school he went to as a child. The kids there had obviously been following the race and they had created a fold-out/cut-out figures. You know: where you fold a piece of paper up and then you cut the half of the body out and when you unfold it there is a row of figures. They had painted them; there were nine of them. There were four red ones, one yellow one and four red ones. And that is of course Cadel riding in the middle of his BMC team as they rode of that last stage in the front of the peloton. Because it is a team event, I am going to name the team members who gave such incredible support to Cadel in the Tour de France. They were: Brent Bookwalter from the USA, Marcus Burghardt from Germany, Cadel Evans from Australia, George Hincapie—that extremely tall incredible rider from the USA—Amael Moinard from France, Steve Morabito from Switzerland, Ivan Santaromita from Italy, Manuel Quinziato from Italy and Michael Schar from Switzerland. I am sure I did not get those pronunciations right. They were the largely invisible men that were there around Cadel making sure he was safe in the
peloton, making sure that he stayed out of trouble and pulling him back into the peloton when he had those mechanical problems on the mountains in the last stage.

There are also a number of Australian riders who should be mentioned in all of this. We had some of the most extraordinary Australian riders in recent years in the Tour de France. We missed Robbie McEwen and Mick Rogers this year. I was very sad not to see Robbie there. Robbie has been one of the joys for those of us who have watched Australians in the Tour de France for many years, seemingly riding without a team and emerging out of nowhere to win stage after stage after stage.

I watched Robbie once down in the criteriums in Geelong. As a bit of a distance athlete myself, every time I see a sprinter suddenly increase the speed of their pedalling my whole body asks how they do that. It is so far from what I am as a past athlete. Robbie is one of the Australian greats and I absolutely admire and respect the way he rode his career for as long as he continued to enjoy it. Robbie, even at the later stages of his career, was still in there as a contender in the final metres of each stage of the Tour de France. An extraordinary rider. Mick Rogers was not there. Mick is perhaps one of our riders who did not achieve what he could have. Back in 2006 and 2007 he was a very real tour contender. In fact, he was a favourite back in those years but crashed badly in 2007 and this took him out of the tour. Again, an extraordinary rider.

Stuart O'Grady, of course, was there. He has been there year after year, often in the front, for kilometre after kilometre, leading—a contender. He is an extraordinary rider. He has now signed with the new Australian team GreenEDGE along with a few rising stars: Jack Bobridge and Cameron and Travis Meyer. We are likely to see them in the tour next year as our first Australian team. Mark Renshaw was there. It is always a pleasure to see Mark, known as the best lead-out man in the game, leading out Mark Cavendish—and making it, I think, much easier for Mark Cavendish by the way. I think Mark is one of the extraordinary gifts to that team. And Richie Porte, who I understand was once a triathlete, was there. I know that every time a triathlete turns up to race with us on Sunday mornings the race organisers warn us that there is a triathlete in the bunch and we look to see who it is and make sure we get in front of them before the corners. I do not think Richie Porte has that problem. I think he has made the transition unbelievably well and he is one of the rising stars in road racing.

It was a great tour overall for Australians. I should also mention Simon Gerrans, who was the first Aussie to win a stage of the Tour de France, the Giro d'Italia and the Vuelta a Espana. He is again an extraordinary talent who, while we were all watching Cadel, we might have missed actually win a stage in the 2011 Tour de France. I would also like to acknowledge Aldo Sassi, who was the former coach and mentor of Cadel. I did not know him personally but I would like to thank him, through his family, for sharing a part of his life with Cadel. He was obviously a great contributor to the way that Cadel thinks and rides and I would like to acknowledge that.

It was an extraordinary event. It was one of great joy to watch. I wish Cadel all the best. I hope we see him again. I know we expect to see him again, defending is yellow jersey next year and we should all know from the character of Cadel that he will honour that jersey and defend it with everything that is in him for every day from now until then. He said a week ago that the preparation for next year's tour begins the day after the last one and we should know from this man that he will put everything into that for every day and we will see him
absolutely honour that jersey next year. I wish him all the best. We will all be watching it again. Maybe he can do it again; maybe he cannot. Whatever way it goes, we will see an Australian athlete give absolutely everything up to the last moment.

Mr HARTSUPTER (Cowper) (12:14): I rise today to recognise Cadel Evans's outstanding achievement in winning the 2011 Tour de France. For most professional cyclists, winning the Tour de France means reaching the pinnacle of their sport. It is the equivalent of a footballer winning either a soccer or rugby World Cup, a tennis player winning Wimbledon or a golfer securing the US Masters. This year's Tour de France was held over 21 stages and covered 3,430 kilometres. Many of these stages involved extremely steep climbs and challenged the endurance and strength of all competitors.

Prior to this year's event Cadel had already established himself as an elite cyclist. In his early years he was a mountain bike rider, who won silver medals at the 1997 and 1999 under-23 world championships and bronze medals at the 1995 junior world road time trial championship and junior world mountain bike championship. In the summer of 2000, Cadel switched to road cycling full time but it was in 2006 that he arrived on the world stage of the Tour de France. In 2006 he finished fourth in the tour, which in itself was an outstanding achievement. In 2007 he went two better when he finished second and was named Australian cyclist of the year. The following year, 2008, he again finished runner-up in the Tour—a major achievement in its own right but still just short of cycling's major prize.

After the 2007 and 2008 results his supporters hoped that 2009 would be his year. However, despite winning the 2009 men's world championship road race in Mendrisio, Switzerland, he struggled in the Tour later that year. It was a tremendously disappointing result which was compounded in 2010 when he again finished well down the field. As a result, in the lead-up to the 2011 event there were some detractors. Despite his finishing runner-up on two previous occasions, some experts wondered whether Cadel was past his best. At 34 years of age some experts questioned whether Cadel was too old to win one of the planet's premier sporting events. But he stared down his detractors with a display of cycling which is now part of Tour de France history. Indeed, those who watched Cadel Evans over the final days of this year's Tour were treated to some of the most outstanding cycling in Australia's history.

On the Friday evening Australian time, Cadel overcame mechanical failure to stay within reach of the leaders and set up an absorbing match race in Saturday's time trial. Starting the last full day of competition almost one minute behind the leader, Cadel showed the strength and determination which have been the hallmark of his cycling career. He finished second overall in the time trial to smash his opponents and secure a remarkable victory. Cadel's victory will inspire many of the current crop of young cyclists as they make their journey through the international ranks. He has demonstrated that if you have the focus and commitment you can win a Tour de France, regardless of where you are from. The victory is also a boon for cycling in general across Australia. Whether it is kids riding to school, adults riding on a Sunday or competitors seeking to improve their results, Cadel Evans's achievements are certainly an inspiration to all cyclists. As someone who cycles regularly, it was of great interest to me to see Cadel Evans's victory and the impact on the sport.

Of course there will be ongoing debate from the sporting pundits over whether Cadel Evans's victory is Australia's greatest sporting achievement. He is up against some strong
competition from the likes of Bradman, Cathy Freeman, John Bertrand and the crew of Australia II and a host of other champions. But the fact is that victory in the Tour de France is considered in the context of a huge international event.

The Coffs Coast area of my electorate has a history of association with some of Australia's most elite sports men and women. Triathlete Emma Moffatt, rugby league player Greg Inglis and cricketer Philip Hughes are three of the more well-known athletes who are currently competing at the top level of their respective sports. But there are many others who have once called the Coffs Coast their home before pursuing their international careers, and I am proud to say that Cadel Evans is one of those great sports people. In the 1980s he attended Woolgoolga High School and worked at the local cycling shop, Woody's Wheels. Cadel's father, Paul, still lives at Corindi just north of Woolgoolga. One can only try to comprehend how proud he must have felt when he watched his son win the yellow jersey on that Saturday night and become the first Australian to win cycling's Holy Grail. Although Cadel moved from our area when he was quite young, many local people still remember the promising young cyclist who enjoyed what our region had to offer. But, regardless of whether they met him or not, the fact is that north coast residents have all been thrilled by Cadel Evans's achievements. I would like to take this opportunity to publicly congratulate Cadel on winning the Tour de France. As much as the victory is his to savour, I know that many of my constituents celebrate in connection with his great effort on the world stage.

Mr RIPOLL (Oxley) (12:20): Go Cadel—allez, allez! I want to pay tribute to and congratulate Cadel Evans on winning the greatest bike race in the world, the Tour de France. It is the most difficult and complex physical endurance race anywhere in the world and by any measure a truly heroic and great sporting achievement. What Cadel Evans has achieved ranks alongside any other great sporting champion in Australia—or, for that matter, the world. Cadel, of course, is the first Australian to win the Tour de France and also the oldest person as a first-time winner ever at age 34, which is an incredible feat in itself.

In the history of the tour there have only been riders from 10 other nations that have ever won and that places Australia very high on that list of cycling achievement. The Tour de France is undoubtedly the most well known and most widely followed cycling event in the world, and this year was undoubtedly the best ever followed by Australian audiences. It is much larger than the world of cycling as an event—it is one of the world's most prestigious sporting events—with a long and difficult road not just in terms of the tour itself but for the journey for those who embark on the race.

Cadel's efforts in winning the tour cannot be overstated by any measure. In terms of remarkable sporting victories by Australians some commentators are ranking it alongside Cathy Freeman's gold medal at the Sydney Olympics and Kieren Perkins's famous swimming wins. Some have even likened Cadel to the great Don Bradman. Cadel Evans may be a humble man and a little embarrassed I think by all the attention, but in our view he is a great sporting hero—somebody who has achieved greatness through sheer hard work and gritty determination in true Australian spirit.

I know—and I suspect that Cadel understands, or I hope he understands—that he shares this victory with all Australians, not just cycling fans but with all Australians. What amazed me this year were the phone calls, the emails and comments from people who had never followed a cycling race in their life, but they just understood how important this was.
Mr Ewen Jones: A bit like the America's Cup!

Mr RIPOLL: Yes, a bit like the America's Cup—exactly. This is something truly great for Australia, great for Cadel and great for cycling. Cadel's victory is a victory for every Australian and particularly every Australian rider who has ever travelled to Europe to create a future at the top of the cycling tree to eventually have one Australian winner—people like Phil Anderson, Stuart O'Grady, Neil Stephens, Bradley McGee, Robbie McEwen, Baden Cooke and Simon Gerrans just to name a few great Australian riders. Another great Tour de France rider to make a huge contribution was Stephen Hodge, who is based here in Canberra and is a great friend to so many people here. All of these riders had the belief that a small country so far away from the focus of elite cycling in Europe could one day win this very difficult and great event, and after so many years, so much hard work, we can all be rewarded by the win of Cadel.

The Tour de France commenced in 1903. It has a great history and a great tradition but it was only the 98th tour this year, because it did have some short breaks—interrupted, of course, only by war. The race lasts for an incredible three weeks. This year it covered more than 3,430 kilometres in 21 stages. It is a long way to push a bicycle. Every year many Australians who are not necessarily dedicated cycling fans actually sit up all night to watch the tour. Many actually travel to France and enjoy the circus that is the Tour de France. They marvel at the pace of the riders, their endurance, their determination, their sheer guts, particularly through the mountain stages, which are complete spectacle. It is something that is quite incredible.

While there have been many great Australians who have competed in the tour and won individual stages, there has never quite been a competitor like Cadel Evans who was ever rated with a serious possibility of winning the tour. For many people it just seemed impossible—how could a small country like Australia so far away in terms of the competitive level of cycling ever possibly compete? That was, of course, until the world heard of Cadel Evans and the bloody mindedness I think of somebody determined that nothing would ever get in the road of achieving that. I read a piece where he said that he had been dreaming of this for 20 years, ever since he was 14 years old—that one day he would win the greatest bike race in the world, the Tour de France. Of course, he is a high-achieving rider—he has not just won this race—but for many this is the pinnacle. This was Cadel's seventh attempt in a long and successful career in a whole range of other global cycling competitions, as we have heard from other speakers. All Australians know that he came very close to winning the Tour de France on a number of occasions, and twice in a row he came second. While that in itself is a phenomenal feat, it must be a huge disappointment to have worked so hard for so long and to have given 100 per cent of everything you could possibly give on every moment of the ride. Given that you are riding about 3½ thousand kilometres, with the possibility of mechanical breakdowns and flat tyres, and the fact that anything that possibly can go wrong will go wrong, to win consistently and finish in No. 1 place is a phenomenal feat.

This year was Cadel's year and, like many other people, I watched, sitting at the edge of my seat, gritting my teeth and biting my nails, thinking the closer and closer he got the more that, potentially, something could go wrong for him, even the fact that he could just have a bad day, if nothing else. He could have slipped going round a corner. As we saw, you can get...
knocked off your bike by an overexcited media guy in a car. There are just so many possibilities for things to go wrong.

He was well placed right throughout the ride. He had a great team and everyone did a remarkable job. Right through, with all the attacks he sustained, the pressure and the different strategies that apply in this very complex race, Cadel maintained a cool head, a great strategy and an incredible feat of athleticism. When he was within striking distance of the best riders and the best climbers in the world you just knew that he could do it, that this was it, that this was Cadel's year. It was an incredible feat.

Of course, as we all saw on the penultimate stage, Cadel put in probably one of the greatest stage rides of the Tour history. He rode like a man possessed and at an incredible pace, something that I do not think any of us have seen for a very long time. There are some great stages and great heroes of the Tour de France because of the sheer physical endurance in the contribution they have to make, but watching Cadel on that 20th stage was really something to be seen, probably over and over again because I am sure it will be on television. Then we saw that fantastic win for him, and you could see it in his eyes when he put on that yellow jersey. I am almost certain that Cadel is responsible for having the Australian national anthem sung by an Australian on the Champs Elysee for the first time, certainly for the first time at a sporting event, which is quite an incredible achievement.

Cadel is a true champion. He is also humble and respectful, and in a sport that has been tainted with the spectre of doping he is an absolute cleanskin; no-one doubts it. He actually did it the hard way. He had years where he could have won but did not because other people had cheated and he did not. He is a real champion because of all those things. I want to pay tribute to all the other Australians who competed in this year's Tour as well. They are great riders, and racing over three weeks over the sort of distance we are talking about is a great achievement. They are all champions and champions for Australia as well.

I am a keen cyclist, as many people in Canberra are. I am a passionate believer in the benefits of cycling, certainly not at the level of Cadel—none of us could even come close to mentioning our own names in the same sentence as his. With everything that cycling can bring, it truly is a great sport that transcends competition. It is a way of life for many people and I see it as a great benefit for so many people in Australia and around the world.

I want to say thanks to Cadel for what he has done for cycling generally and for cycling in Australia. Congratulations, mate. You are an absolute champion.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms AE Burke): As there is only one minute until the adjournment of the debate, does the member for Forrest still wish to speak?

Ms Marino: No, Madam Deputy Speaker.

ADJOURNMENT

That the Main Committee do now adjourn.

Battle of Long Tan

Mrs PRENTICE (Ryan) (12:29): Today is a very special day for our nation. On 18 August we commemorate Vietnam Veterans Day and we also commemorate the Battle of Long Tan. Regardless of whether you supported the Vietnam War, or whether you support or
object to war at all, our veterans deserve recognition for the sacrifices they have made, particularly when that sacrifice was made through national service. At the time, the Vietnam War was the longest war in which Australia had been involved. As we all know, it was also one of the most controversial. It was the first war broadcast live on television, witnessed from the comfort of our homes. It was a tragic time, a confusing time, with public opposition to conscription and the war itself often overshadowing what members of our Defence Force went through. I commend the then Prime Minister Bob Hawke who ensured that Vietnam veterans were finally acknowledged, as they should be, in 1987, with the first official Vietnam Veterans Day.

Vietnam Veterans Day is commemorated on 18 August each year, the anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan. This year, this day is particularly important as it is the 45th anniversary of the battle. This afternoon, at the Gallipoli Barracks in my electorate of Ryan, members of Delta Company 6RAR will be presented with a prestigious unit of citation for gallantry, as well as a medal of gallantry for retired Lieutenant David Sabben. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the unit's commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Harry Smith, whose tireless efforts have finally seen this belated recognition achieved.

There is no doubt that these servicemen deserve recognition for their gallantry. On 18 August 1966, 108 ANZACs unknowingly found themselves pitted against a Vietcong force estimated to be between 1,800 to 2,500. The battle is one of the best known and heaviest conflicts of the war and one of the very few battles in recorded history to be won against such odds. We lost 18 Australians in the Battle of Long Tan, with 24 wounded. The Vietcong lost 245. The conditions were terrifying. Servicemen recalling the battle tell stories of chest-height mist, torrential rain and of course shots that came out of nowhere. Six men were lost immediately upon first contact and backup companies were delayed for over an hour. The low forest ceiling prevented any air support. Despite this, under Smith's command, our forces fended off a numerically superior force, showing unquestionable bravery under circumstances most of us cannot fathom.

I am proud that the men of Delta Company are being recognised today. It is unacceptable that many of the men who were on the ground at Long Tan, putting their lives on the line in terrifying conditions, had their gallantry awards downgraded. I commend former Prime Minister John Howard for being the first Australian Prime Minister to visit Long Tan and acknowledge the poor treatment Vietnam veterans had received. Thankfully, in 2006 many of the awards that had originally been downgraded were upgraded to properly reflect what these brave men deserved. Today the final piece of the battle for Long Tan is being put in place at the ceremony at Gallipoli Barracks at Enoggera.

I feel privileged to have the opportunity to publicly commend our service men and women, past and present, from the Boer War to those serving around the world today. I hope our defence forces never again face a conflict like the Battle of Long Tan, but, if they do, their gallantry, their sacrifice and their trauma must be recognised.

Ramadan

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (12:33): This August, Muslims around Australia mark the holy month of Ramadan. Like Lent for Catholics, the 30-day period of fasting and prayer is a time of personal reflection and an opportunity for those of faith to focus particularly on the needs of others. In the Moreton electorate, nearly 5,000 people identify as Muslim. They come from
places such as Bosnia, Sudan, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Iraq and Pakistan, to name but a few. The Ramadan fast takes great commitment from Muslims. I used to marvel at the Bulldogs rugby league player, Hasim Al Masri, as he would go off to football training and play during Ramadan, having observed the dawn till dusk fast. All Muslims still go about their work, care for their children and often participate in Taraweeh special night prayers at their mosque.

The Moreton area has six mosques, including at Holland Park, which, at 102 years of age, is the oldest mosque in Queensland. We also have a very progressive Islamic school—admittedly, it is just over the road in the electorate of Rankin, but I claim it as mine—and the Griffith Islamic Research Unit at Griffith University. It has a network of scholars who research Islam in Australia and seek to bridge the gap between Islam and the West. I have spoken in this place before about how the Muslim community responded to the floods in Brisbane. In the days after the January floods 400 volunteers turned up at the Kuraby mosque to offer help and financial support to flood affected people. They raised more than $50,000 for the flood effort and were hands-on distributing meals to flooded households, to police and to emergency workers out on the streets. I saw many muddy burqas in the clean-up process. Together, my Muslim community cooked more than 2,000 meals. Twenty Muslim tradespeople came up from New South Wales to help out in Queensland—and that is when the State of Origin score was only 5-0! The Islamic Womens Association of Queensland is also doing good work in the Moreton electorate through aged care and other community services.

All of this contributes to our healthy multicultural community. But as we saw, sadly, in Norway, extreme views about multiculturalism do exist. I think we are all still shocked by the tragic death of 77 mostly young people in Norway at the hands of a madman with a vendetta against multiculturalism and Islam. This attack was so outrageous because it was not only an ideological assault on multiculturalism but a bloodthirsty crime against young people who belonged to our sister party, Norway Labour. Multiculturalism and Labor are intrinsically linked in my own personal world view, so this attack really rattled my core beliefs. That is why in the week following the attack I called my Christian, Buddhist and Muslim groups and school representatives together in my electorate office for a special service to honour the victims of the Norway shooting. It was also an opportunity for all of us present to recommit ourselves to tolerance and understanding. I will never forget the impact this service had on a young Norwegian social worker, Maryanne, who was on exchange at Sunnybank State High School. Until that morning she had felt helpless and isolated, so far from her grieving nation, but the ceremony helped.

Tragic events like this cause all of us to reflect and wonder how one person could get it so horribly wrong. How could one person's fears, insecurities and prejudices lead to such a horrible tragedy? I realise there are different issues at play, but the riots in Britain were another example of those who feel society has forgotten them responding in extreme and violent ways. And of course there was a fair smattering of opportunistic criminals lacking a moral compass. I read an article a few days ago in the London Telegraph which said that in many cases it was Britain's ethnic communities, including the Muslim community, who courageously held back the mob to protect people, property and communities.

I think politicians have a responsibility not to incite extremist views in our community. I am not for a minute suggesting that we impede our rights to free speech, public
demonstrations, protests or rallies. They are a healthy part of our democracy, but we must be responsible and ensure that demonstrations of public opinion do not become overheated. In my experience people, including politicians, are not always moved by lots of noise. Minds are more likely to be moved by quiet, rational engagement.

Finally, as a side note, next month the Prime Minister and federal cabinet ministers will travel to Yeronga State High School in my electorate for the Labor government's community cabinet meeting. I am thrilled to be able to welcome Prime Minister Gillard to Moreton and I encourage all of my community to register and come along to meet with ministers and have their say.

**Battle of Long Tan**

_Mr TUDGE (Aston) (12:38):_ I rise today to speak about the Vietnam War and to thank our war veterans on this important day, Long Tan Day. As you would be aware, Long Tan Day commemorates a battle that occurred on 18 August 1966. In this battle Delta Company 6RAR, which consisted of 105 Australian men and three New Zealanders from 161 Battery, Royal New Zealand Artillery, fought an encounter battle against enemy forces in Long Tan rubber plantation, which is located only a few thousand metres from the 1st Australian Task Force, based at Nui Dat.

The soldiers battled against over 2,000 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops and suffered 42 casualties, more than one-third of its strength. Eighteen Australians lost their lives and 24 were wounded. They fought in torrential rain for four hours. They were nearly overrun but were saved by a timely ammunition resupply, accurate artillery fire from the nearby Australian base and the arrival of reinforcements by armoured personnel carrier. The two 9 Squadron RAAF helicopters negotiated torrential rain and almost zero visibility to drop cases of ammunition wrapped in blankets down to the embattled soldiers.

On 19 August, Delta Company 6RAR, together with 6RAR's Alpha, Bravo and Charlie companies and Delta Company 5RAR, returned to the area with APCs to search for the Australians who were killed in the battle. They found two of the missing men from Delta Company alive and 13 Australian bodies were retrieved. After the battle, the bodies of 245 enemy soldiers were found, but there was evidence that many more bodies had been carried away. It was apparent that the Vietcong commanders had failed to appreciate the effectiveness of artillery fire and had paid dearly as a result.

The battle of Long Tan, a courageous battle, has achieved symbolic significance for the Australian military and indeed for the Australian community, in the same way that Gallipoli did for World War I, the Kokoda Track for the Second World War and the Battle of Kapyong for the Korean War. We now properly commemorate this day, 18 August, every single year. On this day we remember and reflect upon the courage and the sacrifice of all the men and women in Australia who served in Vietnam.

In my electorate of Aston, Gerry Turner, president of the outer eastern Melbourne sub-branch of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, with his members, friends and other local residents, commemorated Vietnam Veterans Day this morning at a dawn service locally. Were I not required here in parliament, I would have been at that ceremony. The guest speaker this morning was a remarkable Vietnam veteran who lives locally, in Boronia: Mr Jim Bourke. He served as a platoon commander in Vietnam in 1966 and established...
Operation Aussies Home, which sought to return the bodies of six Australians listed as missing in action during the Vietnam War. I commend Mr Bourke and Operation Aussies Home for their work in successfully returning four of those soldiers. I understand they remain hopeful that the last two of the six Australian servicemen missing in action in Vietnam may be returned home soon.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to all of the Australians who served in the Vietnam War, the men and women who served in Vietnam and also those who served in supporting roles back home. They deserve our honour, our thanks and our respect as much as any other person who has contributed to Australian campaigns abroad. I understand that they were not treated well when they returned home. In fact, I hear terrible stories of people who were literally spat at and were verbally abused; they did not get the respect they deserved. Thankfully, we as a nation have moved on from that and we recognise that they served our nation and made a tremendous sacrifice, despite the war being unpopular in many quarters at the time. We should honour their sacrifice and their courage as much as we do for any other war veteran. Today we stop and reflect upon the Vietnam War; we say thank you to the men and women who served and we honour their sacrifices.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. Peter Slipper) (12:43): I thank the member for Aston. I believe I speak for all honourable members when I say that I associate myself with the sentiments expressed by the member. I believe other members would join me in doing that as well. I now call the member for Melbourne Ports.

South Sudan

Mr DANBY (Melbourne Ports) (12:44): On 9 July, the world welcomed South Sudan to the international community of nations. After 60 years of struggle against the Islamist regime in Khartoum, the people of the new republic of South Sudan are free. Representing Prime Minister Gillard and the people of Australia, I had the honour of travelling to Juba, the gritty capital of the south, to participate in the independence celebrations. What I saw in Juba gave me hope. The road to independence has not been easy for South Sudan, with five decades of internecine war with the north which have seen the death of 2½ million people. I want to thank Team Australia, who hosted me while I was in Juba and Nairobi; Australian Ambassador Geoff Tooth; his deputy, Paul Dziatkowiec; Sue Graves from AusAID; Simon Wall, Third Secretary; Michael Collins, Second Secretary; and Dr Angelique Burguez, Second Secretary from Cairo.

Australia's early recognition of South Sudan and the announcement of our grant of $16 million over two years to support and deliver services such as education, maternal health, sanitation and support for rural livelihoods have made a strong impression with the new South Sudanese leadership. The security situation in South Sudan remains extremely fragile. Over 40 per cent of foreign aid—I might say not from us—is reportedly spent on the armed forces of the new nation. In June this year the governments of the north and the south signed an accord to demilitarise one of the border provinces and to allow in a United Nations force of Ethiopian peacekeepers to patrol it. But since 5 June there have been clashes in which 73,000 people have had to flee their homes. This is particularly important because in the provinces of Abyei and Kordofan are the oil resources of the new government, the Republic of South Sudan. That is why it is important that we try and re-establish peace there, because this is an extremely poor country. There are 50 kilometres of sealed roads in a country the size of
France. There is 42 per cent female literacy and it is one of the poorest countries in the world. It is an enormous task building a state like this. The infrastructure is worse than in East Timor under Portugal and Indonesia. Only 15 per cent of people are educated. Prior to South Sudan's independence, 470,000 barrels of oil were pumped per day, three-quarters of which came from the south. However, all of the oil flows north, through Khartoum.

Significantly, despite UN indictment by the International Criminal Court for activities in western Sudan, President al-Bashir attended the celebrations in Juba, which I think is an indication of the fact that he and his regime would like the international community to concentrate on potential peace moves between the north and the south rather than his activities in the west of Sudan. Border demarcation is particularly problematic as 20 per cent of the border has not been agreed on.

There is an incredible role for Australia in the potential for this country. One of the things that I absolutely celebrated when I was there was that so many other South Sudanese elite speak with broad Australian accents. That is because under the humanitarian program 30,000 Sudanese people have been admitted to Australia and many of them are returning, hopefully with Australian commerce and mining companies, to develop the former country. They are certainly making a great connection between Australia and South Sudan. I note that the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade have an excellent scheme which is going to take place in Perth for international training of people in openness and transparency of mining operations, which are completely underdeveloped in Southern Sudan, so we have got a lot to impart there. Eventually, beginning at the October meeting of the Commonwealth, I expect that South Sudan will become a full member of the Commonwealth of Nations.

Despite two million lives being lost in the struggle over the last decades, the mood there was inspiring and positive. It was heart-warming to witness the people's belief that the day after tomorrow will be better than the one today. As South Sudan's President Kiir said at the celebrations:

Never again shall South Sudanese be oppressed for their political beliefs. Never again shall our people be discriminated against on account of race and religion. Never again shall we roam the world as sojourners and refugees. We have reclaimed our permanent home given to us by God as our birthright. As we bask in the glory of nationhood, I call upon all South Sudanese to put the long and sad history of war, hardship and loss behind them and open a new chapter of peace and reconciliation in our lives.

We can all say 'Amen' to that.

**Mining**

Mr CHRISTENSEN (Dawson) (12:49): I rise to highlight an often overlooked aspect of the current resources boom. The view of many across this country is that the resources boom is about numbers on a page, about dollars on a budget paper, and about the economy and prosperity. But for families in and around mining regions, particularly in Queensland and Western Australia, the mining boom is also about people. It is about making an honest living, putting a roof over your family's head, putting food on the table and building a better life. These people, these families, in mining are rightfully concerned about how the boom has and will affect them.

As the state government in Queensland considers mining company BMA's application for a 100 per cent fly-in fly-out workforce at its Cavell Ridge mine near Moranbah, it should
consider the people behind the numbers and the dollar signs. Yes, mineworkers in the Bowen Basin should have the right to live where they want to live, but more importantly they must have a real choice—whether that be in Brisbane, Mackay or one of the hinterland coal towns. There must be a real mix of options.

The town of Moranbah, a two-hour drive from Mackay, has been home to mining families for 40 years, and certainly 100 per cent fly-in fly-out poses an economic and social risk to that town. But a 100 per cent fly-in fly-out workforce also would harm the regional centre of Mackay, which is the city of choice for many mining families and workers in the Bowen Basin who choose the drive-in, drive-out option. If the state government allows it, mining companies will fly their workers in from Brisbane and elsewhere almost direct to the mine site, completely bypassing Mackay.

Services and facilities like schools, hospitals, sporting clubs and shopping centres in the Mackay region rely on the growth in mining families choosing to live close to their employment. A 100 per cent fly-in fly-out workforce will bypass and undermine these services, particularly in the smaller towns closer to the mines. The potential outcome here is to kill communities and remove a great lifestyle choice for mining families—this being one where they can live in a real community and work with a minimal commute.

Mining companies do rightly complain about the lack of a local workforce to fill the jobs that the need. Well, part of the problem here lies with the state Labor government, which has done nothing to make mining regions, which are creating the wealth of the state, more liveable communities. Almost $1.1 billion went into the state coffers in the 2010 financial year through royalties on the coal that was exported through the ports of Hay Point, Dalrymple Bay and Abbott Point—all of which are in the Mackay region. And that was in the middle of the global financial crisis. The year before that, we contributed more than $2.2 billion and in the last financial year, just ended, there will have been another multibillion dollar bonanza in royalties from our region for the state of Queensland.

But the Queensland Labor government siphons off the majority of these royalties to benefit the south-east, where it can purchase more votes for the dollar. It has neglected the regions and does not have the common sense to invest in the necessary infrastructure and social needs of regions that service their big cash cow of mining. And Anna Bligh's Labor mates in Canberra will not only back her up; they will try to outdo her with their mining tax.

What will happen to all the revenue the Labor government's mining tax will generate? If Canberra gets its hands on mining dollars, does anyone seriously believe that a fair share is going to come back to places like the Mackay region where the money is being generated? The reality is that it will go to Sydney and to Melbourne and to the next big budget black hole that results from Labor's continual spending sprees.

I did have to laugh because in the Weekend Australian on 23 July the Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government pointed out how Labor had helping mining communities with—wait for it—an increase in the remote area allowance, which tops up welfare payments for people in those areas. If you get a job in the mines and you move your family to a mining town, it must be comforting to know that if you lose your job you can collect just that little bit more from Centrelink than if you stayed in Sydney.
The same minister in the same article maintains that there is 'no role' for government to prescribe a precise formula for fly-in fly-out. I reject that statement. It is government that issues mining permits and sets the conditions for mining activity. It is government that collects billions of dollars in mining royalties—or perhaps the mining tax. Government has a role to play in supporting the interests of mining regions and the families who work in the industry. If weak state and federal Labor governments continue to neglect the regions driving this economy, they will ensure that fly-in fly-out is encouraged and we will all endure the pain and see absolutely none of the gain from this boom.

Petrie Electorate: Disability Services

Mrs D'ATH (Petrie) (12:54): During the winter break a number of organisations and schools in my electorate started to hold an event called the DisabiliTEA, which is a morning tea or afternoon tea to raise awareness of the NDIS, the National Disability Insurance Scheme. I acknowledge and congratulate these groups, who were involved in the Every Australian Counts campaign. I was very proud to get invitations to some of these morning teas, to go along to them to help raise the awareness of this campaign and to be seen supporting the I Count campaign. I had the great opportunity to go to an event organised by Multicap. The service coordinator of Multicap Petrie Day Services, Victoria Phelan, organised one at Old Petrie Town on 2 August. It was well attended by many of the people whom Multicap cares for, as well as by the carers themselves. Deception Bay State High School also held a DisabiliTEA event, which was organised by Kate Eunson, who is the year 9 coordinator, special education teacher and senior transition coordinator at the high school. The students at the special education unit catered for and served us at that morning tea and were in charge of taking photos and looking after the special guests who attended the event. I thank the principal, David Friis, Kate and all the students who were involved in that morning tea.

I also mention the broader work of Multicap. I know that they are raising lots of funds to build homes, a program they call Build a Home4Life, and I know that one of these homes is opening very shortly in my electorate in the suburb of Bracken Ridge. These are homes where people with disabilities can come together and live a normal life in a normal home environment while still getting the care they need 24/7. I have lost count of how many parents I have met who are also carers and who have talked to me about their concerns about the future of their children. They talk about—for example—their 20-year-old son who loves going to the movies and the shopping centre with his mates but is in a wheelchair and has cerebral palsy. They want him to have one of these homes, where he can live with other young men in their 20s, go on outings and have a good quality of life. I have a very small number of homes in my electorate that are set up for young people with disabilities. Predominantly they have been started by families who have put up the money because their child has a disability. The child may have passed on, but the family through multiple generations has continued to support the home, and governments, where they can, provide the full-time carers and grants and other assistance to help to set up the family's minibus with a hoist and so on.

I will not even start going through the list of all the groups that do so much work in my electorate—I will save that for another day, because I need more than five minutes to do it—but I raise these issues because I could not have been more proud of being part of this federal
Labor government when, on 10 August, the Prime Minister and the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs handed down the Productivity Commission's final report into the long-term care and support of Australians with disabilities and acknowledged the Productivity Commission's finding that the current disability support system is unfair, underfunded, fragmented and inefficient. I do not think you would find any parent, carer or person with a disability who would disagree with that finding of the Productivity Commission.

I am very proud that this government has said, 'We support establishing a national disability insurance scheme, and we are going to work to see that happen and we are taking action right now.' There will be $10 million this year to build the foundations and start the work. So my congratulations go to the minister, the Hon. Jenny Macklin, to the Prime Minister and to the previous Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children’s Services, Bill Shorten, for his work in this area.

**Ryan Electorate: St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital**

Mrs PRENTICE (Ryan) (12:59): I take this opportunity in the small amount of time we have left to place on record my appreciation for the dedicated, devoted and hardworking staff, both nursing and medical, at St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital. They performed miracles on the former Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, and my own father has recently undergone an operation there. I think it is timely that we recognise the efforts of these wonderful people who not only look after their patients around the clock but also look after the many anxious members of their families who are always concerned when a family member is admitted.

**Main Committee adjourned at 13:00**
QUESTIONS IN WRITING

Reward for School Improvement Initiative
(Question No. 221)

Mr Baldwin asked the Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth, in writing, on 1 March 2011:

In respect of reward payments for schools:

(1) What total sum of funding is currently available.

(2) What total sum of funding has been allocated to (a) 2010-11, (b) 2011-12, (c) 2012-13, (d) 2013-14, and (e) financial years beyond 2013-14.

(3) In respect of the Australian Standard Geographical Classification—Remoteness Areas (RA), will there be a limit by (a) number, (b) dollar value, or (c) share of available funding, to the projects funded under this program in: (i) non-capital city RA1, (ii) capital city RA1, (iii) RA2, (iv) RA3, (v) RA4, and (vi) RA5.

Mr Garrett: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

(1) Total administered funding currently allocated for the Reward for School Improvement initiative from 2010-11 to 2014-15 is $252.094 million.

(2) The administered funding allocated for each year is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Reward payments ($m)</th>
<th>Total ($m)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>3.993</td>
<td>3.993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>15.785</td>
<td>15.785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>48.596</td>
<td>48.596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>91.860</td>
<td>91.860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>252.094</td>
<td>252.094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>215.625</td>
<td>215.625</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In line with the Government's announcements, it is intended that $86.250 million in funding for reward payments will be available each year for 2015-16 and 2016-17, totalling $172.500 million outside the current forward estimates.

(3) As part of the Government's agreement with independent MPs, of the total $388 million in reward payments to be made available through the Reward for School Improvement program, at least $125 million will go to schools in regional Australia, defined as schools located in all Australian Standard Geographical Classification—Remoteness Areas except RA1-major cities.

Empowering Local Schools Initiative
(Question No. 222)

Mr Baldwin asked the Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth, in writing, on 1 March 2011:

In respect of the Government's policy to empower local schools:

(1) What total sum of funding is currently available.

(2) What total sum of funding has been allocated to (a) 2010-11, (b) 2011-12, (c) 2012-13, (d) 2013-14, and (e) financial years beyond 2013-14.

(3) In respect of the Australian Standard Geographical Classification—Remoteness Areas (RA), will there be a limit by (a) number, (b) dollar value, (c) share of available funding, to the projects funded...
under this program in: (i) non-capital city RA1, (ii) capital city RA1, (iii) RA2, (iv) RA3, (v) RA4, and (vi) RA5.

Mr Garrett: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:
(1) The total sum of administered funding currently available is $466.870 million over 2010-11 to 2016-17.
(2) The total sum of administered funding allocated to (a) 2010-11 is zero, (b) 2011-12 is $63.440 million, (c) 2012-13 is zero, (d) 2013-14 is zero, and (e) financial years beyond 2013-14 is $403.430 million. (2014-15 is zero, 2015-16 is $403.430 million, and 2016-17 is zero)
(3) In respect of the Australian Standard Geographical Classification-Remoteness Areas (RA), the Government has made a commitment that around 330 schools in regional areas of Australia will be the first to benefit in Phase One of the Empowering Local Schools election initiative. Around $15 million will be made available to regional schools in Phase One.

Ministers: Staff, Capital Works and Acquisitions
(Question Nos 263, 264 and 266)

Mr Briggs asked the Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth, in writing, on 3 March 2011:
(1) How many personal staff are employed by the Minister.
(2) What is the (a) total cost, and (b) breakdown of costs, of all capital works and acquisitions in the Minister's private office since 3 December 2007.

Mr Garrett: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:
The answers to these questions were included in the response provided to questions 249, 262, 265, 277 and 278, that appeared in Hansard on 14 June 2011 at page 6035.

Broadband
(Question No. 388)

Mr Fletcher asked the Minister representing the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, in writing, on 26 May 2011:
Further to the Minister's answer to question in writing No. 178 (House Hansard, 10 May 2011, page 54), will the amount of downstream capacity per end user on the Gigabit Passive Optical Network fibre optic link be 77.8 megabits per second if the number of end users assigned to that link reaches the maximum permitted under NBN Co.'s design rules.

Mr Albanese: The Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:
As referred to in the answer to HQIW 178 (b), the downstream capacity of a Gigabit Passive Optical Network (GPON) link is expected to be 2.488Gbps. This capacity is available and is shared dynamically amongst the connected users active at any point in time. Addition of an end user to a link does not assign a specific "block" of capacity to that user. NBN design rules ensure there is sufficient flexibility so that all end-users can access the bandwidth ordered via their RSP. Should demand for aggregate bandwidth amongst end users connected to a GPON link prove likely to exceed link capacity, the design of the NBN allows the option to reallocate end users to another link.

Broadband
(Question No. 390)

Mr Fletcher asked the Minister representing the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, in writing, on 26 May 2011:
Further to the Minister's answer to question in writing No. 78 (House Hansard, 10 May 2011, page 47), what is the estimated sum of the residual costs incurred by USO Co. that will be met by the industry.

**Mr Albanese:** The Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

On 23 June 2011 the Australian Government announced that it had entered into an agreement with Telstra for the ongoing delivery of the Universal Service Obligation for voice and payphone services and other public interest services. At this time the Government also provided detail on the new arrangements through the release of a policy statement, *Universal Service Policy in the National Broadband Network Environment*, available at the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy website.

The residual costs that will be met by industry are the costs of the Telecommunications Universal Service Management Agency, or TUSMA (previously referred to as USO Co), minus the Government's dedicated funding. These costs will include the costs of agreements with Telstra and NRS providers that will be managed by the CEO of the TUSMA in accordance with the proposed TUSMA legislation.

As outlined in the policy statement, the agreement with Telstra will cost approximately $290 million annually (for the delivery of the standard telephone service USO, the payphones USO, and the Emergency Call Service), plus costs relating to migration of voice-only customers from the copper network to the fibre network, and costs if necessary for developing technological solutions for public interest services (public alarm systems and traffic lights).

To facilitate the smooth transition to the new arrangements the Government and Telstra have agreed to interim funding arrangements for the first two financial years to provide certainty to industry. This interim arrangement will mean the aggregate levy contribution that is made by telecommunications firms other than Telstra will, for the first two years, remain at the amount non-Telstra contributors are assessed as being required to contribute under the USO and NRS schemes for the 2011–12 period.

As part of the announcement the Government also stated that it will review the industry levy arrangements and the need for any additional Budget funding, over and above the Government's committed base funding, during the course of the first two financial years of the Telecommunication Universal Service Management Agency's operation.

**Broadband**

(Question No. 391)

**Mr Fletcher** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, in writing, on 26 May 2011:

Further to the Minister's answer to question in writing No. 78 (House Hansard, 10 May 2011, page 47), will USO Co. be responsible for the continued operation of the copper network serving all parts of Australia which are not served by the fibre to the premises network owned by NBN Co., and what are the likely costs of such operation.

**Mr Albanese:** The Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

On 23 June 2011 the Australian Government announced that it had entered into an agreement with Telstra for the ongoing delivery of the Universal Service Obligation for voice and payphone services and other public interest services. At this time the Government also provided detail on the new arrangements through the release of a policy statement, *Universal Service Policy in the National Broadband Network Environment*, available at the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy website.
The Telecommunications Universal Service Management Agency, or TUSMA (previously referred to as USO Co), will not be directly responsible for operating or maintaining telecommunications networks. As outlined in the Government's policy statement, *Universal Service Policy in the National Broadband Network Environment*, the TUSMA will administer the agreement with Telstra, which requires Telstra to deliver the standard telephone service universal service obligation (the STS USO). The agreement also requires Telstra to continue to operate its copper network in areas outside of NBN Co's fibre footprint for 20 years. Under the agreement Telstra will be paid $230 million annually (not indexed to CPI) for the delivery of the STS USO. The policy statement also notes that payments may vary if standards or requirements are changed, or if cost savings are identified.

**Broadband**  
(Question No. 423)

Mr Hartsuyker asked the Minister representing the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, in writing, on 15 June 2011:

How many retail customers signed up for fixed-line National Broadband Network services in the week ending 10 June 2011, what services did they sign up for and at what speed?

Mr Albanese: The Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

NBN Co Limited (NBN Co) has reporting obligations defined in the Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997, the Governance Arrangements for Commonwealth Government Business Enterprises June 1997 and the Corporations Act 2001. The NBN Co Annual Report will include details of progress towards meeting its coverage objectives and expenditure in doing so. NBN Co is required to submit its Annual Report to Shareholder Ministers for tabling at least 4 months after the end of the financial year. NBN Co will be including updated information in its Corporate Plan in line with the timetable established by Government.

The Joint Committee on the National Broadband Network (NBN) has been appointed to inquire into the NBN rollout and report every six months to the Parliament and its Shareholder Ministers. Information on progress with the NBN rollout will be provided for the Committee's six-monthly report.

**Broadband**  
(Question No. 440)

Mr Hartsuyker asked the Minister representing the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, in writing, on 22 June 2011:

How many retail customers signed up for fixed-line National Broadband Network services in the week ending 17 June 2011? What services did they sign up for and at what speed?

Mr Albanese: The Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

NBN Co Limited (NBN Co) has reporting obligations defined in the Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997, the Governance Arrangements for Commonwealth Government Business Enterprises June 1997 and the Corporations Act 2001. The NBN Co Annual Report will include details of progress towards meeting its coverage objectives and expenditure in doing so. NBN Co is required to submit its Annual Report to Shareholder Ministers for tabling at least 4 months after the end of the financial year. NBN Co will be including updated information in its Corporate Plan in line with the timetable established by Government.
The Joint Committee on the National Broadband Network (NBN) has been appointed to inquire into the NBN rollout and report every six months to the Parliament and its Shareholder Ministers. Information on progress with the NBN rollout will be provided for the Committee's six-monthly report.

**Broadband**
(Question No. 446)

Mr Hartsuyker asked the Minister representing the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, in writing, on 4 July 2011:

How many retail customers signed up for fixed-line National Broadband Network services in the week ending 24 June 2011, what services did they sign up for and at what speed.

Mr Albanese: The Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

NBN Co Limited (NBN Co) has reporting obligations defined in the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997*, the *Governance Arrangements for Commonwealth Government Business Enterprises June 1997* and the *Corporations Act 2001*. The NBN Co Annual Report will include details of progress towards meeting its coverage objectives and expenditure in doing so. NBN Co is required to submit its Annual Report to Shareholder Ministers for tabling at least 4 months after the end of the financial year. NBN Co will be including updated information in its Corporate Plan in line with the timetable established by Government.

The Joint Committee on the National Broadband Network (NBN) has been appointed to inquire into the NBN rollout and report every six months to the Parliament and its Shareholder Ministers. Information on progress with the NBN rollout will be provided for the Committee's six-monthly report.

**Defence: Relocation Contractors**
(Question No. 453)

Mr Entsch asked the Minister for Defence Science and Personnel, in writing, on 6 July 2011:

When will he respond to my correspondence dated 17 May 2011 on behalf of two of my constituents, requesting a response on: (a) their dissatisfaction with his department's relocation contractors, Toll Transitions; (b) his department's failure to remedy the issues raised by them in their contact with Mr Merv Dicton, Defence Relocations and Housing Manager, Personnel and Business Services Branch, Defence Support Queensland; and (c) his department's perceived lack of support to Defence personnel and their families in the relocation process.

Mr Snowdon: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

(a) to (c) I responded to your letter of 17 May 2011 on 4 July 2011.