**INTERNET**


**SITTING DAYS—2014**

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FORTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—FOURTH PERIOD

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

House of Representatives Office holders

Speaker—Hon. Bronwyn Kathleen Bishop MP
Deputy Speaker—Hon. Bruce Craig Scott MP
Second Deputy Speaker—Mr Robert George Mitchell
Members of the Speaker’s Panel—Mrs Karen Lesley Andrews MP,
Mr Russell Evan Broadbent MP, Mr Alexander George Hawke MP,
Mr Ian Reginald Goodenough MP, Mrs Natasha Louise Griggs MP,
Mr Ewen Thomas Jones MP, Mr Craig Kelly MP, Hon. Charles Christian Porter MP,
Mr Donald James Randall MP, Mr Ross Xavier Vasta MP, Mr Brett David Whiteley MP

Leader of the House—Hon. Christopher Pyne MP
Deputy Leader of the House—Hon. Luke Hartsuyker MP
Manager of Opposition Business—Hon. Anthony Stephen Burke MP
Deputy Manager of Opposition Business—Hon. Mark Dreyfus QC MP

Party Leaders and Whips

Liberal Party of Australia
Leader—Hon. Anthony John Abbott MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Julie Isabel Bishop MP
Chief Government Whip—Hon. Philip Maxwell Ruddock MP
Government Whips—Mr Scott Buchholz MP and Ms Nola Bethwyn Marino MP

The Nationals
Leader—Hon. Warren Errol Truss MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Barnaby Thomas Gerard Joyce MP
Chief Whip—Mr Mark Maclean Coulton MP
Deputy Whip—Mr George Robert Christensen MP

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

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

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Wilkie, Mr Andrew Damien</td>
<td>Denison, TAS</td>
<td>IND.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Williams, Mr Matthew</td>
<td>Hindmarsh, SA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilson, Mr Richard James</td>
<td>O'Connor, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wood, Mr Jason Peter</td>
<td>La Trobe, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wyatt, Mr Kenneth George AM</td>
<td>Hasluck, WA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zappia, Mr Antonio</td>
<td>Makin, SA</td>
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PARTY ABBREVIATIONS
ALP—Australian Labor Party; LP—Liberal Party of Australia; NATS—The Nationals; IND—Independent; NATSWA—The Nationals WA; CLP—Country Liberal Party; AUS—Katters Australia Party; AG—Australian Greens; PUP—Palmer United Party

Heads of Parliamentary Departments
Clerk of the Senate—R Laing
Clerk of the House of Representatives—D Elder
Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—C Mills
Parliamentary Budget Officer—P Bowen
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<td>The Hon. Tony Abbott MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Indigenous Affairs</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Nigel Scullion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Public Service</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Eric Abetz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Michaelia Cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister</td>
<td>The Hon. Josh Frydenberg MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister</td>
<td>The Hon. Alan Tudge MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development</strong></td>
<td>The Hon. Warren Truss MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Deputy Prime Minister)</td>
<td>The Hon. Jamie Briggs MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development</td>
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<tr>
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<td>The Hon. George Brandis QC</td>
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<td>The Hon. Bruce Billson MP</td>
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<tr>
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Each box represents a portfolio. **Cabinet Ministers are shown in bold type.** As a general rule, there is one department in each portfolio. However, there is a Department of Human Services in the Social Services portfolio and a Department of Veterans' Affairs in the Defence portfolio. The title of a department does not necessarily reflect the title of a minister in all cases.
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<td>Senator the Hon Kim Carr</td>
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<td>Hon Bernie Ripoll MP</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Cabinet Secretary</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Jacinta Collins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Opposition</td>
<td>Hon Michael Danby MP</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Hon Tanya Plibersek MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Senator Claire Moore</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manager of Opposition Business (Senate)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC</td>
<td>Hon David Feeney MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Penny Wong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Defence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Defence</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Infrastructure and Transport</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Cities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Regional Development and Local Government</td>
<td>Hon Julie Collins MP</td>
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<td>Hon Alannah MacTiernan MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water</td>
<td>Hon Mark Butler MP</td>
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<td>Senator the Hon Lisa Singh</td>
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<tr>
<td>and Water</td>
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<td>Senator the Hon Kim Carr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary to the Shadow Attorney General</td>
<td>Hon Mark Dreyfus QC MP</td>
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<td>Hon Jenny Macklin MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Senator the Hon Doug Cameron</td>
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<tr>
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The SPEAKER (Hon. Bronwyn Bishop) took the chair at 09:00, made an acknowledgement of country and read prayers.

BILLS

Albury-Wodonga Development Corporation (Abolition) Bill 2014

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr McCormack.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr McCormack (Riverina—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance) (09:01): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill abolishes the Albury-Wodonga Development Corporation by repealing the Albury-Wodonga Development Act 1973. The bill also provides for a number of consequential amendments to other acts and sets out transitional provisions relating to the transfer of assets and liabilities from the corporation to the Commonwealth.

The government announced as part of the 2014-15 budget that it would be delivering smaller, more rational government involving the abolition or merger of government bodies where possible to reduce the cost of government administration for taxpayers. The reforms are expected to deliver net savings over the forward estimates period.

As part of the second phase of the smaller government agenda, the government decided that the Albury-Wodonga Development Corporation would be abolished with its remaining property management functions consolidated into the Commonwealth, as represented by the Department of Finance.

The Albury-Wodonga Development Corporation (Abolition) Bill 2014 provides for the transfer to the Commonwealth of the remaining assets and liabilities of the corporation at the time of its abolition. These transferred assets and liabilities will be managed by the Department of Finance.

The date of the abolition of the corporation will be set by proclamation but in the absence of this will occur six months following the date the act receives royal assent, or by 1 July 2015, whichever date falls later. This transitional period allows for an orderly wind-up and transition of the corporation's remaining activities before its abolition.

The corporation ceased development activities in 2004 and in the interim has been preparing for its wind-up through the ongoing sale of its remaining land interests. This bill will bring to a close the operations of the Corporation.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.
National Security Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2014
Second Reading

Mr KEENAN (Stirling—Minister for Justice) (09:04): I present the revised explanatory memorandum to this bill and move:
That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the National Security Legislation Amendment Bill (No 1) 2014, which passed the Senate on 25 September 2014.

The bill contains a package of targeted reforms to modernise and improve the legislative framework governing the activities of the Australian intelligence community. It principally amends the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act 1979 (ASIO Act), and the Intelligence Services Act 2001 (IS Act).

The bill has the benefit of not one, but two, bipartisan reviews undertaken by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (PJCIS) in 2012-13 and also this year.

The 2012-13 inquiry was referred to the committee by the then Attorney-General, Nicola Roxon. The committee examined a range of potential reforms to Australia's national security legislation, including our intelligence laws.

The committee made 22 recommendations to help ensure that our intelligence agencies retain their capability to respond to current, emerging and future security threats.

That inquiry was chaired by the member for Holt, Anthony Byrne. We thank Mr Byrne for his leadership of that committee; and for his continued participation as deputy chair upon the change in government.

The committee's 2013 report led to the introduction of this bill in the Senate on 16 July 2014. On the government's reference, the committee—now chaired by Mr Dan Tehan MP—inquired into the provisions of the bill and tabled its report out of sitting on 17 September.

The committee unanimously recommended that the bill be passed, subject to the implementation of 16 targeted improvements to improve oversight, accountability and other safeguards. The government accepted all of these suggestions, and moved amendments in the Senate to implement the relevant recommendations. These measures were passed by the Senate on 25 September, and represent valuable improvements to the bill.

The government acknowledges and commends the outstanding leadership of the member for Wannon, Mr Tehan, and the constructive participation of all committee members in that inquiry. We further acknowledge those opposite for their bipartisanship in supporting the bill and its timely passage. We thank you for placing the principles of security and accountability above politics.

My colleague the Attorney-General has commented at length on the elements of the contemporary and evolving security environment that have led to the necessity to introduce this bill. This includes the unprecedented threat presented by foreign fighters, together with developments in technology and its uses, as well as the ongoing threat presented by hostile activities such as espionage.
As the parliamentary joint committee has rightly acknowledged, it is critical that our intelligence agencies are equipped with powers that enable them to function effectively in this environment—both now and into the future.

**Outline of measures in the bill**

Against this background, the bill enhances the capability of our intelligence agencies in seven key areas, which I will outline briefly.

(1) **Modernising ASIO’s statutory employment framework**

First, the bill contains amendments to modernise the employment provisions in part V of the ASIO Act to better align them with contemporary organisational needs, and Commonwealth public sector employment practices, including interagency mobility and secondments.

Modernisation of these provisions is necessary. They have not been updated significantly since their enactment some 30 years ago.

The bill also implements consistent terminology to describe persons who are in an employment relationship with the organisation, or otherwise affiliated with it.

(2) **Modernising ASIO’s warrant based intelligence powers**

The second key area of reform is to modernise and streamline ASIO's warrant based intelligence collection powers. These reforms are in line with the majority of recommendations in the parliamentary joint committee's 2012-13 inquiry; and the committee's recommendations on the bill in its 2014 report.

Division 2 of part III of the ASIO Act enables the issuing of warrants authorising the organisation to exercise powers to search premises, to access computers, to use surveillance devices, and to inspect postal or delivery service articles.

The proposed amendments will address a number of practical limitations in these powers. In particular, the bill will ensure that the warrants regime regulating ASIO's intelligence collection powers keeps pace with technological developments, particularly the use of computers and online communications by persons of security interest.

In particular, amendments to the definition of a 'computer' to include computer networks and systems will be of particular assistance, recognising that devices are commonly connected to multiple networks and systems.

ASIO's warrant based powers will remain subject to significant safeguards. These include the high thresholds in the statutory criteria for the issuing of warrants and the exercise of powers under them.

The requirements for ministerial level issuing decisions will continue to apply, and the regime will remain subject to the extensive, independent oversight of the Inspector General of Intelligence and Security (IGIS).

The bill will also insert a number of additional safeguards to the new powers.

In particular, ASIO must report to the Attorney-General on all instances in which material interference or disruption is caused to the lawful use of a computer accessed under a warrant.
ASIO must also report, as soon as practicable, to the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security and the Attorney-General if reasonable force is used against a person, where authorised for the purpose of executing a warrant.

(3) Strengthening ASIO's capability to conduct covert intelligence operations, with appropriate safeguards and oversight

The third key reform is the implementation of a recommendation of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security in its 2013 inquiry to establish a dedicated statutory framework for ASIO's covert intelligence-gathering operations.

Much of the intelligence information that is relevant to the security of Australia must necessarily be collected by the organisation on a covert basis.

However, such covert operations are not without risks. In addition to the potential risks to the safety of participants, covert operations can in some instances require participants to associate with those who may be involved in criminal activity—for instance, the commission of offences against the security of the Commonwealth.

Covert operations may, therefore, expose intelligence personnel or sources to legal liability in the course of their work. For this reason, some significant covert operations do not commence or are ceased.

To address this issue, the bill creates a limited immunity for participants in authorised, covert operations.

Just as part IAB of the Crimes Act provides for a limited immunity for covert law enforcement operations, it is appropriate that corresponding protections are extended to participants in covert intelligence operations.

Consistent with the parliamentary joint committee's recommendations in its 2013 and 2014 inquiries, the limited immunity is subject to rigorous safeguards.

In particular, it is restricted to the conduct of a participant in a special intelligence operation that is authorised by the Attorney-General. The participant and the specific conduct must be authorised expressly in advance. There are a number of reporting requirements to the Attorney-General and the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security, where an operation is commenced, periodically every six months, and where certain conduct is engaged in (namely that which causes death, serious injury or property damage).

As an additional safeguard, the limited immunity from legal liability expressly excludes conduct in the nature of entrapment, serious offences against the person or property, and torture.

(4) Clarifying and improving the statutory framework for ASIO's cooperation with the private sector

The fourth major reform will clarify the legislative basis for certain cooperative information-sharing activities of ASIO.

The bill will insert a provision which confirms ASIO's ability to cooperate, on a voluntary basis, with private sector entities, such as owners and operators of critical infrastructure, in performing its statutory functions.

This will remain subject to the extensive safeguards that already apply to prevent misuse of information shared with private sector entities and to ensure privacy of personal information.
These include offences for the unauthorised disclosure of information, the oversight of the inspector-general, and ASIO's obligations to adhere to the Attorney-General's guidelines which require it to take all reasonable steps to protect personal information collected by ASIO for its statutory functions from loss or unauthorised access.

In addition, as the Attorney-General indicated in the government's response to the parliamentary joint committee's 2014 report on the bill, a review of ASIO's guidelines will be undertaken shortly.

(5) Enhancing the capabilities of Intelligence Services Act agencies

The fifth key reform will implement the recommendations of the parliamentary joint committee to enhance the capabilities of agencies under the IS Act, principally by clarifying or strengthening their powers or functions.

Importantly, the bill enhances the capacity of ASIS to cooperate with ASIO, by improving the statutory arrangements for the collection and sharing of certain security related intelligence.

The bill will also improve the protective security capability of ASIS, which undertakes operations in dangerous locations. These amendments will enable ASIS to provide protective security training—such as training in self-defence—to other persons who are cooperating with it in performing its statutory functions.

(6) Improved protection of intelligence-related information

The sixth key reform concerns measures to modernise and strengthen the secrecy offences in the ASIO Act and the IS Act in relation to the unauthorised communication of intelligence-related information, and the disclosure of the identities of our intelligence personnel.

Unauthorised communication of information / dealing with records

These reforms are complementary to the measures recommended by the parliamentary joint committee in its 2013 report. The committee supported the need for these offences, subject to some largely technical amendments, in its 2014 report. As the committee acknowledged, these new and amended offences are necessary to address significant gaps in the coverage of these offences in the contemporary security environment.

As recent, high-profile international events demonstrate, in the wrong hands, classified or sensitive information is capable of global dissemination at the click of a button. Unauthorised disclosures on the scale now possible in the online environment can have devastating consequences for a country's international relationships and intelligence capabilities.

Accordingly, the bill will address a legislative gap by creating new offences applying to unauthorised dealings with an intelligence-related record, including copying, transcription, removal and retention. Currently, no such offences exist. Each new offence will attract a maximum penalty of up to three years imprisonment.

In addition, the bill introduces new maximum penalties of 10 years imprisonment for existing offences involving unauthorised communication of intelligence-related information, which at two years imprisonment are disproportionately low. The higher maximum penalties better reflect the gravity of such wrongdoing by persons to whom this information is entrusted.
These changes, combined with the existing espionage offence punishable by a maximum of 25 years imprisonment, will create a three-tier structure of unauthorised dealing offences that jeopardise the security of intelligence-related information.

In line with recommendations of the parliamentary joint committee in its 2014 report, the offences contain express exceptions for persons who communicate or record information, or deal with records, for the purpose of making a disclosure to the inspector-general.

**Disclosure of identity offences**

In addition, and as a result of amendments moved in the Senate by the Palmer United Party, the bill increases the penalties applying to offences in the ASIO Act and the Intelligence Services Act for persons who disclose the identities of intelligence personnel.

Currently, these offences carry a maximum penalty of just one year imprisonment, which is manifestly inadequate. It fails to provide sentencing courts with an adequate basis on which to denounce and penalise appropriately the wrongdoing inherent in these offences. The lives, safety and livelihoods of our intelligence personnel depend on maintaining absolute confidentiality about their identities.

As the Senate recognised in supporting these amendments, a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment will serve as an appropriate penalty and deterrent for conduct that sentencing courts find to be at the more serious end of the spectrum, in accordance with ordinary principles of criminal sentencing.

The government thanks the Palmer United Party for its foresight in moving these amendments and agrees with the persuasive case for reform that it has advanced, as has been recognised by a majority of the Senate.

(7) Renaming of Defence agencies to better reflect their roles

The seventh and final key reform is to formally amend the names of DIGO and DSD to the Australian Geospatial-Intelligence Organisation and the Australian Signals Directorate respectively. While these agencies have been known by their updated names for some time, the bill will place this on a statutory footing and better reflect the roles that they play in protecting Australia's national security.

**Concluding remarks**

This bill is a significant contribution towards ensuring the future capability of Australia's intelligence agencies.

More broadly, it is the first step in the government's commitment to maintaining security and, where necessary, improving Australia's already strong national security laws.

We have undertaken a further review of these laws, with a view to proactively addressing any gaps to ensure our agencies can respond effectively to emerging security threats.

Following this, we have introduced a further bill, the Counter-Terrorism Legislation Amendment (Foreign Fighters) Bill, which is presently before the parliamentary joint committee for inquiry. We will introduce a third tranche of legislation in the spring sittings addressing the important issue of data retention.

The government's No. 1 priority is to keep Australians safe. We are committed to working with parliament, the private sector and our international partners to protect Australians and our interests from those who would seek to do us harm.
May I, again, thank the parliamentary joint committee and acknowledge, again, the chairmanship of the member for Wannon, and its members on all sides of the chamber who have worked so hard to support this important priority.

I commend this bill to the House.

Mr DREYFUS (Isaacs—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (09:20): The National Security Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2014 stems from work which began under the former Labor government in 2012. In May 2012, the then Labor Attorney-General, the Hon. Nicola Roxon MP, asked the bipartisan Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security to conduct a broad inquiry into the potential reforms to Australia's national security laws. The Labor government released for community debate and consultation a national security discussion paper, which formed the basis for the PJCIS's inquiry. The PJCIS held both public and private hearings in 2012 and took evidence from a range of witnesses. Its final report was tabled on 13 June 2013.

It is worth noting the comprehensive process of consultation which the committee undertook in that inquiry. A broad range of community views were taken into account in that process. I will quote from the PJCIS report:

Letters inviting submissions were sent to over 130 stakeholders in both federal and state government, the telecommunications industry, civil liberties and privacy non-government organisations, and peak legal bodies and associations with an expected interest in the reforms canvassed. The Committee received 240 submissions and 29 exhibits. Three submissions were received in largely identical terms from some 5,300 individual members of the public.

The commissioning of the PJCIS inquiry was just one part of the Labor government's broader approach to updating and improving Australia's national security laws. In 2010, the Labor government established the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor, a statutory office responsible for the ongoing review of national security laws. The inaugural monitor, Bret Walker SC, has provided an invaluable service to the nation in the four reports he produced in his three years in office. In 2012, Prime Minister Gillard launched the COAG review of counterterrorism laws, whose report I tabled in May 2013.

I expect that as the government introduces the successive pieces of national security legislation it has now foreshadowed, it will draw on this work. Where it departs from the considered recommendations of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, the COAG review and the independent monitor, it should be able to provide good reason for doing so. I welcome the government's abandonment of its ill-conceived proposal to abolish the monitor and I call on the government to appoint a new office holder as soon as possible. I am heartened that the Liberal Party senators and members of the PJCIS share this concern. They too have called on the government in their report on this bill to appoint a new monitor as soon as possible.

Each of these measures—the establishment of the monitor, the commissioning of the joint intelligence committee inquiry and the COAG review—showed our government's commitment both to protecting the Australian community from security threats and to making sure that our laws are appropriate, balanced and fair. Labor will always make sure that our security agencies are adequately resourced and empowered, but we are also committed to protecting civil liberties and human rights. We will not abandon the values and the protections which make Australia such an open and free society.
I give this background because it is important to understand the context of this legislation. The government has indicated that it will bring forward a range of legislative responses to the threat of terrorism arising out of recent developments in Syria and Iraq. This bill—the first of several the government has introduced into the parliament or foreshadowed—may certainly have some implications for our security agencies’ ability to handle this threat. However, we should be very clear about the content and intent of the legislation we are debating today.

This bill implements the recommendations contained in chapter 4 of the 2013 Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security report entitled 'Australian intelligence community legislation reform'. The bill updates the legislation underpinning our intelligence agencies to take account of technological and social developments and to take account of the agencies' experience of current arrangements, their experience of what works well and what could be improved. It is in the nature of a modernisation, a finetuning of legislation which is now some decades old.

Many of the measures in the bill are largely uncontroversial, though worthy, adjustments to intelligence legislation, including updating ASIO's employment framework, improving ASIO's ability to work and share information with other organisations, enabling ASIS to better cooperate with ASIO, improving ASIS's protective security capability while operating in dangerous environments and renaming our defence agencies to better reflect their roles. Though it is perhaps impossible to separate this legislation from current events in public debate, we should be clear that these are reforms intended to endure well after current threats have faded. We should debate their content on that basis. Subsequent bills, which do not so squarely implement the outcome of a process as lengthy and as exhaustive as the 2012-13 PJCIS inquiry, may merit a different approach.

Labor understands the importance of national security legislation both to agencies and to the community. We understand that some of the commentary and debate about national security at present has caused agitation in the community. I want to assure the community that we will be treating any proposed reforms with the care, the caution and the seriousness they deserve. The provisions of this bill have of course aroused some community concern, particularly among the media. I want to touch on two issues which have been particularly controversial. First, I acknowledge the concerns many have raised about the offence provisions in the new special intelligence operation scheme provided for ASIO in this bill. I know that this has caused particular alarm among some journalists.

SIOs are counterespionage and counterterrorism operations in which ASIO officers work undercover, infiltrating groups which would do us harm. In the course of working undercover in such groups, undercover ASIO officers may have to break the law. The new SIO scheme is modelled on the arrangements which have applied to undercover AFP operations for some years now. It provides immunity from criminal prosecution for ASIO officers in such circumstances, though this immunity does not extend to torture, to any conduct causing serious harm or death, to sexual offences or to serious damage to property.

The establishment of the SIO scheme was supported by the independent monitor. SIOs will comprise only a very small proportion of ASIO activity and are subject to strong oversight. Labor has, in fact, insisted on safeguards stronger than originally proposed by the government, which I will come to later.
The danger to which undercover ASIO officers could be exposed if the nature of a SIO were to become known is obvious. Given the potentially fatal consequences for the small number of ASIO officers to be involved in SIOs, the bill makes it an offence to disclose information relating to a SIO.

Some in the media have objected to the offence provisions to be contained in section 35p of the ASIO Act on the basis that it might inhibit the work of journalists. It has been suggested that journalists and others might unwittingly breach section 35P. Concerns have also been aired about the position of whistleblowers. Labor understands these concerns.

The media are right to vigorously defend press freedom; it is a crucial part of our democratic system. It was in part due to these concerns that Labor ensured the government's bill was referred back to the PJCIS for further scrutiny with the opportunity for community input, including from the media. The committee made a number of recommendations to improve the design of this offence, each of which Labor has supported in amendments in the Senate. The bill has been amended to confirm that no-one can breach section 35P unless, at the very least, he or she is aware of a substantial risk that information relates to an SIO and it is unjustifiable to take the risk. Clear exceptions to the offence have been established for information disclosed to a person's lawyer, for disclosures to the intelligence watchdog, the Inspector General of Intelligence and Security, and for disclosures to a court. The legislation now confirms that the DPP will take account of the public interest in the publication of information in deciding whether a prosecution is appropriate. SIOs must now be approved by the Attorney-General, providing the highest level of political accountability possible. With these amendments and clarifications, Labor will support the new SIO scheme. The community should be reassured of the limited scope of the offence provisions. Labor would not, and will not, ever support laws which prevent journalists who report on national security and related matters from doing their job. We would never support, as the Greens have cynically suggested, ‘jailing journalists for national security reporting’. The fourth estate provides a crucial form of accountability and oversight of our national security agencies.

SIOs will only ever comprise a very small part of ASIO's work. Like other aspects of ASIO's operations, they are subject to the oversight, at an operational level, of the independent Inspector General of Intelligence and Security. Amendments we insisted upon put it beyond doubt that IGIS will be able to scrutinise SIOs without hindrance. Section 35P will not criminalise the good-faith activities of journalists. As clarified, a journalist will only contravene that provision where they are aware of the dangers of reporting on an SIO. No-one can inadvertently breach this provision, but where journalists are aware of the possibility of endangering undercover ASIO officers we expect them to act responsibly.

However, I want to make it clear to those who are worried about these laws that we hear their concerns. It is essential we maintain community confidence in our security agencies, which must necessarily work in secret. We can only empower those agencies to do their important work if the community is assured, through appropriate oversight and accountability, that they are meeting community expectations. This work—building confidence and dealing with community concern—is a key task for government. In the case of the SIO scheme, the government has not explained itself well. It has allowed some misunderstandings of what this legislation enables to gain currency. There is always room for reasoned disagreement about the scope of security powers, but some commentary about the SIO scheme has simply
misunderstood the nature of that scheme and the operation of section 35P within it. Labor will support these provisions as amended, but we will continue to monitor the operation of the SIO provisions to make sure they do not unduly limit the rights we hold dear. We will insist the government do the hard work of building confidence in our security agencies and we will revisit these measures if necessary.

Secondly, I would like to dispel some of the more unfounded concerns about the changes this bill makes to ASIO's computer access warrants. I have seen some material circulating which suggests that the bill would authorise warrants for ASIO to access the entire internet. I want to reassure the community that this is simply not the case. The definition of 'computer' as relevant to ASIO warrants has been updated to reflect technical developments. The amendments are intended to do nothing more than honour the original, decades-old intention of the warrants scheme in modern conditions.

As the PJCIS noted in its 2013 report:

In an environment of rapidly evolving technology, the capability of ASIO should not be degraded by the definition of computer in the ASIO Act being obsolete. … the term "computer system", may not be sufficient to include a multiplicity of computers operating together … This does not mean, as has been incorrectly asserted, that a warrant could in practice take on absurd breadth, encompassing huge swathes of computer systems or, absurdly, the entire internet. Under the legislation, for a warrant to be issued there must be reasonable grounds to believe that access to the computer or computers specified will substantially assist the collection of intelligence in respect of an important security matter.

Though the new definition of 'computer' is intended to afford ASIO flexibility to deal with changed technology, the legislation makes clear that warrants are to be expressed with precision and specificity. These are targeted measures pursued for clear security goals. As amended, section 25A of the ASIO Act will provide:

(3) The target computer may be any one or more of the following:

(a) a particular computer;
(b) a computer on particular premises
(c) a computer associated with, used by or likely to be used by, a person (whose identity may or may not be known).

As to the authorisation in the warrant, the act will provide in section 3A that the warrant must:

(a) be signed by the Minister; and
(b) authorise the Organisation to do specified things, subject to any restrictions or conditions specified in the warrant, in relation to the target computer; and
(c) if the target computer is or includes a particular computer—specify the computer; and
(d) if the target computer is or includes a computer on particular premises—specify the premises; and
(e) if the target computer is or includes a computer associated with, used by or likely to be used by, a person—specify the person (whether by name or otherwise).

The bill empowers ASIO to access, under warrant, specified third party computers in order to access data in a target computer. As the PJCIS noted in its further report, this does not enable access to content on the third party computer. It authorises the use of that computer only as a
'conduit' to the target computer. Again, this is an attempt to grapple with technical changes in honouring the original intent of the ASIO warrant scheme.

Ultimate protection against misuse of computer access warrants is provided by the warrant process itself, in which warrants are authorised by the Attorney-General. The case for each warrant sought by ASIO must be made to the Attorney-General quite meticulously. The agency must justify its request with real rigour. No Attorney-General of Australia will authorise a warrant for ASIO to access the whole of the internet, and each and every individual warrant authorised is subject to the oversight of the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security.

Again, I know that developing community confidence in these arrangements is difficult. Australians are rightly sceptical of government powers, and of agencies which operate in secret. Again, I think the present government has failed to clearly make the case for these provisions. It has failed to dispel some of the more extreme misunderstandings of what the computer access warrants can authorise, and to assuage the legitimate anxieties of many in the community.

As I have said, most of this legislation is uncontroversial, routine updating of legislation which has been on our statute books now for some decades. Nonetheless, Labor will always insist that national security legislation be subject to very cautious scrutiny.

This bill has been preceded by a long period of careful work and broad consultation. Conscious of concerns about the more controversial measures I have just discussed, Labor insisted that the bill be sent back to the PJCIS for further examination. It is clear that this scrutiny has been valuable in allowing considered public debate and in ensuring that the parliament appropriately balances necessary security powers against the rights and democratic values that our nation holds dear, and that suitable checks and balances are in place to ensure that these powers are always used correctly.

The PJCIS recommended over a dozen important improvements to this bill, and each of these recommendations was accepted by the government and Labor supported amendments to the bill to implement them.

We will continue to monitor the implementation of this legislation to make sure that the correct balance is struck between properly resourcing our security agencies and preserving appropriate safeguards.

As the government brings forward further bills dealing with national security matters, Labor will continue to play the role of a critical but responsible opposition. We will offer the government our assistance in getting the balance right, but our support should not be taken for granted if the government seeks to rush through ill-conceived proposals. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (09:40): Everyone in this place wants to make Australia safer, but there are provisions in the National Security Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2014 that will not make Australia safer. Unscrupulous governments use people's legitimate fears to illegitimately take away their freedoms. Whilst there are parts of this bill that are uncontroversial and could be supported, there are other parts that will fundamentally remove rights and freedoms from people who have done nothing wrong and are not even suspected of having done anything wrong.
The opposition is going along with it. Labor is keen to sign up to Prime Minister Tony Abbott’s khaki campaign and cannot move quickly enough to help get these laws through the parliament. The country is going to be the poorer for it.

If these laws pass, our security agencies could inadvertently kill an innocent bystander, and journalists would not be able to report on it. Whistleblowers would not be able to point out that an operation was bungled and resulted in somebody, who happened to be standing in the wrong place at the wrong time as an innocent member of the public, being killed. The whistleblower would face going to jail for pointing that out.

This throws an even greater shroud of secrecy over already secret operations in an environment where we do not have an independent monitor in the way that we have had under previous governments. There are examples in our recent history where we can see that it is only because of the scrutiny of the media or the courage of a whistleblower that we, the Australian people, have found that about what is being done in our name and when the line has been crossed.

Under these new laws, if it were deemed to be a special intelligence operation, we may never have found out that the Australian government had an involvement in bugging the East Timorese, and individuals who wanted to blow the whistle or report on that wrongdoing, because it was in the public interest, would now face jail if this legislation goes through.

This new category of special operations is to be decided on by the Attorney-General. They are limitless in number, and we will never find out that an operation has been determined in this way. So, as a result, journalists have rightly said: ‘How do I know if I report on something that I am not inadvertently contravening this section?’ That tells us two things: one is that whistleblowers and journalists, who now want to act in the public interest and draw attention to failings or mistakes by our security services, face jail themselves for acting in the public interest. In Australia we certainly would not see the kind of reporting by an Edward Snowden that we have seen elsewhere.

But more worryingly, it is going to have a chilling effect. This provision, if it goes through, will muzzle the media. It will have a chilling effect, because every journalist and every editor will now be worried about whether or not they are going to go to jail if they report on an operation in connection with our security services, and so they are going to be less likely to do it.

It is more than that; it is more than the attack on whistleblowers and journalists who are seeking to bring to light the operations of secret agencies where they step over the line. This bill also significantly expands the ability of the government agencies and of the government itself to access people’s computers, their mobiles and their tablets, even where they are suspected of having done nothing wrong. Even if you are not a suspect, your computer can be accessed and it can be modified. The security services can put files onto your computer simply because you happen to be on the same network as someone who is a suspect.

Now, that is just wrong. If you are not suspected of having done anything wrong, why should the security services be able to access your computer, phone or tablet? That is a fundamental step, in this country, that we are taking and one about which most people if they knew about it, would be very concerned, because what this legislation does is to redefine what counts as a computer. It is not just one or more computers; it is one or more computer
systems, or one or more computer networks or any combination of the above. Anyone with a basic understanding of a network will know that computers at a university might all be connected to the same network and there might be thousands and thousands of people who have access to those computers at that university. If this bill goes through then all you need is one warrant to access every computer on that network.

It is the same in the workplace. There may be hundreds of people and hundreds of computers connected to the one network. Even further, if you just read the legislation as it is, the internet is a network of networks, or a combination of networks. So a single warrant could access the entire internet.

I heard the shadow Attorney-General speaking with some confidence, saying, 'No. You can't access the entire internet from one warrant.' Well, the real Attorney-General refused to rule that out in the other place. When we get to the details stage I will ask the relevant minister here to confirm whether what the shadow Attorney-General said was right. It is very clear to clarify. The question is this: is there an upper limit on how many computers can be accessed from one warrant? A simple reading of the legislation says 'no'.

In the other place, the Attorney-General said 'no'. And if Labor, in its desperation to be a small target on these issues and to get this legislation through this place as quickly as possible, is now saying, 'Oh, no, you can't access broad networks of computers from this,' well, I am sure that someone from the government will come in and clarify that, because I think the shadow Attorney-General has it wrong.

The shadow Attorney-General also let the cat out of the bag when he said yesterday—which is reported in the papers today—that he cannot be absolutely certain that a journalist will not go to jail for reporting on a story that someone got killed in a bungled ASIO raid. So, the opposition, which is quite happy to sign up to this bill, cannot be certain that if a journalist does their job and reports on a bungled ASIO raid that sees an innocent member of the public killed, then that journalist will not go to jail.

Given that uncertainty, the government and the opposition should support the amendments which we are going to move. We will move amendments that will allow the uncontroversial parts of this bill to go through but that will retain the ability of whistleblowers and journalists to act in the public interest.

We accept, as the Greens, that there should be some limits on revealing information that could potentially endanger an operation or endanger the life of someone who is involved in an operation. So we are not going to seek to remove that section—that will stay. Any argument that somehow opening up access to journalists and whistleblowers to report on the public interest will endanger people is a furphy because that section will stay. What will go, under the Greens amendments, is the section that turns legitimate whistleblowing and legitimate reporting into a crime where someone could go to jail. I strongly hope that Labor supports this amendment and that that is a sign to the government that it has got the balance wrong, and that that forces the government to have a rethink. Then we can at least put in some protections in that regard.

Secondly, when it comes to how wide a warrant can be, I do not believe that anyone who is sitting at home on their iPad who has done nothing wrong or who is jumping on their computer at work should themselves be the subject of an ASIO warrant simply because
someone connected to that network is also the subject of a warrant. We accept, though, that
times have moved on and it is now the case that a single person may have multiple devices in
their home. They may have a phone, a tablet, a laptop and a desktop. So we accept that there
may be a case for saying that the definition of 'computer' now needs to be updated.

We will move to limit the number of devices that can be accessed from a single warrant to
20. That should be more than ample to cover the needs of any single warrant served in respect
of a particular person. If 20 is not the right number or there needs to be the capacity in certain
instances to get more then we are happy to have a talk about how to fix that as well. Maybe it
should be 25, maybe it should be 30 or maybe it should be that a judge can decide in an
individual instance that an unlimited number is okay. But if Labor and the government refuse
to support a sensible limit on the number of devices that can be accessed from the one
warrant, whether it is 20 or something else, then the shadow Attorney-General and Labor's
argument dissolves because it is then absolutely crystal clear that an unlimited number of
devices can be accessed from the one warrant because Labor and the coalition will be
standing in lock-step saying, 'There is no upper limit.'

So I hope that the greater reporting on this bill that has happened over the last few days and
the legitimate concerns that have been raised by people about the breadth of new powers
being given to our security agencies that still do not have independent monitoring and
oversight, as well as the concern about what it will mean for reporting, gives people pause for
thought. We should not be rushing legislation through this place under cover of what is going
on in the broader community and thinking that somehow a hothouse of fear is the best time to
make sober decisions about whether to permanently trade away people's freedoms and rights.

The case has absolutely not been made that anything in relation to whistleblower
protections, the journalists' protections or the warrant protections will in any way make
Australia safer. The government do not come in here and say, 'There are activities that we
could have prevented if only we had these additional powers.' Instead, we have a government
desperate to hide behind a uniform, as we have seen them do many times before, and to
switch the national conversation away from the inherent unfairness of this government, using
any excuse they can to remove people's rights and freedoms. As I said at the start,
unscrupulous governments use people's legitimate fears to illegitimately take away their
freedoms.

If the measures in this bill actually had the prospect of making us safer then we would
consider them but they do not. We should not be supporting the bill and we certainly should
not be rushing it through. I hope the opposition will be having more than one speaker on this
and I hope it is doing more than simply rolling over and giving the government everything it
wants. I hope that by the end of this debate we have altered this bill so that we can keep
Australia safe while protecting our freedoms as well.

Mr WILKIE (Denison) (09:55): I rise to speak on the National Security Legislation
Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2014. This is disgraceful, absolutely disgraceful. Here we are with
some of the most sweeping, far reaching, deep reforms to Australia's national security
legislation in memory yet, when you look at the speaker list, there is the minister for the
government, there is the shadow for the opposition and, it appears, one Labor backbencher.

Clearly the government and the opposition—with the exception of the member for
Fremantle—do not understand the role of this place. It is to bring ideas in, to bring bills and
motions in, to explain them, to fight for them, and, in particular, to explain why there is a need to rush a bill in the way this is being rushed. It is to come in and make the case and explain why the controversial aspects of this bill are there—things that I will describe later as obvious flaws in this bill. It is to come here and make the case why things are missing from this bill.

But where are you? You think you can just ram it through the Senate and bring it into the House of Representatives and in an hour, if we are lucky, the business will be done and we will be left to live with the most sweeping reforms to Australia's national security legislation probably since Federation, and that is not good enough. And it is not good enough to come in here and say it is okay to rush things because of these dire security circumstances.

And it is certainly not good enough to come in here and refer to the 2013 Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security report into these reforms and say that this report backs these reforms. It does not. The fact is, the committee—and I was a member of the committee at the time—was fundamentally handicapped because it did not have a detailed exposure draft to work to. We had basically a handful of pages from the then Attorney-General which pointed us in a particular direction and we were asked to pass comment. Time and time again and in the report's findings, we make the point that we could not properly scrutinise these reforms. In fact, recommendation 41 says among other things that the draft amendments 'should be released as an exposure draft for public consultation'. That has not occurred. The recommendation also states:

The Government should expressly seek the views of key stakeholders, including the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor and Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security.

In addition, the Committee recommends the Government ensure that the draft legislation be subject to Parliamentary committee scrutiny.

Where is the scrutiny? There is no scrutiny going on. There is one speaker for the government and two speakers for the opposition. Again it is left to the crossbench in this place just as it was left to the crossbench in the Senate to take a stand and to hold the government to account.

The fact is this is being unnecessarily rushed. It is a fact that raids over the recent weeks have occurred, quite effectively I understand, with the current laws of the land. None of what is in this bill would have made any difference to the raids that have already occurred. So there is no rush. There is time to get it right.

We do need to modernise our national security legislation. I accept that. We need to modernise the legislation, for example, to make it a technology neutral. So we do need to get it right and getting it right means a proper debate in this place, a debate where a number of obvious flaws could be identified. The media has understandably made much in recent days of the notorious section 35, which would make it an offence punishable by up to 10 years imprisonment for a journalist if he or she was to disclose a special intelligence operation. That will have the effect of shutting down the media. It will also have the effect of discouraging the media from trying to work cooperatively with the government and security agencies because they will hope deniability will be some sort of defence if they are to deliberately or inadvertently report some sort of special intelligence operation.

But there is another issue here. Why are we adding a penalty of 10 years? Do have a problem we need to fix? No. The fact is there is already a penalty for the media disclosing a special intelligence operation conducted by the Australian Federal Police, and that penalty has
never been applied. So why on earth are we extending it from a couple of years to 10 years? It is clearly overreach by the security services which have been invited to write an open cheque. The government, which wants to beat its chest and look tough on national security, said: 'We'll sign that!' And the opposition, which is desperate to look just as strong on national security, said: 'We'll countersign that cheque too!' No-one has even made the case that there is a requirement for such a measure in this bill.

But that is not the only thing. These special intelligence operations, apparently, can be authorised by the minister. There is no requirement for any judicial authorisation or oversight of such an operation. That is another fundamental flaw in this bill. Most ministers are very good most of the time; but when we have such sweeping reforms to our legislation we must ensure it is absolutely watertight and prevents some minister, at some future point in time, overreaching and going too far.

That is another problem with this bill: there is no judicial authorisation for special intelligence operations. I do not accept the words of the government, nor those of the opposition, about the limits that would apply to a network of computers that might be under surveillance. The fact is, when you look carefully at this legislation, there are scant limits on the breadth of a computer network that can be surveilled. Again, we have good ministers most of the time; but what about when we have a bad minister? In another security environment, when someone wants to overreach and go further, these laws would allow that minister to go much further than the reassuring words of the government and the opposition today would indicate.

And what is this about ASIO having the right to use force? Up until now, ASIO would have the Federal Police with them—people who are trained, armed, equipped and have a culture around the proper use of force; but with this bill ASIO will be able to barge in and do whatever they want when it comes to the use of force. I will tell you what that will mean: it will mean, more and more, that ASIO will go in alone. A spy agency will go in alone and use force. More and more, they will do away with the inconvenience of having to take the Federal Police along with them. Before we know it, at some point in the future, we will have spies kicking in doors and using force with no police alongside them, and that is another step towards a police state.

These are some of the problems with the bill. But what about all the things that are missing? We do need to update our national security legislation. We do need to ensure that genuine problems are rectified. One of the problems we have at the moment is there is no parliamentary oversight of intelligence operations. I make that point again: there is no parliamentary oversight of intelligence operations. At the moment the only political oversight, if I can use that word, is by the ministers who have responsibility for the particular agencies; for example, the Attorney-General keeps an eye on ASIO and the foreign minister keeps an eye on ASIS. But there is no oversight by the people's House. There is no oversight by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security because that committee, by legislation, only has oversight of administrative matters. Compare this with the United States and the United Kingdom where similar parliamentary committees have operational oversight. In fact, as recently as just last year, the British intelligence and security committee was given such power. At least our colleagues in the US and the UK understand that if you are going to give security services powers, especially more powers, then it should be up to the
representatives of the people to keep an eye on the use of those powers. I have circulated an amendment which seeks to rectify this. It seeks, in essence, to remove the limits on the oversight power of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security. I hope the government and the opposition see the merit in supporting that and will understand it is doing nothing more than bringing our parliamentary intelligence and security committee into line with similar committees in the United States and the United Kingdom.

Now back to section 35P and the concerns that have been expressed about it. It would appear to be a bullying act to send a message to the media: 'Don't you try to report on us. Don't you try to hold us to account. Just go away and report on other things and accept our press conferences and media releases when it comes to security.' It is clamping down on free speech. It is clamping down on having visibility of what the intelligence agencies are up to. The other problem associated with that is this bill does not seek—nor has the government flagged any intention—to amend the Commonwealth Public Interest Disclosure Act, which currently carves out—that is, excludes—inelligence material and intelligence officials from the whistleblower protections contained in the Public Interest Disclosure Act. Over two parliaments now, regrettably, we have whistleblower protection being denied to intelligence officials; we have intelligence material not being covered by whistleblower protection; we are now, in this parliament, going to ramp up the penalty for the media if they dare report an inappropriate intelligence operation. My colleague, the member for Melbourne, has quite appropriately referred to what happened in East Timor, where we now know the Australian Secret Intelligence Service planted listening devices in the Timorese offices—not because Timor is a security threat but because we wanted an Australian company to have a commercial advantage, get a better deal and get the contract. How grubby is that? And what better example is there of a time when the media should report something, bring it to the public's attention and let the public understand what our security services are up to? The fact is: we have very good security services, and most of the time they are doing a very, very good job. But the fact is that sometimes they err and sometimes the people that direct them or supervise them err, and we need to have safeguards in place, such as the media or whistleblowers, to shine a light on those problems and bring them to the public's attention.

The fact that the government, with the opposition's support, is rushing through flawed legislation—flawed because of problems and deficiencies within it—has to raise the question: why? Why is the government, with the opposition's support, wanting to overreach like this? I can only assume that the government wants to capitalise on and exploit the current security environment. I can only assume that the security services are absolutely delighted that they have been invited to fill in a blank cheque. In some ways, this is a distraction. It is another distraction from the fact that our heightened security environment is a result of us helping to start a war that has run for 11½ years, fomented more turmoil in the Middle East and caused more angst within our own community. Perhaps it is to distract us from the fact that we were, until recently, giving broad diplomatic support to the Syrian rebels that included the Islamic State. Now, all of a sudden, the Islamic State has gone from being—I think to quote the Prime Minister, or words of the Prime Minister to this effect—one of the goodies to one of the baddies. This is outrageous. This is absolutely outrageous.

In closing, can I just say this: we do need to be continually reviewing our laws, including our national security legislation. We do need to be modernising that legislation when it needs
to be modernised, particularly with changing technology. We do need to look for ways to make this country safer, but we do not make this country safer by this; nor do we give the community any confidence in the parliament, or that they are, in fact, safer, when they see governments rushing through legislation that is full of controversial and problematic sections and is missing the things that are really needed. Hopefully, at least the government and the opposition will see the sense in supporting both the amendments being moved by my colleague, the member for Melbourne, and also my own amendment, because those amendments would go, at least, some small way to rectifying this bill and to genuinely making this country somewhat safer.

Ms McGOWAN (Indi) (10:10): I rise to speak about the National Security Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2014 and why I will not be supporting this bill in this House. The security of our nation and our people is paramount, and this bill is the leading edge of the government's expansion of anti-terrorism laws. I fully support the government taking steps to introduce relevant legislation to counter the insidious march of terrorism in all its forms. Our current suite of laws is not providing the necessary powers to our law enforcement and intelligence agents, and technology has advanced in leaps and bounds. Once again, our laws need to be amended to ensure that Australia can effectively monitor and police in this ever-changing technological world.

The government, with bipartisan support from the opposition, says: this legislation is what is needed. I say: it may be the legislation that is needed, but my biggest concern is that the people of Australia have been neither effectively consulted nor included in the development of this bill. I support the concerns stated by the Law Council of Australia that: The tight timeframes for the present inquiry limits the capacity of the Law Council and other organisations to provide detailed analysis in relation to these proposals. When legislation of such significance to all Australians is under development, it is imperative that everybody—individuals, organisations, communities and business—has adequate time to scrutinise and comment. The lack of independent scrutiny of this bill and the lack of time members and senators have been given to consider the complexities are my greatest concerns. I share Professor George Williams' view, when he says:

… the extent to which its changes would extend the powers of government at the expense of citizens is unexpected …

This bill allows greater surveillance of computers, grants immunity from protection to intelligence officers engaged in special operations and exposes journalists to jail for publishing even more general information about terrorism activities. My colleagues on the crossbench have adequately described some of the problems and gaps. But, as an independent member of parliament and as a community representative, today my focus is the impact of these changes on the community.

There is much fear in my community—and, I know, in other communities around Australia—about the terrible work of terrorism around the world and how it impacts, particularly in our major cities. I have been approached by many people in Indi sharing their fears. They are scared for their family and friends. They do not want to lose the free life that we have in Australia. The consequence of this fear has been such that families have come up to me and said they are not travelling overseas to attend weddings. More extremely, members of my small communities are not going to Melbourne or Sydney for footy matches, terrified
of what might happen to them in the cities. And they do not understand it. Young people and young leaders have come and spoken in this parliament about the huge implication of this fear on them and their life—the undercurrent of racism; the undercurrent of religious bigotry; the undercurrent of people being different; the undercurrent of the impact when we use fear as a weapon. This fear in my community is devastating. It makes me scared; it makes the people I live with scared. And the consequences will be with us for a long time. It causes lack of trust—lack of trust in the government and lack of trust in our institutions. It causes community to fight community and this impact will be with individuals and communities for a very long time.

So this is not a time to rush through legislation. This is a time for considered approaches. This is a time when we should be our best selves, as the Prime Minister reminds us; not only in parliament to be our best selves as politicians but to call on our communities to be their best selves—to be our most inclusive selves and to be our wisest selves. It is a time to bring our community with us. It is a time to build community confidence. It is a time to help people understand what is happening and to explain that this really is legislation that is going to make our community better.

In closing, I think that we as a country have done a wonderful job in building a coalition of the willing overseas. It is my hope that we can invest in time to build a coalition of the willing in Australia. This is a time, I believe, for 'Team Australia' to play to the whole team, not just a small select group.

Ms PARKE (Fremantle) (10:15): I wish to start my comments on the National Security Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2014 by making reference to a case that came before the UK House of Lords in 2004 in relation to the detention of foreign terror suspects indefinitely without trial under the UK's Anti-terrorism Crime and Security Act. Lord Hoffmann, in his dissenting judgement, said:

>This is a nation which has been tested in adversity, which has survived physical destruction and catastrophic loss of life. I do not underestimate the ability of fanatical groups of terrorists to kill and destroy, but they do not threaten the life of the nation. Whether we would survive Hitler hung in the balance, but there is no doubt that we shall survive Al-Qaeda. The Spanish people have not said that what happened in Madrid, hideous crime as it was, threatened the life of their nation. Their legendary pride would not allow it. Terrorist violence, serious as it is, does not threaten our institutions of government or our existence as a civil community.

The real threat to the life of the nation, in the sense of a people living in accordance with its traditional laws and political values, comes not from terrorism but from laws such as these. That is the true measure of what terrorism may achieve. It is for Parliament to decide whether to give the terrorists such a victory.

Tony Abbott made a speech to the IPA in 2012, in which he referred to the coalition as the 'freedom party'. However, Prime Minister Mr Abbott now believes that 'the delicate balance between freedom and security may have to shift' and that 'there may be more restrictions on some so that there can be more protection for others'. I do not support a number of key elements in this bill and I am aware that there are further, even more controversial bills coming before the parliament in the near future.
I question the premise of the government’s general approach to this area of policy, which is essentially that freedoms must be constrained in response to terrorism and that the introduction of greater obscurity and impunity in the exercise of government agency powers that contravene individual freedoms will both produce and are justified in the name of greater security.

So far, the debate on this issue has occurred within a frame that posits a direct relationship between, on the one hand, safety and civility in our everyday lives, and on the other, the powers that impinge upon and make incursions into individual freedom. If we want to continue our lives free from terrorism and orchestrated violence, so the argument goes, we have to accept shifting the balance between freedom and constraint away from the observance of basic rights and towards greater surveillance, more interference and deeper silence. Let me say that no-one should be fooled into believing it is as simple as that.

The truth is that the remarkable peace, harmony and security that we enjoy in Australia is in fact produced and sustained by our collective observance of freedoms and human rights, rather than existing in spite of such values and conditions. It is wrong to say that we have been complacent about security on two counts. First, because we have strong, well-resourced and competent security agencies and, second, because our commitment to a way of life that puts faith in freedom, respect and tolerance, and that puts faith in democracy and the rule of law, is itself productive of peace and shared security.

These are the reasons we must be so careful when we legislate to constrain those freedoms because, contrary to the reductive argument that says we are making a straight trade of less freedom for more safety, the reality is likely to be—and, indeed, has proved to be many times in the past—that constraining our fundamental liberties achieves nothing more than making us less free, and in fact does ourselves harm through licensing the abuse of powers.

In the wake of the past few weeks, delivery by government—assisted by many media outlets—of existential threat and panic/don’t panic messages has caused many people in the Australian community to feel, understandably, confused and anxious. Members of Australia’s Muslim communities may fear that the Prime Minister’s ‘restrictions on some’ message applies particularly to them. If that is the case, then surely it is an approach that can only foster fear, mistrust and division, the very opposite of what is needed in terms of investing in community harmony, safety and human security in its broadest sense.

I recognise the process by which this bill has come forward and, of course, I understand that it contains a number of amendments to the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act that represent unobjectionable adjustments put forward off the back of the report of the inquiry into potential reforms of Australia’s national security legislation. I am also grateful for the recent consideration of the draft bill provided by the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence and Security. I believe the amendments that the committee has recommended represent improvements, but not, in my view, sufficient improvements.

One critical point to grasp is the fact that the proposed laws are not a response to recent events involving the emergence of Islamic State and the existence of people with criminal intentions based on their adherence to an extreme and deranged world view. It was a surprise, therefore, to see the editorial in The Australian on Monday where, under the heading ‘Home-grown terror threat needs new tools to fight it’ rushed to conclude:
The new counter-terrorism laws are not an attack on free speech; they are a protection against an evolving threat … before acknowledging that 'any new counter-terrorism laws should be scrutinised by the parliament' and that 'there is also a role for the media and other non-government groups to offer an analysis of proposed laws, alongside laws currently operating'.

That analysis and commentary certainly should be occurring, but it is hard not to have the sense that there is too much fierce agreement in this space at the moment as a result of people believing that we currently face some completely new and unprecedented terror threat. The reality is, as we have seen from very well-publicised operations recently, that law enforcement agencies have clearly been able to operate effectively on the basis of existing laws and that there has not been convincing evidence of inadequacies in the existing framework that warrant the broad extension of powers that we see here.

I am particularly concerned that this bill entrenches and amplifies the lack of protection for whistleblowers regarding intelligence information, and penalises with up to 10 years jail the legitimate actions of journalists and others doing their jobs in holding the government to account in the public interest. There have been numerous examples of governments' defence, intelligence and law enforcement agencies here in Australia and elsewhere abusing their powers that have only come to light via WikiLeaks, Edward Snowden and other whistleblowers regarding, for instance, the improper mass surveillance of civilians; the misuse of our aid program; and spying on foreign governments, including for the commercial benefit of corporations.

There are concerns that the offence does not make any distinction between someone acting to sabotage a security intelligence operation and potentially putting security officers' lives at risk, which should rightly attract significant penalties, and persons disclosing information in the public interest when no such danger is present but which may potentially be politically embarrassing. There is no comfort from the explanatory memorandum stating that there will be a prosecutorial discretion to consider the public interest when deciding whether to prosecute a person. This kind of consideration should attract a specific exemption in the legislation, otherwise, as others have noted, there is a very real danger that the provisions will produce a chilling effect on the willingness of the media to report legitimate matters of public interest.

We are assured that the significant impunity for breaking the law that is granted to security officials engaged in SIOs only applies when the officers are carrying out their duties as authorised and is not a green light for corruption or abuse of power. It is unsatisfactory in my view that the external oversight of special intelligence operations is limited to the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security rather than the more extensive oversight that applies to the AFP's controlled operations. The member for Denison has just highlighted the deficiencies in Australia's oversight of intelligence services relative to other countries such as the UK.

On the question of press freedom and media scrutiny, the editorial in the West Australian yesterday took issue with the new specific provisions, arguing: 'They fail to strike a balance that does not unduly limit the ability of journalists to report on matters of national security. Any controls of this sort must be carefully considered and minimised. In this instance there is a concern that the impetus to act on the terrorist threat may have led to the proposed laws being rushed and not considered as fully as they might have been.' I would contrast the
curious yet telling gulf between the nicely timed, neatly packaged and government facilitated media access to the recent AFP anti-terror operations and the utter silence, stonewalling and denial of access to operations that involve asylum seekers. On this I agree with Mark Day, who wrote in Monday's Australian:

Last week we saw much commentary about how state and federal police provided on-the-spot video and still pictures of their raids against a terror group believed to be planning a random beheading in Australia.

How fortunate it was for the government that the raids came precisely as the parliament was considering new anti-terror powers—tougher laws to protect our freedoms by removing them.

Raids of this nature involving 800 coppers for one arrest are obviously newsworthy. Police PRs were beside themselves with delight. You want pictures? How many?

They fed the narrative of a government alert and anything but insouciant.

Now make the obvious comparison. For more than a year the government has refused to give any detail about any “on sea” activity related to people smuggling or asylum-seekers. This is because secrecy suits it.

Secrecy is the government’s starting point. When you seek information from government, no matter how trivial the issue, the default position of any army of PRs is denial, obfuscation or the positioning of as many hurdles as possible to make information gathering difficult.

That was Mark Day in The Australian this week.

I understand that one of the legitimate bases for this bill is the necessary adjustment to cover the kinds of technological change that have occurred over the last 20 years, and I note the considered comments by the shadow Attorney-General in this regard. I nevertheless have concerns about the scope of the provisions, especially in relation to computers and computer networks, including access to third-party hardware or communications. These provisions are the equivalent of a physical search warrant for a house that also allows you to search an arbitrary number of other houses. The JSCIS report notes that public submissions were made by the Gilbert and Tobin Centre of Public Law calling for two categories of improvement in this area: the first being a 'minimal intrusion test' requiring other options for gaining the required intelligence to have been used before ASIO has recourse to a computer network or third-party asset or communication, and the second being a further refinement in terms of scope so that a warrant would only access those parts of a target computer that are reasonably necessary for the acquisition of the relevant intelligence. Unfortunately, neither of these proposals were taken up as recommendations. Instead, the broad requirement that access must be reasonable in all the circumstances was considered sufficient. In my view, this is one of the areas where we may be licensing the potentially improper infringement of privacy and the possible misuse of personal information and communications without due consideration to the dangers involved and without due care and restriction when it comes to those powers.

For an example of how this government regards the so-called balance between security and freedom, one can look to the proposed abolition of the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor. The Prime Minister announced the abolition of this critical office and function earlier this year as part of that government's war against red tape. Other casualties of this bizarre war of self-harm include environmental protections, financial services safeguards, and the framework to address climate change and encourage the development of renewable
energy. In this way the so-called war on red tape is unpicking the vital threads of our social fabric, our social compact.

With this bill the essential oversight of security legislation and powers is being undermined when it should be strengthened. As others have noted, the Attorney-General was an active member of the Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security when the committee issued a report with respect to the very legislation we debate here, calling for the assessment of the draft bill by the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor. Of course, thanks to the government, that position has been vacant since April and was to be scrapped. I am glad that as a result of the outcry on this aspect of security oversight in particular the government has reversed its position—though unfortunately not in time for this bill to have been appropriately scrutinised. I believe that at the very least this legislation should incorporate sunset clauses so that the provisions can be subject to review and discontinuance if not found to be necessary or not found to be working appropriately.

I want to conclude by returning to the point I made at the beginning about what is really at issue when we expand the capacity and power of state agencies to infringe upon the privacy and freedom of citizens and, at the same time, constrain the ability of citizens to examine and discuss the use of those powers. There is a lot of talk about the danger of complacency when it comes to security threats, including terrorism. I do not see evidence of that complacency, and none has been put forward. Australia is a remarkably secure and peaceful nation. Our law enforcement, intelligence and defence agencies and personnel do excellent work on our behalf. If there is any complacency, it is in relation to the very dangers that lie in failing to recognise, value and speak up for our fundamental rights, values and freedoms. We have seen what happens when state agencies exercise improper power without effective safeguards, without effective oversight and accountability mechanisms. We would all do well to reflect upon this now as we consider changes in this bill and in others that seek to reset our laws and values in ways that may not only be ill-designed to protect us from dangers and horrors we seem inclined to overstate, but might also in fact wear and fray the fabric of our freedom, trust and faith in government.

Mr KEENAN (Stirling—Minister for Justice) (10:29): I thank all honourable members for their contribution to this debate. This National Security Legislation Amendment (No. 1) Bill 2014 will implement a series of targeted reforms to modernise the legislative framework governing the activities of the Australian intelligence community. It is imperative that the statutory framework governing these agencies’ operations keeps pace with the contemporary evolving security environment. The important reforms in this bill will help ensure that our intelligence agencies maintain their capability to protect Australia and Australians against current emerging and future security threats.

I note that the measures in this bill have been formulated and further refined with the benefit of two bipartisan inquiries undertaken by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security. The committee’s first inquiry was completed in 2013 under the chairmanship of the member for Holt, the Honourable Anthony Byrne. It recommended a number of reforms to Australia’s national security legislation including intelligence legislation. This report led to the introduction of this bill, which represents the government’s response to chapter 4 of that report.
Following the introduction of the bill in the Senate on 16 July, the Attorney-General referred it again to the committee under the chairmanship now of the member for Wannon, Mr Dan Tehan. The committee made 17 recommendations in its advisory report on the bill, tabled out of sitting on 17 September. It recommended passage of the bill subject to a handful of targeted amendments to enhance oversight and accountability particularly with respect to ASIO’s warrants and its special intelligence operations. As the Attorney-General announced on 19 September, the government supports all of these measures and moved amendments in the Senate on 25 September to implement them.

In addition, the government tabled a replacement explanatory memorandum elaborating on the justification for various measures in this bill in line with the committee’s recommendations. This is now included in the revised explanatory memorandum tabled in the House. The government has also supported the amendments moved by the Palmer United Party and passed by the Senate to address the manifestly inadequate maximum penalties applying to offences for the disclosure of the identities of our intelligence personnel. The proposed 10-year maximum penalty will ensure that sentencing courts have discretion to impose a fitting penalty in relation to conduct at the most serious end of the spectrum including that which places at risk the lives or safety of the dedicated men and women who serve their country.

I want to move to respond to some of the specific points that have been made in this debate. I would like to thank the opposition for their express support for this bill, as amended in the Senate, to include the government’s responses to the parliamentary joint committee’s recommendations. As honourable members in both the government and the opposition have acknowledged, the measures in this bill will, with the benefit of the recommendations from that committee, strike an appropriate balance between ensuring that our agencies have adequate powers and providing for necessary limitations and safeguards. The bill has undergone a rigorous and thorough process of scrutiny—and I might just say that, whilst we welcome the bipartisanship that has been shown on this bill, clearly, from some of the comments from individual members, that bipartisanship is not necessarily shared by everybody within the opposition, but I will move to that a little later.

I want to address the comments of the member for Melbourne and member for Denison. I note that the Australian Greens and the member for Denison have made various comments about measures in this bill which have focused on special intelligence operations, disclosure offences and computer access. As the Attorney-General mentioned repeatedly in the Senate, all of these points were examined in detail by the parliamentary joint committee. We are comfortable that they have been dealt with appropriately.

On the specific issue of special intelligence operations, I note that adoption of this scheme was supported by the parliamentary joint committee in its 2013 and 2014 reports. The former Independent National Security Legislation Monitor similarly recommended the adoption of such a scheme. A comparable regime for covert law enforcement operations, known as 'controlled operations', exists in part 1AB of the Crimes Act.

On the issue of disclosure offences where concerns were shared by the member for Melbourne and the member for Denison, suggestions that they will unacceptably prevent acts of whistleblowing, it is important to note that none of the offences will disturb any of the existing mechanisms for making legitimate disclosures of suspected wrongdoing. This
includes the making of disclosures in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act and the making of complaints to the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security. In addition, any person can report suspected offences to the Australian Federal Police.

To avoid any possibility that the offences could be perceived as disincentive to persons who may wish to make appropriate internal disclosures, the government's amendments, as agreed to by the Senate, insert express exemptions for disclosure to the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security or his or her staff. To the extent that the Greens appear to support wider exemptions that would permit the unauthorised dissemination of sensitive intelligence related information to the world at large, the government makes no apology for criminalising such conduct. This is not, as has been wrongly suggested, about preventing the release of information that might simply embarrass the government of the day or expose it to criticism; this is about providing a necessary and proportionate limitation on the communication of information that relates to the core business of intelligence agencies. I need hardly add that unauthorised disclosures of intelligence related information particularly on the scale that is now possible in the online environment can have devastating consequences for a country's international relationships, for a country's intelligence capabilities and, very importantly, for the lives and safety of our intelligence personnel.

The member for Denison had concerns—and I understand that these concerns are also expressed by the member for Indi—about limited consultations on this bill. Really, it is simply an incorrect assertion that this bill has been rushed through this parliament. I have made repeated references in my contribution, in my introduction are now in the summing up, to the reports that were done by the very effective bipartisan operating in the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security. They conducted not one but two inquiries which attracted considerable public interest and participation. The government has also consulted the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security on the draft bill. In addition, the inspector-general's submission and evidence to the inquiry are all on the public record. This is consistent with the committee's intent that there should be consultation on, and further scrutiny of, provisions of the bill. As the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security acknowledged in its report, 'Full and proper consultation was undertaken.' This is evident in the report it has produced, which represents a very significant concentration of effort.

I again want to commend in this House the member for Wannon, who, as chairman of that committee, led those consultations. He is a very diligent member. The work that he has done within time frames has been exceptional. I want to commend him and others on that committee for the work that they have done in improving this bill. It is a committee whose thoughts and recommendations are taken very seriously by the government. The fact that this bill has evolved in relation to the report that they made is, I think, ample evidence of that.

Before I conclude, I want to turn to the remarks from the member for Fremantle. I understand that the member for Fremantle has strong views about this. I respect that she has a right to disagree with the government. I understand that she has echoed some of the concerns that have been made by the member for Melbourne, the member for Denison and the member for Indi. I will not repeat the government's response to those particular points, but I want to address something that she mentioned, which I do not believe any other member of this House has mentioned in this debate. This is a very important myth to dispel—the idea that the
government directs our law enforcement or intelligence agencies over the timing of operations. That is absolutely wrong. It is an insult to both the acting commissioner of the Australian Federal Police and to the director-general of intelligence—who, quite frankly, would not accept an improper order from this government. We would never seek to make it and if we did, they would not undertake it.

Operational decisions about terror raids and, for that matter, criminal raids are taken by our law enforcement agencies independent of government. They do not respond to the government's political agenda. In relation to the raids that the member for Fremantle specifically addressed, those raids were taken because the law enforcement and intelligence community had had very credible intelligence that a random act of violence was going to occur on Sydney streets within days. The idea that our law enforcement or security community would sit around and wait for harm to come to random members of the Australian community is ludicrous. The idea that somehow they were directed by the government to do that because we were looking at legislation in this House is completely and utterly wrong. The member for Fremantle should repudiate any such ludicrous suggestions.

May I conclude by acknowledging the work of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security. As I said, their work has been excellent. It has been thorough and constructive, and their reports are bipartisan. I thank my colleagues from all sides of the chamber for recognising the need for these important reforms and for placing principles of security and accountability above politics. Your work is a testament to the high quality of parliamentary scrutiny that is rightly applied to Australia's national security legislation and has rightly been applied in the case of this bill. This is an important bill. It secures the security of the Australian community and I wholeheartedly commend this bill to the House.

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

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

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: As there are fewer than five members on the side for the noes, I declare the question resolved in the affirmative 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 agreed to, Ms McGowan, Mr Bandt and Mr Wilkie voting no.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (10:46): I foreshadow to the minister that I will be moving amendments in two blocks, seeking leave to move (1) and (2) together and (3) to (10) together. Before I do that, I have a question for the minister in this consideration in detail stage about the operation of the amendment bill. It goes to the question of an innocent member of the public who is not suspected of having committed any offence under the legislation or under any legislation and is not suspected of having been connected with a suspect in any way. I ask: can the minister confirm whether an individual member of the public's tablet, iPhone or any other device that that individual member of the public has is capable of being subject to a warrant, even though that individual member of the public is not
suspected of having committed an offence and is in no position to be connected to a suspect, other than being on the same network as someone who is the subject of a warrant? Can the minister confirm that the individual member of the public is themselves exposed to having their tablet or iPhone or any other device accessed, modified or surveilled, even though they are not suspected of having done anything wrong?

**Mr KEENAN** (Stirling—Minister for Justice) (10:48): I thank the member for Melbourne for the question. In relation to what he has asked, I understand his concerns—and I understand he is really foreshadowing amendments that he will be moving later in this debate. The concern we have about the amendment, and in answer to his question, is that it would impose an arbitrary and artificial impediment on the intelligence agencies doing their work. What he proposes would be entirely unworkable in light of the advances in online communications. In the majority of cases, it is very unlikely that the agency would know in advance what was required for a specific warrant being issued or which parts of the computer network would contain data relevant to a security matter in respect of the warrant issued.

With the variety and the number of devices currently in use, as well as the increasing use of computer networks and remote storage, it is highly probable that data could be stored on multiple devices. In exercising its functions, including its powers under a computer access search warrant, ASIO is of course required to comply with the Attorney-General’s guidelines, and these require ASIO to use as little intrusion into individual privacy as possible. This means that use of warrants for obtaining information must be proportionate to the gravity of the threat that is posed and the probability of its occurrence. In line with the recommendation from the parliamentary joint committee that I have discussed extensively already this morning, the government issued a replacement explanatory memorandum to this bill which explains the concept of a security matter in relation to section 25A and its limiting effect on the ability to issue warrants and authorise activities under them. The Attorney-General can also include appropriate conditions and restrictions in that warrant, which could include a limitation on the number of devices that could be accessed where appropriate.

Limiting computer access warrants in the way that the Greens propose, and in relation to the question that he has asked, does have the potential to produce an absurd result for ASIO and it would create a significant loss of ASIO’s capability to do its job, which contradicts the position taken by the bipartisan committee report. There is a need to enhance the system in line with recent developments in computer technology and its usage.

I appreciate the concerns that have been raised by the member for Melbourne. If the government were to accept his point of view and accept the amendment, we would be creating an unworkable situation for the very agencies that we are trying to assist with the passage of this legislation.

**Mr BANDT** (Melbourne) (10:51): With respect to the minister, that was not my question, though. The question was not about numbers; the question was about an individual member of the public who is not suspected of having committed an offence and who is not suspected of even in any way being connected with a potential terrorism suspect or any other suspect. It is just a completely innocent member of the public who happens to have their device—their iPad or their phone or their computer—on the same network as someone who is suspected. So my question is not about numbers; it is about the principle. I am asking the minister to explain how this legislation will work in practice. Will that innocent individual member of the public
be able to have their phone or device subject to a warrant and therefore subject to all the powers—we will come to that in a moment—simply because they are on the same network as someone who is a suspect? That is my question.

Mr KEENAN (Stirling—Minister for Justice) (10:52): I thought I had made it relatively clear that ASIO is required to—and do as they go about their business—take into account that they only should be accessing information that is relevant to their inquiry. Under section 25A the test for the Attorney-General to actually issue a warrant to access data that is held on a computer is not going to change. The Attorney-General must be satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for believing that access by ASIO to data held in a target computer or computers will substantially assist the collection of intelligence in respect of a matter that is important in relation to security.

As is currently the case, ASIO's purpose for using a computer under section 25A must be to access data relevant to a security matter. ASIO may copy any data to which access has been obtained that appears to be relevant to the collection of intelligence. In undertaking its function or obtaining intelligence relevant to security ASIO is required to comply with the Attorney-General's guidelines, which require it to use as little intrusion into individual privacy as is possible but still consistent with the performance of its functions—its function being to protect the Australian community. In the event that the DG of security is satisfied that ASIO has obtained data that is not required for the performance of ASIO's functions or exercise of its powers, that data is destroyed. That is a requirement under the ASIO Act. The Attorney-General can also include appropriate additional conditions and restrictions in the issuing of the warrant.

Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (10:54): Further to the minister's answer: the minister used the term 'computer', which in this bill is proposed to be redefined not only to include one or more computers but one or more computer systems, one or more computer networks or any combination of the above. Does that mean that a network in, for example, a workplace that may contain dozens, if not hundreds of computers counts as a network for the purpose of the definition of 'computer' in this bill?

Mr KEENAN (Stirling—Minister for Justice) (10:55): I appreciate the interest of the member for Melbourne, but I am really not sure how much clearer I can be. ASIO does not access information that is not relevant to their security inquiries. If they do and it is judged by the DG of security not to be relevant, it will be destroyed. I am not sure how long we can continue debating the same point. The government is concerned, as we always are, to protect the privacy of individual Australians. We do not go about with the idea of intruding into people's privacy, and obviously we do not welcome legislation that allows us to do that. We are only taking these measures because of the enhanced risk in the national security environment. We have been very mindful of ensuring that appropriate safeguards continue to exist. In my two previous contributions to the member for Melbourne's point I have raised those safeguards, and I do not propose to do so a third time.

Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (10:56): I have a question for the minister about the penalties that would apply under this legislation. For someone who manages a network—the minister would not say whether or not a network at a workplace counts; let's assume it does, and I will come back to whether it includes the whole internet in a moment—if ASIO or someone accesses a network in the workplace pursuant to a warrant, if the systems administrator or
network operator of that workplace believes that they have been hacked and then takes countermeasures to remove the intrusion, will that network administrator or operator be subject to prosecution under this bill?

**Mr Keenan** (Stirling—Minister for Justice) (10:57): Again, I think I have made it abundantly clear that there are appropriate safeguards within this legislation to make sure that ASIO is accessing information in the course of its inquiries and that very significant safeguards exist for the use of that information. We can keep going over and over on the same point but perhaps, if the member for Melbourne has other points he would like to make, we could move on.

**Mr Bandt** (Melbourne) (10:57): It was a very clear and different point. It is about how far the proposed prosecutions go under this—a point about which I have asked nothing before and about which the minister has said nothing. People could go to jail under this legislation, so I am asking the minister a very simple question. If a network administrator believes that their network has been hacked because it has been accessed by ASIO under one of these warrants and they take steps to fix it or they publicly disclose it, are they subject to prosecution under this? That has not been traversed in any of the debates so far. It is a very simple question. If the minister cares at all about someone's individual liberty and the people who manage computer networks, he should be able to give a very simple answer about how these provisions apply. The government is coming in here saying, 'We want sweeping new powers that can send people to jail,' and they cannot even define the offence for us. The minister should hang his head in shame if he cannot tell the public whether or not they are going to jail for doing something as simple as saying: 'I think the network's been hacked. I'm going to fix it,' or 'I think my network's been hacked. I'm going to report it.' The minister, if he cares about individual liberties, should be able to answer that question.

**Mr Keenan** (Stirling—Minister for Justice) (10:59): We can continue to go around in circles on this point, but I think I have made it abundantly clear that ASIO collects information that it believes is relevant for the course of its security inquiries. If it collects information that it does not require then that information will be destroyed. On top of that, as I made clear in both my opening remarks to this bill and the summing up, people could still make a complaint to the Inspector General of Intelligence and Security if they believe that their information has been used in an improper way. That safeguard will still remain.

This is the fifth time that the member for Melbourne has made essentially the same point and the fifth time that I have responded. I suggest that, if he has got something else to contribute to this debate, he moves on.

**The Deputy Speaker** (Mr Vasta): I call the honourable member for Melbourne. Why don't we start moving these amendments that the honourable member for Melbourne has?

**Mr Bandt** (Melbourne) (10:59): I will move the amendments, but I have asked a series of questions about vital legislation that is about the security of this country and people's individual liberties and how we strike a balance. I have asked simple questions of the minister about how big the network can be. He cannot answer. And I have asked a simple question of the minister about a case where someone is managing a network and thinks it has been hacked: are they susceptible to prosecution if they release information about that? He cannot answer that.
So let me ask him another simple question, and then I will get on to moving the amendments. I am asking these questions so that we can have some clarity about how the legislation operates because that goes to the question of whether or not amendments need to be moved. Let me ask another question. If there is a special intelligence operation in place, how will a journalist know that that is the case if they are reporting on something that ASIO or a security agency does? In other words, if something happens and the journalist reports on it, and it turns out later that that reporting was, in fact, about a special intelligence operation, how is the journalist meant to know that in the first place?

Mr ROBERT (Fadden—Assistant Minister for Defence) (11.01): I thank the member for Melbourne for his question, noting that the Minister for Justice has had to leave the chamber to deal with some issues and has asked me to answer that question.

We deal with this issue all the time. There is nothing new about the concept of a journalist understanding that an operation is of significant national interest, whether it is an operation by Defence, intelligence agencies, Australian Federal Police or ASIO. I am yet to think of a single instance that I have come across in my prior life in parliament or as a minister, where journalists did not know and did not have clarity that an operation, be it a covert operation or an operation of some military or security significance, was occurring. The idea that a national-level journalist would not understand that a covert operation—such as the operations of a few weeks ago, involving over 800 police, ASIO officers and others—was occurring and therefore the journalist publicly reported it is absurd. The notion that a journalist would have information that something profound is happening and they did not know it was a covert operation, did not know it would contain or create risks if it was compromised, or did not have the wherewithal to call an appropriate minister or head of an agency, is simply not something that occurs with professional journalism in this country.

Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (11:03): Given that this minister seems to know a bit more about the legislation than the last one, would journalists have been prosecuted under this legislation, or be liable to be prosecuted, for revealing the Timorese cabinet bugging?

Mr ROBERT (Fadden—Assistant Minister for Defence) (11:03): I thank the member for Melbourne. We do not deal in hypotheticals, because the full notes of the case are not known. It is the judiciary that will determine if there is a conviction or a prosecution occurring. It is the DPP that will determine if a case is put forward. So we cannot deal in hypotheticals. The members knows that we cannot deal in hypotheticals. And no-one from either side of the House deals with them.

Let's go back and apply the common-sense test to which this legislation refers. The legislation is simply saying that if a journalist wilfully discloses and compromises an operation of such significance to the nation and the protection of its people an offence may have occurred. This is dealt with in numerous areas. There are areas that deal with interception law across the military space, where it is very clear to journalists that if you reveal areas in the nation's interception space you are liable for some degree of action. This has been in place for decades, and I have never yet come across a journalist who said that they do not understand the limits of how this law applies to what they can and cannot report.

So it is fine for journalists to operate in a framework with Defence, keeping in mind that we embed journalists in our military operations all the time; we have done for a decade. Journalists from every major reporting network and paper we have embedded in Afghanistan.
In combat operations we have put them with our special forces. We have put them in our forward operating bases with very strict requirements on what they can and cannot report. And for a decade Australian journalists have not had a problem. In fact, the last time that I can recall that there was an issue of journalists pre-empting or disclosing military operations in an unauthorised manner was when the paras went to Goose Green in 1982 during the Falklands War. The journalist pre-empted an assault by the parachute regiment at Goose Green. The end result was that the commanding officer was killed and quite a substantial battle ensued.

That was 32 years ago, involving the British forces. We have had such a long operation of journalists understanding the need to be sensitive with a range of disclosures that journalists well and truly understand the limits. It is not muzzling of free speech; it is simply appropriately dealing with issues that we are looking at, at the time. So the member quite rightly asks: is the government concerned about journalists not understanding the limits to which they can use their journalistic freedom? The vast experience of journalists embedding in the military and working in this space clearly says: no, there is not a problem.

Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (11:06): Thank you for the reasons, in large part, outlined by the minister. By leave—I move amendments (3) to (10) on the sheet circulated in my name together:

(3) Schedule 3, item 3, page 69 (lines 19 to 23), omit subsection 35P(1).

(4) Schedule 3, item 3, page 70 (line 6), omit "Subsections (1) and (2) do", substitute "Subsection (1) does".

(5) Schedule 3, item 3, page 70 (line 20) omit "(1) or".

(6) Schedule 6, items 1 and 2, page 81 (lines 4 to 13), omit the items.

(7) Schedule 6, item 4, page 81 (line 16) to page 85 (line 25), omit the item.

(8) Schedule 6, page 106 (line 2), omit the heading.

(9) Schedule 6, item 24, page 106 (lines 3 and 4), omit the item.

(10) Schedule 6, item 26, page 106 (lines 9 to 11), omit the item.

What is clear is that in Australia journalism plays a vital role in holding the government to account. Thanks to journalism here and around the world we have heard about things like the bugging of the East Timorese cabinet, and we have found out that Australia tapped the phone of the wife of the Indonesian President. We have seen significant journalism coming forth from those who have reported on leaks that have come from Edward Snowden, Julian Assange and WikiLeaks.

As the minister just explained, journalists understand that they also have national security obligations. Any sensible journalist will go through a debate to weigh up security and safety—where that is potentially compromised—as against the public interest or the public's right to know. Good journalists make that assessment all the time. Now this government is coming in and saying, 'We are going to treat every good journalist like a criminal. We are going to treat every good journalist with contempt and increase the penalties and the scope of offences that they will be subject to.' So what we read in the paper about our secret agencies that operate in our name, we probably will not read about from here on in because the government's approach is: rather than read an embarrassing article in the newspaper about an instance where actions done in our name may have overstepped the line, we want nothing to be spoken about at all.
The minister can tell me if I am wrong. He has the opportunity in this debate to say that we are wrong. But if this legislation passes as it stands at the moment, an innocent member of the Australian public could be killed in a bungled operation and no-one would have the right to talk about it and no-one would have the right to know. In fact, if you did talk about it, you would face going to jail. The minister now has ample opportunity to say, 'No, that won't be in the legislation.' It would be great if he did, but I bet you he will not. What this legislation is about is operations that are already secret and are not subject to the scrutiny of an independent security legislation monitor—because the government has not filled that position and, in fact, wanted to get rid of it. Where there is not adequate parliamentary oversight, we in this country are left to rely on the media to shine a light on where they think the line has been crossed. Now, even that light is going to be snuffed out. For that reason I move these amendments.

What these amendments do not do is remove the new provision that makes it an offence to release information that would disrupt an operation or put someone's life in danger. That provision can stay. So I can save those opposite, those heckling and those about to speak all their cant on that front because that provision will remain. What the amendments do is allow for public interest whistleblowing and reporting. The minister has now left the chamber, perhaps because he is not across the legislation, and someone else has come in to take over from him. The minister made a number of comments about whistleblowing and whether or not whistleblowing is protected—and I expect my colleague, the member for Denison, will make some points about that shortly. These amendments protect whistleblowers and protect journalists reporting in the public interest.

Given the haste with which this is being rushed through, given the lack of an independent monitor and given the lack of real parliamentary oversight, if we value democracy and we value transparency, we must preserve that last right of the media to shine a light on where they think our secret agencies have overstepped the mark. That is why I urge the House to support these amendments and I urge Labor to support these amendments.

Mr ROBERT (Fadden—Assistant Minister for Defence) (11:12): Just so the nation understands what the member for Melbourne, representing the party of the Greens, is suggesting: they are seeking to remove from the National Security Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2014 an offence in section 35P(1) which applies to people who intentionally communicate information, reckless as to the circumstance that it related to a special intelligence operation. Clearly, we oppose the amendments. As the PJCIS recognise, the offence in section 35P(1) is necessary and it is appropriate to protect sensitive information about the existence and conduct of intelligence operations, keeping in mind that there already exists a number of offences in a number of bodies of law. Section 18 of the ASIO Act makes it an offence to disclose intelligence information. Section 92 of the ASIO Act makes it an offence to disclose or identify the identity of ASIO agents. Under the Intelligence Services Act, there are offences in terms of disclosing intelligence related information. I note that there are no amendments, from the party of the Greens, to amend those two acts—the ASIO Act and the Intelligence Services Act. So it begs the question as to how serious the Greens really are.

We are talking about section 35P(1) 'special intelligence operations'. The very disclosure of the existence of these operations will create risks if they are compromised. It will impact the safety of participants and their families. It will put families in jeopardy. Such a risk could be
immediate or, indeed, it could evolve over time. There is no way of controlling it once it is disclosed. The risk of harm is inherent in the very disclosure of information when it relates to special intelligence operations and it does not depend in anyway on the intention of the discloser, good or otherwise. As Justice Robert Hope observed in 1984 in his report on ASIO:
The disclosure of secrets or secure areas to risk through inadvertent or carelessness can result in just as much damage to the national interest as can result from espionage or sabotage.
The Australian Law Reform Commission has also endorsed the view that offences concerning unauthorised disclosure of intelligence related information should not be limited to those which require proof of harm or malicious intent. This is because such harm is inherent in the very act of disclosure which places that information at risk. In addition, as the PJCIS has further recognised, the offence requires the prosecution to prove that the person who disclosed the information was reckless as to the fact it related to a special intelligence operation. As the PJCIS committee acknowledged, this is an 'onerous burden of proof'.
The government has not decided to put a range of offences in place to muzzle the media. Building on the offences in the ASIO Act and the Intelligence Services Act, an onerous burden of proof is required for an offence under section 35P1. The prosecution must establish beyond reasonable doubt that the person knew of a substantial risk that the information related to a special intelligence operation. It must then establish that the person 'nonetheless and unjustifiably in the circumstances took the risk of making the disclosure'.
An offence with identical elements, inserted in 2010, exists in section 15HJ of the Crimes Act in relation to controlled operations. I note that in addition to there being no amendments from the Greens on the ASIO Act or the Intelligence Services Act there are no amendments on the Crimes Act. So offences in relation to media disclosure under those three acts is fine, but under this one apparently it is not. The hypocrisy is astounding.
There have been no prosecutions or referrals of prosecutions to date. This strongly suggests that the offences are not operating to unduly curtail media reporting or public disclosure in relation to security matters as it relates to section 15HJ of the Crimes Act. There are only a limited number of special-intelligence operations that can be approved by the Attorney-General, and they must be preapproved.
Let me give the member for Melbourne and the Greens party one example of what they are trying to get rid of. A special-intelligence operation may be extraordinarily covert. An example might be ASIO seeking to infiltrate a known terrorist organisation and then the media, for whatever reason—and I cannot think of a single journalist in the country who would do it—would blast that over the front page of a paper, putting that operative and their family at risk. That is what section 35P1 is all about. The Greens are saying it is fine to risk the lives of ASIO operatives and their families. Member for Melbourne: it is not fine. The nation does not think it is fine. That is why the provision exists.

Mr DREYFUS (Isaacs—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (11:17): I rise to speak in relation to amendments (3) to (10) moved by the member for Melbourne. The first group of those amendments is the omission of the first offence, which appears as part of the secrecy provision that is section 3P. The member for Melbourne said that his amendment protects whistleblowing. It does nothing of the kind. I have some knowledge of these matters, because I brought what is now the Public Interest Disclosure Act into this House last year. A scheme of whistleblower protection expressly confers protection on whistleblowers.
This amendment would simply remove one of two secrecy offences that appear in the bill. As a consequence, it is an amendment that completely fails to address what is an important policy goal, if not a crucial policy goal, of maintaining the secrecy of special-intelligence operations. As the minister has pointed out, it is secrecy that protects the wellbeing—and potentially the lives—of undercover ASIO officers.

I assure the House and the Australian community that Labor understands the concerns that have been raised about section 35P. In this provision the parliament needs to grapple with the competing policy priorities of free reporting and of the ability to safely conduct national-security operations. Given the nature of special-intelligence operations, it is imperative that there be a general protection for their secrecy. We are reassured by the clarification in the amended bill that no journalist could ever inadvertently breach section 35P1, among other amendments. I can assure the Australian community that we will monitor the operation of the amended provision to ensure that it lives up to our understanding—and the understanding of the joint intelligence committee—as to how it is intended to function.

The other part of the group of amendments moved by the member for Melbourne is the omission of increased penalties for communicating intelligence information by ASIO officers, employees and contractors and the new offence that grapples with unauthorised dealing of records. Labor opposes these amendments also, on the basis that the Greens party clearly does not appreciate the importance of maintaining confidentiality of our security agencies' operations. It is the nature of their work that it be conducted in secret.

These provisions deal with misconduct by those who have been entrusted by the government with valuable information. Those people bear a serious responsibility, to the community, to meet their obligations and to maintain the confidences that have been entrusted to them. It is hard to see why serious penalties should not apply when ASIO personnel breach their obligations. That is what these provisions deal with. Labor appreciates the difficulty of maintaining confidence in our agencies. We think it important that there be confidence in our agencies, but we think the amendments proposed by the member for Melbourne are the reverse of anything that could achieve that end of building confidence.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Vasta): The question is that the member for Melbourne's amendments (3) to (10) be agreed to.

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

The DEPUTY 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, Ms McGowan, Mr Bandt and Mr Wilkie voting yes.

Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (11:25): by leave—I move Greens amendments (1) and (2) together:

(1) Schedule 2, item 12, page 28 (after line 17), after subsection 25(6), insert:

(6A) Subsection (5) authorises the use of a device to obtain access to data only if the total number of:

(a) devices used to obtain access to data; and

(b) devices from which data has been obtained;
(other than devices owned by the Commonwealth and brought on to premises specified in the warrant for the purposes of executing the warrant) in accordance with the warrant is no more than 20.

(2) Schedule 2, item 25, page 30 (after line 23), after subsection 25A(5), insert:

(5AA) Subsection (4) authorises the use of a device to obtain access to data only if the total number of:

(a) devices used to obtain access to data; and
(b) devices from which data has been obtained;

(other than devices owned by the Commonwealth and brought on to premises specified in the warrant for the purposes of executing the warrant) in accordance with the warrant is no more than 20.

There is a simple principle underlying this set of amendments and it goes to some of the questions that I was asking earlier. What appears to be the case, given the government's answers, is that someone who has done nothing wrong, who is just an innocent bystander, can now have their computer, their device, their phone accessed by security agencies who get one of these warrants. What appears to be the case is that, under this new expanded definition of 'computer', which is not only one or more computers but a network or indeed a network of networks, this could be expanded under one warrant to include the whole internet—the internet being a network of a network of computers. In other words, every computer or device connected to a network of networks could now be the subject of scrutiny by the one warrant, even though you are not suspected of having done anything wrong.

I listened to the shadow Attorney-General, who said that he wanted to dispel any suggestion that somehow one warrant could be extended to the whole of the internet. So I move these amendments and I ask the minister a question in so doing. The question that I ask the minister is: is there an upper limit on the number of devices that can be accessed? This amendment proposes 20. The minister and others may say that 20 is not practical. We understand, say the Greens, that things have moved on in terms of technology and it may well be the case that in one household or in the possession of one person they may have multiple devices whereas previously they might have only held at one. So we concede that there is a need for the provision to be updated, but the legislation at the moment is limitless. So, firstly, I ask the minister: given what the shadow Attorney-General said that basically it is not limitless and you could not pointed to the whole internet, is that right? Is there an upper limit and, if so, what is it? Secondly, if the minister does not accept this amendment because 20 is seen to be impracticable, what would be an appropriate way of doing it? Is it to allow a judge or someone else to set a limit? Is it to allow some external scrutiny to ensure the people who have done nothing wrong are not going to be trampled by a warrant? Or, will you allow the provisions of a limitless number of devices to be subject to one single warrant?

Mr ROBERT (Fadden—Assistant Minister for Defence) (11:29): I thank the member for Melbourne. The government will reject the amendments by the Greens because, for a start, they do not actually pass the common sense test. The common sense test simply says: say an individual working at Coles who thinks they have got a hacking incident reports it to their management; the member for Melbourne believes that ASIO may come screaming down to look at their wife's Facebook account. Warrants pertaining to matters covered by the first two amendments have to be security matters and security matters are defined in the ASIO Act. They deal with the likes of foreign intelligence collection. Unless someone is collecting intelligence on someone who is working at Coles, I suggest the issue of everyone having to be
concerned that ASIO may come swooping in to look at their household computers or tablets is completely and utterly unwarranted. ASIO need to show the Attorney-General why they need a warrant to go after various computing devices or networks because of a relevant security matter, not because someone thinks their Facebook account has been hacked.

Let us just get some common sense across this argument. The Greens are intentionally trying to muddy the waters to suit their own political point, but attorneys-general on both sides of politics have been very sound and very serious individuals and they take their responsibilities extraordinarily seriously. ASIO must demonstrate why the warrant they are seeking covers a security matter. We have dealt with that issue and I think we are all happy, as a parliament, that the Attorney-General will be providing warrants to ASIO for substantial matters.

If I could come to the device issue: the Greens are proposing to fix in legislation the total number of devices. Let me put my ‘master's degree in IT’ hat on. I get a little about IT and I get a little about computing; I did a master's degree in networking, so I have a bit of substance when it comes to how computing, networking and devices work. The Greens are seeking to impose an arbitrary, artificial and completely and utterly unworkable limitation that would not only frustrate ASIO but which does not exist in the real world we live in.

We talk about devices and networks. I think about my home: I run an 802.11n network that has 25 concurrent mobile devices connected. With mum and dad and three kids, we have 22 internet-enabled devices in our house, which comprises a very small 802.11n network. TVs talk to the internet. My fridge talks to the internet. We are moving to the system of systems, the internet of internets, where all devices are connected. You are suggesting, the member for Melbourne, that if ASIO came to my home they could interrogate my fridge, my devices and my TV but as soon as they hit device number 20—because I have 22 concurrent devices—they could not hit one of my hard drives or my WDTV, where all my movies are stored. Under your amendment, ASIO cannot even deal with my home running a simple network. I accept that my fridge is, possibly, a threat to national security; I fear it may be. But my home has more than 20 connected devices and we have not even entered the internet of internets. We have not even entered the world where my car is going to speak to my computing network, or where my freezer or fridge will automatically go online to Coles or Woolies and order the milk and the bread and the things I want. We are in a rapidly evolving networked world but the Greens, dragging behind them their Luddite policy, want to limit our law enforcement to 20 devices. That would not even cover my humble home and the devices I have.

Can we please apply a modicum of common sense? If the Attorney-General allows a warrant on a security matter that deals with national security—espionage or other such issues of gravity—that covers multiple devices, tablets, computers, limited networks, IP gateways and VPNs among other things, let us give the serious professionals the tools they need. Let us not limit them because the Greens do not quite understand how even a basic home uses internet networking.

Mr DREYFUS (Isaacs—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (11:34): These amendments to the bill would put an arbitrary limit on the scope of warrants and as a consequence are wholly impractical. Labor opposes them for that reason.
In modern conditions, it is easy to imagine a warrant targeting a particular person or a particular group of people could necessitate the use of a number of devices to access data relevant to a security matter. There is no basis for seeking to impose the kind of arbitrary limit this amendment would impose.

Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (11:34): I want to thank the minister for making our point exactly. The point the minister made was that now that devices are proliferating in homes, they are also proliferating on networks and they are connected to each other. Networks are connected to networks. He has made the point exactly: without an upper limit, one warrant not only includes all the devices in someone's home—and as I said in my speech, if you think 50 is the right number let us make it 50—but the other networks they are connected to.

The minister has just confirmed that this new definition of computer, which is not only one or more computers but one or more computer systems, one or more computer networks or any combination of the above, now means anything that is connected to anything else—even something two, three or four steps removed. With so many devices in people's homes and workplaces nowadays, there is no upper limit. You could be targeted simply because your network happens to be connected to someone else's network, which happens to be connected to someone else's network. I thank the minister for clarifying that.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Vasta): The question is that amendments (1) and (2) moved by the member for Melbourne be agreed to.

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

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: As there are fewer than five members on the side for the ayes in this division, I therefore declare that the question be negated 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, Ms McGowan, Mr Bandt and Mr Wilkie voting yes.

Mr WILKIE (Denison) (11:40): by leave—I move amendments (1) and (2), as circulated in my name, together:

(1) Page 80 (after line 8), after Schedule 5, insert:

Schedule 5A—Functions of the Committee on Intelligence and Security

Intelligence Services Act 2001

1 Subsection 29(3)

Repeal the subsection.

(2) Schedule 7, items 31 to 40, page 110 (lines 5 to 24), omit the items.

Before we address the question, I have a few questions for the government to really bring some clarity to what has gone on this morning. Much of the discussion this morning—and, in fact, the discussion in the other place and elsewhere—has centred around the fact that the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security has inquired into these proposals on two separate occasions. In fact, that is correct. The first inquiry ran from May 2012 to May 2013—12 months. And, as someone who was involved in that inquiry, I am pleased to say that it was very robust and did as good a job as it could do. The second, more recent, inquiry went a matter of days or weeks at best, and, compared to the first inquiry, might be described
as flimsy. So much then rests on the first inquiry. Yet, when you go to the chair's introduction in the report from the first inquiry, he says:

… the Committee was faced with three key difficulties. Firstly, the terms of reference were very wide ranging as they contained 18 specific reform proposals containing 44 separate items across three different reform areas. Secondly, the lack of any draft legislation or detail about some of the potential reforms was a major limitation and made the Committee’s consideration of the merit of the reforms difficult.

That ultimately led to recommendation 41—and I will read it in full:

The Committee recommends that the draft amendments to the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act 1979 and the Intelligence Services Act 2001, necessary to give effect to the Committee’s recommendations, should be released as an exposure draft for public consultation. The Government should expressly seek the views of key stakeholders, including the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor and Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security. In addition, the Committee recommends the Government ensure that the draft legislation be subject to Parliamentary committee scrutiny.

Through you, Mr Deputy Speaker Vasta, I ask this question of the government and of the minister: why, Minister, does the government keep claiming that the PJCIS supported these reforms in its 2013 report when the committee repeatedly said that its inquiry was limited by the absence of a detailed proposal or exposure draft? Through you, Mr Deputy Speaker: why is the government making so much of a report that, by its own admission, says it cannot address the issues in any detail?

Mr ROBERT (Fadden—Assistant Minister for Defence) (11:44): Let me thank the member for Denison for his questions. Notwithstanding that the minister has dealt with this extensively and notwithstanding that this bill is seeking to implement 21 of the 22 recommendations in chapter 4 of the original report, in terms of comments that the original report—that the member was a part of the committee for—is being, somehow, whitewashed or disregarded, I think 21 of the 22 recommendations being implemented in some part or in whole makes it very clear that is not the case. The minister has gone back to the PJCIS about the legislation and to ensure that they are across what the legislation has and so the government is entirely comfortable in terms of process and disclosure.

Mr WILKIE (Denison) (11:44): We might have to agree to disagree then because when I read the report it is in absolute black and white where the chair and the committee as a whole makes the observation repeatedly that in the absence of an exposure draft they are unable to look into these matters properly. Hence, that crucial recommendation—41—which is an overarching recommendation saying that before these proposals could be progressed there needed to be a detailed exposure draft, that it needed to be released for effective public and stakeholder consultation and then subject to effective parliamentary scrutiny. You and I can disagree, Minister, on our interpretations of this, but I would leave it to the public to have a look at that report and to see where things are expressed in black and white.

Through you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I will ask another question of the government. Earlier today, the minister made the point that the reforms in this bill in no way are clamping down on whistleblowing in the public interest. In fact, this morning the minister referred to the Public Interest Disclosure Act. The shadow Attorney-General has also referred to it in this place today. My question to the government—and really, it only needs a 'yes' or a 'no'—is: isn't it the case that the Public Interest Disclosure Act specifically carves out intelligence
material and intelligence officials from any of the protections afforded by the Public Interest Disclosure Act? I think that needs a simple 'yes' or 'no'.

Mr ROBERT (Fadden—Assistant Minister for Defence) (11:46): The thing I like about the member for Denison is that we served together as military officers and we serve in the parliament, and, of course, we agree to disagree on so many things!

The thing I love about your 'yes and noes' is that they are not based entirely on the full set of facts, member for Denison. You know it, I know it and the parliament knows it. The Public Interest Disclosure Act does carve out disclosure in some forms. However—and it is a big 'however'—that, of course, you neglected to tell the parliament. There is a big 'however' that deals with a range of frameworks within the act. So it is not as simple as a 'yes' or a 'no'.

I will let you move your amendments and then we will just move on.

Mr WILKIE (Denison) (11:47): Again, we might have to agree to disagree on that, because if anyone were to pull out a copy of the Public Interest Disclosure Act they would see, in black and white, that intelligence material and intelligence officials are specifically—explicitly—excluded from the protections of that act.

Mr Deputy Speaker, through you, I have another question for the government. This morning, the minister said words to the effect—I do not have them in front of me—of, 'Journalists have nothing to fear from section 35P so long as they do not endanger anyone.' These were words to the effect that journalists have nothing to fear so long as they do not 'endanger' anyone. That appeared to be a rewriting of section 35P. My understanding—and I would ask the minister to confirm this—is that the relevant section quite explicitly would impose a penalty of up to 10 years jail on a journalist simply for reporting the existence of any special intelligence operation. In fact, nowhere in the legislation is there the sort of qualification that was offered by the minister this morning, that it was really only to do with endangering someone.

This is not about how people might interpret it in the future; this is about the exact words in the bill and what will become the exact words in the law of the land, that journalists could be jailed for up to 10 years simply for reporting on a special intelligence operation if they know it is a special intelligence operation.

Mr ROBERT (Fadden—Assistant Minister for Defence) (11:49): We have dealt with this extensively in the public and we have dealt with this extensively in the parliament. But let me just give an example so that the Australian people understand what we are talking about in 35P.

The offence will not, and is not designed to, criminalise legitimate reporting. We have seen that. We have had 10 years of embedded journalists in military operations, with no issues. We dealt with this in response to the member for Melbourne's question. But in terms of gazetted or legitimised special operations as preapproved by the Attorney-General, we are talking about operations as sensitive. As an example: an ASIO agent covertly infiltrates a terrorist organisation, something that could take years, endangering his or her life and those of many others of their compatriots and their families, and a journalist, knowing this—being aware of this, and knowing full well the ramifications of it—then reports it anyway.

I think that any decent Australian would look at that scenario and say, 'No. Australian journalists just wouldn't do that.' And I agree; frankly, they would not. We have seen that
right across the board for the last decade as journalists have been eminently responsible. The law here is designed to stop the one-in-a-million journalist who perhaps is not quite across the ramifications. This will ensure that they are.

Is it appropriate? Yes. If you endanger the lives of our people knowingly and endanger the lives of their families knowingly, there is a consequence. It is just like if you were a journalists embedded with our military overseas; if you endanger our troops then there damn well is a consequence. They know it, I know it and the Australian public deserves it. And they demand it. It is no different here—absolutely no different here.

This is not about stopping good, sound journalism; it is about saying to that one-in-a-million, who seeks knowingly—for whatever reason—to harm Australia, its interests its people and their families, that there are consequences.

Mr WILKIE (Denison) (11:51): I agree with the government, without any qualification, that no journalist must ever knowingly put someone at risk. In fact, the minister's example of a counter-terrorist operation is a good example of a situation where it would be inconceivable that a sane journalist would report anything that might put anyone involved in that operation at risk.

Of course there are lots of examples that could be used to tease this issue out. There has already been repeated references this morning to the now infamous planting of a listening device in the East Timorese cabinet rooms. There is an example where a type of operation could be occurring where the Australian government or perhaps a zealous official within an intelligence agency might be going beyond what could be regarded as reasonable and ethical behaviour, and there could be a legitimate reason for a journalist to want to publicise that. In that example, that journalist could be liable to up to 10 years in prison; an intelligence official involved in the operation who perhaps is collaborating or working with the journalist, he or she would have no protections under the Public Interest Disclosure Act. So there we have another example, but it is an example that I think very clearly makes the point that this section 35P could conceivably silence or muzzle the media in the future on that rare occasion when a prescribed operation does need or does warrant publication.

The point was made a little while ago, in fact I think it was in response to my colleague the member for Melbourne, that there is already an abundance of laws out there to prohibit and deter the improper disclosure of information or intelligence. The minister listed a number of examples, and used it as a challenge to the Greens: 'Why are you challenging things today when you don't challenge these other things?' I am going to turn that attack on the member for Melbourne around, and I am going to say: if there are already a range of laws that deter and prohibit the improper disclosure of information, then why do we need one more? And, in particular, why do we need one more that goes way beyond any existing penalty and a law to do with an issue that has never been a problem? We are creating solutions for things that are not a problem. The fact is that prescribed operations have been in existence for the Australian Federal Police for years, and to the best of my knowledge no journalist has ever been pursued or prosecuted for disclosing any information improperly about any of those AFP prescribed operations. So why are we creating a solution when there is no problem? Why are we creating laws and more red tape, particularly by a government that is wanting to get rid of unnecessary and superfluous laws? Why? I do not understand it. Why do you want another law?
Mr ROBERT (Fadden—Assistant Minister for Defence) (11:55): What I find interesting, Member for Denison, is the PJCIS report that we referred to, that 12-month great committee that you were a member of—correct, sir?

Mr Wilkie: Yes.

Mr ROBERT: And if I look at that report and its recommendations, it was a unanimous report, which means that you agreed with it, Member for Denison—is that correct? I will take that as a nod. That report recommended a regime modelled on the Crimes Act to deal with section 35P. You agreed with the report at the time that this legislation in part be modelled on—you agreed because the committee agreed that such a regime as 35P needed to be implemented, modelled on the Crimes Act. That is what the report from the committee you were a member of the agreed on, so for you to come back here now and say that you disagree is a stunning reversal at best.

Mr WILKIE (Denison) (11:56): That was a stunning personal attack on me, and one that is unwarranted. And I would hope that, after I finish speaking, the minister would retract. Yes, I was a member of that committee. I was very proud to have been a member of that committee and to have produced this report. And it was a consensus report, which I think was a remarkable achievement for a committee that had such a wide range of members on it. And crucially I agreed with recommendation 41:

The Committee recommends that the draft amendments to the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act 1979 and the Intelligence Services Act 2001, necessary to give effect to the Committee’s recommendations, should be released as an exposure draft for public consultation. The Government should expressly seek the views of key stakeholders, including the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor and Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security.

In addition, the Committee recommends the Government ensure that the draft legislation be subject to Parliamentary committee scrutiny.

In other words: it was the consensus report of the committee in the 43rd Parliament that if these were to be progressed, they were to be fleshed out in detail and to be looked at again, and that all of us, myself included, were reserving our rights on how we would approach that next episode.

Mr ROBERT (Fadden—Assistant Minister for Defence) (11:58): I thank the member for Denison for quickly moving away from the point I made. I did not attack the member for Denison; I simply pointed out that he agreed with the consensus report. That report included recommendation 28, a recommendation that you just forgot to read out then, didn't you, sir? I will read it out for the convenience of the House. The recommendation you agreed with, that you are now saying that you do not like, says:

The Committee recommends—

that includes you, sir, who voted for it—

that the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act 1979 be amended to create an authorised intelligence operations scheme, subject to similar safeguards and accountability arrangements as apply to the Australian Federal Police controlled operations regime under the Crimes Act 1914.

And this is what we are doing. We are creating an authorised intelligence operation scheme subject to similar safeguards and accountability arrangements as they apply to the Crimes Act. It is exactly what we are doing with 35P. This, sir, is exactly what you agreed to in the report.
back then, and for you to come back in here this morning and suddenly say the government is wrong is hypocrisy at best.

Mr WILKIE (Denison) (11:59): I have a lot of time for the minister. We are former colleagues and we run the risk of going around the buoys on the river repeatedly. I will not read out again recommendation 41—I have read it out twice this morning—but I will emphasise that it was the overarching recommendation at the end of the 2013 report and that is the context in which all of the other recommendations need to be viewed. Interestingly, recommendation 41 comes at the end of the report. I will read your couple of sentences of the concluding comment:

The Committee has carefully considered each of the reform proposals. Where the committee has recommended draft amendments be made to the acts, these amendments should first be released as an exposure draft for consultation. The Government should expressly seek the views of key stakeholders, including the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor and Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security.

In other words, all members of the committee reserve their right to look at this afresh if and when the proposals are progressed, as they are being progressed today. I am firmly of the view that what is on the table today is being rushed and it is flawed because some parts of the bill are unsatisfactory and because other important reforms are neglected, including the reform contained in my amendments (1) and (2), which are simply to expand the powers of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, to give it oversight of intelligence operations, which does nothing more than to bring the powers of the Australian committee into line with comparable committees in the UK and the US.

Mr DREYFUS (Isaacs—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (12:01): The member for Denison, in this amendment, which proposes the deletion of section 29(3) of the Intelligence Services Act 2001, has drawn the attention of the parliament to the limited functions of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security. As the member for Denison has just observed, unlike the House of Commons Intelligence and Security Committee and the equivalent committees of the US Congress, which do have access to and oversight of operational matters concerning intelligence, the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security of this parliament does not have such powers.

The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security is, of course, an unusual committee of this parliament in that it is one of the small group of committees that are constituted by statute rather than under the standing orders. As a consequence, we look to the statute which establishes it for its role, which is set out in section 29 of the Intelligence Services Act. Sections 29(1) and 29(2) confer clear functions which include reviewing the administration and expenditure of the intelligence agencies and reviewing any matter in relation to the agencies that the minister or either house of parliament asks the committee to engage in. It has a particular review role in relation to a sunset provision of some particular powers given to ASIO in 2006 and it can request the minister to refer matters to it. It also has another function in relation to proposed listing of terrorist organisations under the Criminal Code, which appears in other legislation.

We then see in 29(3) that there is a specific exclusion of the committee from reviewing the intelligence gathering and assessment priorities of the agencies, of reviewing the sources of information, reviewing particular operations and a range of what can be described as
'operational matters'. There should be some consideration of expanding the role of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, which I think needs to take place as part of consideration of the whole scheme of oversight of our intelligence agencies. We need to ensure that the whole of our community has confidence in our intelligence and security agencies. One of the ways in which that confidence can best be achieved is through oversight and integrity bodies. We already have a range of oversight and integrity bodies which includes the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security, the National Security Committee of cabinet has oversight, as does the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor.

I pause to note that, although the government has abandoned its ill-conceived proposal to abolish the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor, the office of the monitor remains vacant. I would urge the government to fill that vacant position. If ever there were a time when we needed an independent national security legislation monitor it is now when we are considering the new powers being conferred on our agencies with this bill, the new powers that are proposed to be conferred on our agencies by the Counter-Terrorism Legislation Amendment (Foreign Fighters) Bill, which is now in the Senate, and yet further as yet unexplained changes to the national security legislation which the government has mentioned. You could add as well an oversight role, the role of the Attorney-General, and of course this parliament has a role in overseeing the activities of our intelligence and security agencies and in particular the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security.

It is worth considering whether the role of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security should be expanded but the way proposed by the member for Denison is not the way to do it—by simply deleting a section of the act which sets up the committee. Serious consideration needs to be given to what particular functions should be conferred on the committee and what expansion of the role of the committee is appropriate. That needs to be done through a process of parliamentary scrutiny, through a process of public consultation and through a properly considered proposal, not something on the run on the floor of the House.

I thank the member for Denison for drawing the attention of this parliament to the constraints that have been placed by legislation on the role of the intelligence committee and for drawing the attention of the parliament to the differences in the UK and the United States.

Mr ROBERT (Fadden—Assistant Minister for Defence) (12:06): I thank those who have contributed to the debate on the National Security Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2014. Debates are always constructive and the nation is always at its finest when the House of debate is used as a strong debating chamber. I also thank the shadow Attorney-General for his words. In conclusion, suffice to say that the government opposes these amendments moved by the member for Denison that have the effect of extending the statutory remit of the PJCIS to include oversight of intelligence agencies' operational activities. This would fundamentally alter the role and functions of the committee which were intentionally limited to performing oversight of agencies' expenditure, financial statements and other matters referred by responsible ministers. Comprehensive and rigorous oversight of agencies' operational activities is provided by the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security pursuant to the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security Act 1986. The IGIS has extensive powers of inquiry, including in response to complaints made by any person. The IGIS submits reports on
his or her findings and unclassified versions can be made publicly available. As such, there is no demonstrable or evidence gaps in existing oversight powers in relation to agencies' operational activities. In that line, I move:

That the question be now put.

Question agreed to.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Broadbent): The question now is that the amendments moved by the member for Denison be agreed to.

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

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: As there are fewer than five members on the side of the ayes in this division, 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, Ms McGowan, Mr Bandt and Mr Wilkie voting aye.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question now is that this bill be agreed to.

Bill agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr ROBERT (Fadden—Assistant Minister for Defence) (12:13): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill 2014

Second Reading

Debate resumed on the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr FLETCHER (Bradfield—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Communications) (12:14): I am pleased to continue my remarks on the Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill 2014. At the point before the debate was interrupted last night, I was observing that the economic realities in the fundamental uncompetitiveness of the Australian automotive industry do not make the transformation that needs to be faced any easier. It may be a reality, it may be inevitable but that does not make it an easy transition for those in the industry, for employees, for the businesses or, of course, for the affected communities. But while it is not an easy transition, the status quo is simply not a viable status quo and this is something that any responsible government must recognise.

Tragically, the previous Rudd-Gillard-Rudd governments refused to recognise the reality and instead preferred to keep throwing taxpayers' money at an unsustainable industry. Labor consistently refused to acknowledge economic reality. Indeed, in 2013 then Prime Minister Gillard insisted that the car manufacturing industry remained viable in Australia. She reassured the workers of Ford that the government would make a special effort to assist them. There were continuing handouts to the automotive industry with $42 million of taxpayers' money paid to assist the development of two Ford Eco vehicles which, unfortunately, failed to meet the requisite environmental criteria for some state government fleets.
You would have thought that the Labor Party would learn from experience. Suggesting that additional money be thrown at industries which are unviable and unsustainable and, critically, businesses whose management teams had decided to exit Australia in such circumstances is the height of folly, the height of irresponsibility. You would have thought that the Labor Party would have learnt from experience and would have recognised that reality. But unfortunately that was not the case.

When we saw the announcement from General Motors just before Christmas that Holden would cease manufacturing vehicles in Australia, what was the response from the Leader of the Opposition? In February 2014 he said:

Government subsidies for car makers are essential for keeping manufacturing alive.

He was determined to keep throwing taxpayers' money at that industry. He was determined to wilfully close his eyes to the evidence even from the managers of the businesses themselves that this was not a sustainable industry.

What did we hear from former Rudd government minister Senator Carr—Kim Il Carr as he is known quite appropriately? He made the completely unsubstantiated claim that the coalition could save Holden for as little as $150 million a year and could secure the entire Australian automotive industry by spending double that—just spend a bit more. Despite the fact that the management teams of these companies were saying 'this is not a sustainable business', as far as Senator Kim Carr was concerned, if we just spent a little bit more and a bit more then we could solve this problem. It was a wilful refusal to acknowledge reality.

It is very important to acknowledge that senior General Motors executives said the decision to exit manufacturing in Australia was driven by basic scale economics, not by government incentives or by reductions in them. The decisions to exit manufacturing in Australia by 2016 in the case of Ford and by 2017 in the case of Holden and Toyota, were taken by the manufacturers themselves. All three manufacturers indicated that the level of government support was not the reason for their decision to cease manufacturing vehicles in Australia. But the Labor Party remained wilfully blind to the economic realities. Why? Because in part, as usual, they were dancing to the tunes of the union masters.

What did we hear from the former secretary of the Australian Workers Union? In 2012 he gave a speech at the National Press Club complaining that manufacturing jobs had disappeared. What was his solution? Unsurprisingly, it was more government assistance for the car industry and for the manufacturing industry. He went on to say:

The Australian Workers Union does not want to see Australian industry lose. We want Australian industry to win. We want Australia to rediscover its industrial policy vision.

What is that code for? I will tell you what that is code for: that is code for more taxpayers' money being shovelled in to subsidise an industry which is manifestly uncompetitive. Let us be clear. Of course we want Australian industry to succeed. Of course we want Australian manufacturers to prosper. But it is a fool's paradise to imagine that manufacturing can prosper on the basis of subsidies from government. Manufacturers need to be competitive and they need to be world competitive if they are to survive. There are plenty of instances of Australian manufacturers being innovative, being world competitive. But they need to find market segments where they can compete and they need to do it on the basis of their own expertise, knowledge and capacity—not on the basis of decisions made in Canberra. The Abbott government recognises that competitiveness is critical for our economy. To promote
competitiveness, we need to move away from a mindset of dependency and play to our strengths.

This bill is one which will make sensible savings in public expenditure by reducing an ongoing subsidy to an uncompetitive industry. The automotive transformation scheme will close from 1 January 2018 after motor vehicle manufacturing in Australia ceases. This bill amends the automotive transformation scheme legislation to give effect to this decision. Savings of some $900 million in total will be achieved and will be directed to repairing the budget bottom line, filling the yawning chasm of deficit we were left by the previous government and to fund other important government priorities. But approximately $700 million remains in assistance for this industry.

This is an important bill which secures economies and recognises the economic reality, the reality that the other side of politics wants to stay wilfully blind to. This is not an industry in which we can remain competitive on the present terms.

Mr CHAMPION (Wakefield) (12:22): It is my very sad duty to speak on the Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill 2014. The bill obviously involves a $500 million cut to our automotive industry and, in particular, to the components industry that lies behind it. Let's make no mistake: this bill continues with the vandalism that this government has wrought on what was and still is today a very important Australian industry and a very important industry to my electorate, and, obviously, to my state and the southern part of Australia—and to the rest of Australia too. It importantly represents one of our key manufacturing industries and one that so many other industries took their skills and R&D from.

This $500 million cut, as exposed by the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries last year, jeopardises an industry that provides the economy with about $21 billion worth of investment and other economic benefits each year. For that $500 million, you were getting $21 billion—that is what the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries said in their press release on 4 November 2013. This is an industry which is not just important for investment, jobs, our national capacity, our ability to manufacture things like cars but a whole range of other products in this country.

The previous speaker, the member for Bradfield, talked about what Mr Devereux said at the time of closure. He talked about volumes but he began with the high cost of the Australian dollar—and this was referred to by the member for Melbourne in his address. This was the No. 1 issue affecting not just Australian automotive industries but Australian industries generally. It did not matter in my electorate if you talked to farmers, people who owned wineries who exported wine or people who made and exported cars: the persistent high value of the Australian dollar from about 2006 onwards has been a real issue for Australian industry.

We all know the economic fundamentals that led to that: high commodity prices and a disruption of the world's currencies caused by the global financial crisis. The persistent high value in the Australian dollar was only ever going to be an event that lasted for a period of time. It is important that we understand that the dollar was the real issue behind the difficulties that the automotive industries and a whole lot of industries had. It wasn't wages. It wasn't work practices. It wasn't unions. It wasn't consumer preferences—all these things like straw men that have been thrown up in this debate; it was
the effect of the Australian dollar. It was the effect of currency movements: an appreciation of the Australian dollar while many of our competitor countries depreciated their currencies at the same time to lift their exports.

The Australian car industry faced a situation where the dollar was persistently high on one hand, but the yen plunged as a deliberate act of Japanese government policy on the other. Japanese cars became $5,000 cheaper in six months not because of anything other than currency movements.

We should not have those opposite coming into this place and saying: 'It's the straw men. It's the workers. It's the unions. It's the Labor Party. It's industry subsidies' and all that sort of nonsense. It was the Australian dollar that caused many of the issues. It did not just cause issues in the automotive industry; as I said before, I have spoken to many other companies which have had the same problems.

The dollar has now come down quite a bit—I think it was 87c in recent times. That proves the point that the government has made reckless decisions, engaged in reckless vandalism and spurned foreign investment in our country—in this case by multinational automotive companies—based on a situation that was transitory. Because once the dollar falls below about 92c or 93c, the Australian industry can export. I know this, because Holden will be able to export rear-wheel drive cars to the United States for the police car market and the luxury market. They will be able to make money where the dollar is at the moment. It was a niche capability and it is that capability that gets you around some of the issues of volume which the member for Bradfield raised. The only answer to getting around those volume arguments is to fit in a niche manufacturing place within the global production chains of these automotive industries. And we could have done that, and Holden was interested in doing that.

It is interesting that, for all of the rhetoric and the quotes from previous members, they should remember that on December 10, 2013, Holden's Mike Devereux created the rather unique situation of going public in an article to the *Sydney Morning Herald*. The headline was: 'It's in the government's hands, says Holden.'

Holden was interested in investing in Australia—and I know this because they bothered to come to see me to talk to me about it and I know something about investment windows. I know something about the opportunity that we had to secure Holden in this country until 2022. That opportunity was there and at least the government for a moment might have realised this, because Ian Macfarlane made a big fuss, came down to the factory, did a big tour and posed in photos with workers. You would have thought that, if the government thought what the member for Bradfield just said, they would not have done that. It was pretty cruel to wander around a factory, giving hope to people, if you did not think the opportunity was there to invest.

Of course the opportunity was there to invest. But it needed a minister and it needed a cabinet. It needed a Prime Minister that was serious about keeping the car industry in this country. It could have been done. The opportunity was there for it to be done. Holden would not have gone through all of the things they went through—going to the workers, doing an enterprise agreement, getting a whole heap of cuts, making a whole lot of sacrifices at the shop-floor level—why would they do that if they did not want to invest in Australia? Why do it?
GM is not there to mollycoddle people. They have closed factories around the world at different times, and when they close factories they are quite clear about it. But they did not do that in this case. They did an agreement with their workers to try and leverage off that investment. All they needed was a government to step up to the table and do what governments around the world do for their car industries. But the thing about this is the government just did not want to.

I have showed this article to the House many times before—the Financial Review article from 11 December: 'Hockey dares GM to leave'—bells the cat. It was the government that made the decision about the car industry. Today, in this bill cutting $500 million out of the Automotive Transformation Scheme, they risk even further accelerating the job losses, accelerating the timetables, and making the situation far worse than it needs to be.

A different article in the Financial Review, also by Phillip Coorey—a very good journalist—is titled, 'Abbott bowls a blistering spell of line and length'. This is where the bragging of the Prime Minister comes in—and there is a quote in there:

'It was Abbott who put the torpedo in the water over Holden,' …

Given all the rhetoric on submarines, given their lies on submarines to South Australia—we know the damage they are going to do to that industry as well—it is an odd bit of language to use.

It was the government in this bill, it was the government last year, who closed the Australian industry, putting 50,000 jobs at risk. They are devastating the manufacturing base of this country. Why? Because of their prejudice. It is not just me who thinks this. In the Financial Review, on 11 February this year, Mr Sardelis, who makes car components in the suburb of Netley, in the member for Hindmarsh's electorate—it is good to see he is not speaking on this bill today; he will be scurrying about, hiding in his office, under his desk—said he was angry at policymakers. He said: 'In the end they did not want an industry and they have got what they wanted.' That is a quote that bells the cat on policymakers like the member for Hindmarsh and others in this government—people who basically put this industry to the knife, put it to the sword. Now, with this $500 million cut, they jeopardise every component company in this country and they jeopardise bringing forward that 2017 date. Make no mistake; that is the consequence of this $500 million cut.

I heard the member for Dawson making a speech. I just about fell off the chair in my office; I could not believe it. Here was a Queenslander railing against subsidies to the car industry and railing against subsidies to the multinationals. But there is just one thing: I remember keeping an article on the member for Dawson, from the Financial Review from the same day, 11 February 2014: 'Nationals fight razor gang over ethanol'. It describes the member for Dawson as 'fighting for ethanol subsidies'. He comes into this House and gets stuck into car workers, car companies and foreign investment, and there is all this emotive language about multinationals, but apparently, if you want to hand over a huge subsidy for ethanol, that is okay; that is just helping everyone out.

If you are going to get up and get stuck into corporate welfare, you need to be consistent. You cannot be against corporate welfare everywhere else other than in your home patch, because no-one will take you seriously. I guess that is where this debate is left, sadly—for all the seriousness of it. It is an industry, put to the sword on the basis of prejudice, on the basis that it is unionised, on the basis that its workers are organised, on the basis that it needs
support because other industries are supported around the world, on the basis of the prejudices of the government and the high cost of the Australian dollar. They have decided it is all too hard and they have walked away from it. They pushed Holden away. We have the situation where the member for Dawson makes these ridiculous contributions, and then the member for Bradfield says: 'Oh well, that was inevitable. There was nothing we could do.'

Really, when you get down to it, this government has acted with extraordinary malice to a great Australian industry, an industry that defined us. It certainly defined my electorate, because we were able to build and make cars here—one of only 13 nations in the world—and we did it well. We could export when the dollar came down, when the economic circumstances changed.

But we now have the government becoming a farce. The youngest member of this House ever, the member for Longman, Wyatt Roy, has put a picture of himself on Facebook—I am happy to table it. The picture has him there, with some rather nice looking young ladies, in the party room, with Tony Abbott in the background. He has a V8 Supercars thing in the background. The caption is 'Debating the big issues facing the nation: Ford or Holden?'. This is this government's attitude to the car industry. They put an industry to the sword at the same time that they send thousands of hardworking Australians into the unemployment queues. And they cannot even take it seriously. On the one hand, the Nationals use it for rhetoric; and, on the other hand, the member for Longman uses it for a joke. That is a problem with this government.

**Mr EWEN JONES (Herbert) (12:37):** I like the member for Wakefield. He is a good man. But I think I counted about seven bells around that poor cat's neck; it is not sneaking up on anything; it is not moving at all; it was belled so many times it was dragging along the ground.

I want to get into what we are doing with this bill and why we are doing it. The member for Wakefield was talking about exporting motor cars overseas. Holden Australia were exporting motor cars until the parent company, GM, said no. It is common knowledge in the automotive industry—

**Mr Champion interjecting—**

**Mr EWEN JONES:** You had your chance, Nick. In the race of life back self-interest. I understand the hubris. The reason you are standing up here is that you want to make sure you have another term because you do not have anything else to go to.

**Mr Champion interjecting—**

**Mr EWEN JONES:** You are singing to the choir, mate.

The Automotive Transformation Scheme is a legislated entitlement scheme which provides assistance to registered participants for the productions of motor vehicles and engines. I would like to go through the substance of the bill and then make some personal comments at the end. The ATS allows investment in allowable research and development and allowable plant and equipment. There are two types of assistance—capped via special appropriation and uncapped via an annual appropriation.

The coalition announced its intention to reduce the ATS in February 2011—so this is not a surprise. These intentions were brought to the 2013 election—once again, not a surprise. The local motor vehicle producers—Ford, Holden and Toyota—announced that by the end of
2017 they will stop local vehicle manufacturing in Australia. During Labor's tenure in government Ford and Mitsubishi said they would do the same. What did the member for Wakefield say at the time? I would like to go back and have a look at that. Therefore, assistance through the ATS will no longer be required from 2018. Labor members and Senate crossbenchers are likely to oppose this bill—and why wouldn't they? They oppose absolutely everything. They opposed their own budget measures!

Labor hit manufacturing with a carbon tax bill of $1.1 billion, hit the car industry with a fringe benefits tax bill of $1.8 billion, provided a last minute $215 million to GM Holden and granted Alcoa $40 million pre-closure as they pushed through their carbon tax. In their last three years Labor spun 14 ministers through the former Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research, Climate Change and Tertiary Education—14 ministers! Labor's legacy is one of instability, inconsistency and indecision.

The Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries have publically called on the parliament to oppose the government's savings measures—but why would we? GM Holden's Managing Director, Gerry Dorizas, warned in August 2014 that the cuts to the ATS would result in an early closure of the car manufacturing industry costing 50,000 jobs. I do not know how you get 50,000 jobs out of that—but that is the rhetoric we have to deal with.

A Productivity Commission report was handed down in March 2014. The report showed the automotive industry was handed about $30 billion in government support between 1997 and 2012 in the form of tariffs and budgetary assistance—have a look at the number of small engineering firms in my electorate that could have done with a slice of that. Over that period there were 5,186,765 vehicles manufactured locally. This equates to approximately $5,784 of government support per vehicle during this period. That is approximately $164,000 of government support a year for every job—man woman and child, cleaner and CEO—in the motor vehicle industry. Imagine what people out there could do with a government subsidy of $164,000 per job in their business. You would not have too many worries, would you? You would probably be able to provide something people actually want! Despite this the Australian automotive industry has failed to survive in a highly competitive global market.

This bill gives effect to the government's decision to reduce the ATS by $500 million over three years from 2015 and finally closing it on 1 January 2018 as announced at the 2013 election. The total amount of capped assistance for stage 1 will be reduced by $200 million to $1.3 billion (2011-2015) and in stage 2 it will be reduced by $700 million to $300 million (2016-2018). This will provide $900 million in savings to the budget. This government has made a longstanding commitment to get this budget under control. The decision to return the $400 million allocated for 2018-2020 to consolidated revenue was set out in this year's budget—no doubt opposed by all and sundry on the other side of the chamber and the crossbenches.

The government believes there is a future for manufacturing in Australia but only in those areas where we have a competitive advantage: food and agribusiness, mining equipment, technology and services, medical technologies and pharmaceuticals, oil and gas and advanced manufacturing. To take advantage of these opportunities many Australian firms will have to change the way they do business and run their companies. This is why we are focused on creating the economic environment that will support and encourage private sector investment and jobs growth. We are reforming vocational education and training, improving incentives
for business to invest in technology and research and development, cutting red tape by $1 billion per year and helping transition manufacturing to the smart, high-value, export focused industries of the future.

The government has a way forward post car manufacturing. We believe that by supporting industry, innovation and competitiveness, targeting Australia’s strengths and identifying ways to foster national competitiveness and productivity we will create long-term sustainable jobs. The government has established a $155 million growth fund to help automotive workers find new and better jobs. We will assist businesses to diversify into new markets and invest in infrastructure projects. A key part of the growth fund is the $20 million Automotive Diversification Program, which will assist automotive supply chain firms to diversify and invest outside of the automotive industry. The first round of the program is already underway.

The growth fund also includes a $30 million skills and training program to assist automotive employees and have their skills recognised and provide training for new jobs. There is $15 million to boost the Automotive Industry Structural Adjustment Program to provide careers advice and assist automotive employees to secure new jobs. There is a $60 million for the Generation Manufacturing Investment Program to accelerate private sector investment in high-value non-automotive manufacturing sectors in Victoria and South Australia, and there is $30 million for the Regional Infrastructure Program to support investment in nonmanufacturing opportunities in affected regions.

The $42 million Automotive New Markets Program is a joint initiative of the federal, Victorian and South Australian governments to help automotive component producers win work in non-automotive markets domestically and internationally. The federal Minister for Industry, Ian Macfarlane said—and I will not do the voice—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Broadbent): It is actually against parliamentary procedures so don't risk it.

Mr EWEN JONES: I know. That is why I said I would not do it. The minister said:

These grants will help automotive firms remain viable by diversifying into non-automotive markets and ensure that vital manufacturing capabilities remain in Australia.

The projects to be funded include: manufacturing cycling training simulators; casting metal components for the aerospace and defence industries; transforming production lines to producing new packaged goods for the food and medical or pharmaceutical industries; and producing emergency pipe repair clamps for the oil and gas industries.

The government has given a $50 million boost to the Export Market Development Grants scheme. The grant will help small- and medium-sized businesses to reach their potential and assist them in establishing markets when they go overseas. In June 2014 Minister Truss said:

Farmers and business developers in southern parts of the country will be eyeing the opportunities in the north to expand and diversify their interests. This has been part of our plan to put regional Australia at the heart of the national economic recovery.

The government wants to: develop a food bowl, including premium produce which could help to double Australia’s agricultural output; build an energy export industry worth $150 billion to the economy with a major focus on clean and efficient energy, providing major increases to resource exports; and grow the tourist economy in Northern Australia to two million international tourists a year.
On 14 February 2014—on Valentine's Day—the Courier Mail said:

The local content of Australian-made cars was already in decline. Just 30 per cent of the parts to make a Holden Cruze were sourced locally, and the Commodore was only 50 per cent Australian in the end, according to figures supplied by the car maker. Toyota had a Japanese image but the Camry had up to 70 per cent Australian-made parts, the same as the Ford Falcon.

Australia now looks beyond car manufacturing. At the moment, over 50 per cent of world trade is now in components, that is companies and countries making things for a product that is finally assembled somewhere else. The Boeing 787 Dreamliner is a great example of that. The wing flaps are made in Melbourne and parts of the wings are made in other countries and they are all then flown to Seattle for final completion. But the value of the wing flaps being made at Fishermen's Bend is three billion dollars in contracts to Boeing. That sort of fibre composite technology was common in the auto industry and we need to transpose it into other industries. Bosch Australia are diversifying into new sectors and technologies in the food manufacturing and biotechnology industries.

Passage of this bill provides certainty for ATS participants about the level of assistance available for the final three years of the scheme, which will also assist their future business planning and decision-making. Approximately $700 million in ATS assistance remains available to the industry over the four years from 2014-2015. The Australian government is determined to ensure a strong, long-term future for Australian manufacturing.

I think it was the Kelly review in 1998-1999 that said that we were a high-wage country, that the profitability of the firm had nothing to do with the wages we were paid. You can be a high-wage country, and I support that 100 per cent, if you have low input costs and high productivity. If you have both of those you can be competitive in any market. Take one of those out and you are gone. Whilst we were reasonably competitive in productivity when it came to car manufacturing, import costs in Australia went through the roof. That, coupled with the high Australian dollar, is a blister on everyone's backside at the moment, and I think we have to deal with that.

But we made a decision as a government when we came in here that corporate welfare has to come to an end. As I said, $164,000 per employee in the motor vehicle industry is the Australian taxpayer subsidy to that industry. We are talking about 1,600 jobs in fact here. Labor will say that it is the end of manufacturing in the whole country. Everyone is going to be out of work—50,000 jobs, 100,000 jobs, all gone—and the whole state is going to shut down. But in Queensland over the last couple of years we have seen 14,000 jobs exit the mining industry Ten thousand engineers in Australia have lost jobs in Queensland over the last four years and there has not been the sort of corporate welfare that has been handed out to the good burghers of South Australia and Victoria in this same industry.

It gets down to what is important here. Do we just keep on digging a hole for ourselves as a country? Do we just keep on digging it down? Did we just keep on spending the money until we just completely run out and go completely broke?

Dr Leigh interjecting—

Mr EWEN JONES: I know the member for Fraser has been on the road to Damascus and he has had a serial conversion on everything, but even he must understand the basic nature of cause and effect. If you keep on doling it out, if you keep on doing these sorts of things, they do not get any better.
We are a high-wage nation, and I have no problems with that, and this government is working to lower the input costs in everyone's industry. That is the secret of us being competitive in this. That is the secret of transitioning these things. You guys would still have us making crap carriages! We cannot have any industry die, we must keep on supporting it. Even though no-one wants the bloody things—pardon me—we have got to keep on building these things. What we must do is make sure that we have opportunities for people and that we do transition out of these areas to things that people can do and can make a living out of.

In a lot of ways, the best thing we can do in shutting these things down is just get on with life, and that is what I am calling on the people of the motor industry to do—get on with their lives. No-one wants to lose their job, but sometimes the best thing you can do—and it has happened to me on a couple of occasions when I have lost a job—is to recognise that one door closes and another door opens. They say that opportunity only knocks once. Opportunity knocks all the time—you have to open the door. That is what we are saying to the people involved in the car industry, because there is opportunity everywhere here in this country and it does not take the taxpayer to pay you $164,000 a year on every job to get it done.

Mr WATTS (Gellibrand) (12:52): In this debate on the Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill 2014, I rise to speak on behalf of the 2,500 Toyota workers directly employed in my electorate, who have had to pay for the Abbott government's reckless and arrogant approach to the automotive industry. I speak on behalf of the 2,500 workers who were promised before the election that their industry would 'not just survive but flourish' under an Abbott government and that an Abbott government would be no threat to their jobs. I speak on behalf of the 2,500 workers who saw these promises broken in less than three months after the election; who saw $500 million ripped out of the Automotive Transformation Scheme, or ATS, in October, the mechanics of which can be seen in the bill before us today; who saw the announcement that Holden would cease operations and believed that their government would work as hard as they could to ensure they did not suffer the same fate; and who then watched as the government ignored the calls from the auto industry for a commitment before the end of the year and then blundered into the new cycle, attacking complex union negotiations at a sensitive point.

I speak on behalf of the 2,500 workers who saw the true meaning of the Abbott government's intent on a Monday afternoon in February: that, despite the strength of the skills and expertise of our auto workers and despite the research and innovation that has gone into the plant in Altona in recent years, Toyota would cease operations in Australia by 2017. These workers received more promises from our Prime Minister at that time—promises that there would be assistance from the government in reskilling workers and finding them alternative jobs; promises that, in these turbulent times, their government would provide them with a path to a new career. Once again, these workers have seen these promises broken.

They have seen the government treat the review into the assistance program with the utmost disdain—even keeping the preliminary report sitting on the minister's desk for a month before any attention was drawn to it. They have seen another $400 million ripped from the ATS in the budget in May, bringing total cuts to $900 million. They have seen the introduction of a weak $100 million growth fund to address the closure of the Holden and Toyota plants, with only a $30 million investment into reskilling workers—an investment made entirely by Holden and Toyota, with not one cent contributed to by the government. It is
these workers, Prime Minister, who you need to answer to. You need to answer how you could treat these workers' futures with so little care. You need to answer how you could place in jeopardy not only these workers' livelihoods but also the livelihoods of thousands of component manufacturers throughout my electorate and the Australian automotive ecosystem. These component manufacturers are another casualty of the bill before us today.

The bill under consideration decreases government investment in the automotive industry by cutting $500 million from the ATS over the 2014-15 year period and it stops investment in the ATS on 1 January 2018—that is, two years earlier than planned and reducing the ATS by another $400 million. The ATS was an initiative designed to encourage investment in our automotive industry. It allowed for investment to car manufacturers for producing vehicles, undertaking research and development and investing in capital such as plant and related equipment. It recognised Australia's proud history of auto manufacturing and the wealth of highly skilled manufacturing talent we have on our shores. Australia is one of just 13 countries around the world that are able to make a car from start to finish—well, we are today—and that, when it comes to auto manufacturing, Australians get more bang for their buck.

Car industry support in Australia is $17.40 per capita, compared to $264 for every American and $334 for every Swede. Despite this, the ATS was not a free handout. Every company that received funding from the government had to invest an equal amount. So government was working with the businesses to expand our auto industry for the future. The auto industry was committed to this long-term future. It was the largest contributor to research and development in the Australian manufacturing sector, contributing $700 million per year. This research and development was paying dividends by creating a manufacturing industry in Australia that was world-class. Indeed, last month Ford Australia announced that they were doubling their design staff due to the wealth of research and development talent in Australia. CEO Bob Graziano stated:

Australia is a centre of excellence in the Asia Pacific region for Ford product development and design.

But the ATS was not just crucial for Holden, Ford and Toyota; it was also critical to the livelihoods of many manufacturers of component parts.

These component manufacturers are already looking at a difficult transition period away from the major car manufacturers and towards new clients and new industries. They planned their business models and hired their staff with the ATS in mind. Now, with these cruel cuts to the ATS, the component manufacturers have to immediately deal with increased international competition for the parts that they already manufacture and lose the support needed to enter new markets and transition away from the auto manufacturing industry. The sad result is that some businesses will survive, but many will not and will be forced to close. Up to 30,000 people in Australia in the component manufacturing sector, including many businesses in my electorate, could be hit by these changes.

The Federation of Automotive Products Manufacturers have been unequivocal about the impact of the Abbott government's changes to the ATS. They have stated that the cuts contained in the bill under consideration:

… will have serious implications for the continued operations of many firms within the automotive supply chain.
The managing director of Holden, too, has stated bluntly the effect of the ATS on the component supply chain. He indicated:

Suppliers have invested based on the ATS to break even. They needed this kind of subsidy and, at this particular time, they're in dire straits.

What is even more concerning is that, with the cuts to the ATS, these component manufacturers might not even be able to rely on work from Holden, Ford and Toyota until 2017. Holden and Toyota have indicated many times that they want to perform a soft exit from Australia and they want to give as much support as possible to the workers who they are leaving behind—workers who have given much of their loves to these companies. But their business plans are designed with the existing ATS in mind. With a decrease in government funding, Holden and Toyota may be forced to make a quicker exit than they had hoped or planned for.

The effect is more insecurity for our auto workers, who are faced with the possibility of walking through the doors of the Altona plant for the last time sooner than they expected. It is another blow for them from a Prime Minister who has stood by and done nothing while the auto workers of Australia have suffered; a Prime Minister who arrogantly announced to his caucus that he has 'started the roads', but failed to mention that he has abandoned the men who built the cars to drive them; a Prime Minister who stated blithely that these workers would feel 'liberated' by the loss of their jobs—'liberated' by a government decision to take them out of the Toyota Altona plant and into a Newport Centrelink 10 minutes away!

But the shattered remains of the government's promise to look after the auto industry—to provide for an auto industry that would not just survive but flourish under the Abbott government—does not just affect the workers in my electorate. The shock of this decision will reverberate across the country for many years to come.

According to modelling provided by the University of Adelaide, up to 200,000 Australians will be affected by the loss of the auto industry; 100,000 jobs will be affected in Victoria alone. We will see another 30,000 jobs affected in New South Wales and Queensland, as well as 24,000 jobs affected in South Australia. Overall, we will see a hit of $2.9 billion to the Australian economy by 2017, equivalent to two per cent of Australia's GDP. The welfare payments alone from the auto industry's sudden collapse are estimated to cost over $20 billion. Most horrifically, we will not see the recovery of employment levels until the end of the 2020s. That is an entire generation of workers who will not see the days of full employment until they are 15 years into their careers. For many of these workers, it means they will be cut out of a job in the manufacturing sector altogether. For those who have already been working in the manufacturing sector for some time, it means there is little chance they will find a similar job at any point in the foreseeable future.

The flow-on effects across our community with mass unemployment of this kind will be severe. Studies from similar situations in the US bear repeating here. Workers in these situations suffered a 15 to 20 per cent decrease in their earnings over the long term. The life expectancy of these workers declined by one to 1½ years.

But the Abbott government has done little to support the transition of these workers through training in skills. In fact, in the May budget this year—the budget most workers hoped would contain the government response to the loss of Holden and Toyota; a budget that would send a signal to these workers of their government's support—how much do you think
was included in skills retraining for auto workers? Zero. That is right: nothing. In fact, the Abbott government actually cut funding for skills training. Five point one million dollars was cut from vital skills and training programs for auto workers in the May budget. Instead, all the government has committed to is a measly $100 million 'growth fund' for these workers, with most of the money stumped up by Holden and Toyota, as well as the Victorian government. In fact, the miserable amount of Commonwealth money that is contained in the fund is geared towards unemployment services, which means these workers will have support as they fill out their 40 job applications in an increasingly desolate job market—particularly the youngest employees of Toyota and Holden. But it does not create the jobs that the workers will need. It does not train them for alternative work should no manufacturing jobs re-emerge.

It is the classic short-term approach of a government that is determined to cling to free-market extremism, even when faced with the evidence of the effect this deranged attachment is having on the lives of Australian workers. It is a government that not only ignores the workers it has promised to help but treats these workers with the utmost disrespect in doing so. It is a government that started off with a mealy-mouthed pledge to see the car industry flourish in Australia, but the result has been the largest car manufacturers being the ones developed in the pursuit of science alone.

Labor will never let the Abbott government off the hook for their behaviour towards the auto workers in Australia. I speak on behalf of the 2½ thousand workers in my electorate today when I say that this broken promise will never be forgotten in my electorate. I and my Labor colleagues will continue to fight for the rights of these workers. We will continue to fight the cuts to the ATS at every opportunity. We will call on the crossbenchers and minor parties to do the same—to answer the free-market extremism of the Abbott government with economic sense. We will continue to speak for the auto workers of Australia until we finally get through to this arrogant Prime Minister. The automotive workers of Melbourne's west did not vote for this bill, and they do not want it.

Ms HENDERSON (Corangamite) (13:03): I rise to make a contribution to this debate on the Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill 2014. Before the member for Gellibrand leaves the chamber—I notice he is scurrying out very quickly—he might care to back my petition for jobs, because we as a government are focused on delivering the jobs of the future. The East West Link project, to which we have contributed $3 billion, is a vital project for western Melbourne. The people of western Melbourne currently have a member of parliament who is not supporting a project that will deliver in excess of 6,000 construction jobs. In my electorate of Corangamite and for Geelong residents, this project will cut peak-hour commuter times between Geelong and Melbourne by three hours a week and deliver those vital jobs that we and our community need—that the people of western Melbourne need; that the people of Geelong and south-west Victoria and the people of Ballarat need. Members opposite are standing in the way of one of the most significant infrastructure projects in Victoria's history.

So today I ask everyone in the Geelong and Corangamite region to go onto my website and back the jobs of the future by signing this petition so that we can call on the House and all federal Labor MPs, including the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Gellibrand, the member for Corio and the member for Ballarat, to get the blinkers off, look at the jobs for the future and back the East West Link project. What Daniel Andrews has done in threatening to
tear up the contracts on this project is an absolute disgrace. Not only does it jeopardise $3 billion of federal funding from that project; it also jeopardises our great state as a place to do business. God help us if he manages to get across the line at the state election.

I return to the debate today on the Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill 2014, and I propose to do so in two ways: by setting out the rationale for the government's decision to close the Automotive Transformation Scheme on 1 January 2018 and by reflecting on our government's commitment to advanced manufacturing and to investing in the jobs of the future, particularly in my electorate of Corangamite and across the Greater Geelong region, which has in the manufacturing sector gone through some difficult times and continues to do so.

It is extraordinary—and I reflect on the member for Wakefield's contribution. He talked about the car industry being in the government's hands. I refer to a report in the Geelong Advertiser on 24 May 2013 with the headline 'Shattered'—because that is what happened in my electorate when Ford decided to close manufacturing, as did Mitsubishi. Of course, in typical Labor fashion, in January 2012 the then Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, came down and threw $34 million at Ford, announcing that there would be another 300 jobs. What did we get in return? Three hundred and thirty jobs were lost some eight months later. So what we saw with members of the reckless previous Labor government was the attitude that the more money you throw at something the better something will get. Unfortunately, it does not work that way.

We saw the beginning of the demise of the car industry under the previous government, very sadly. Whenever we talk about the end of Ford manufacturing in my region I talk about the 490 jobs that remain, including the 190 jobs that remain at the proving ground. There is some incredible work being done by many fine men and women who work for Ford in Geelong at their engineering and design plant and at the proving ground. We need to champion those jobs and the opportunities that those jobs deliver to our region for the future.

I do take particular issue with the member for Corio saying we will have a dumber nation as a result of the end of car manufacturing. I can assure him that we are focused on building a brighter, smarter nation, particularly smart manufacturing and the many opportunities that that presents the region I represent and our nation.

It is not enough to throw short-term dollars to get a political fix. We saw that with previous Prime Minister Gillard in January 2012 and we saw the most disgraceful example of that when $40 million was delivered to Alcoa. That was nothing more than a political fix. The Labor Party simply needed to get through the election. They were not prepared to face the hard decisions, particularly the hard decisions about some of their policies that had impacted so dreadfully on manufacturing in this country. The carbon tax was a $1.1 billion hit on manufacturing every year. It was one of the most toxic policies of the previous government that caused enormous damage in my electorate and throughout the Geelong region.

The decisions to cease manufacturing in Australia by 2016 by Ford and by 2017 by Holden and Toyota were made entirely by the vehicle producers themselves. I note the member for Wakefield was talking about the member for Hindmarsh slinking under his desk. I think the only one who should be slinking under his desk is the member for Wakefield. In a report in the Adelaide Advertiser on 8 August 2013 he was accused of misleading voters with his claim that he had 'secured guaranteed support for GM Holden Elizabeth, ensuring production until...
2022'. At a time when Holden was currently weighing up its future in Adelaide he sent an incredibly misleading letter to his voters braging and claiming that he had fixed the car industry in his region. Nothing was further from the truth. Unfortunately, again we have seen a fairly poor contribution from the member for Wakefield.

I have to add that the member for Gellibrand has demonstrated that he has really not researched his material very well at all. The point has been made in the House today that there has been incredible support for the car industry in this nation. The Productivity Commission has estimated that the automotive industry has received about $30 billion in government support between 1997 and 2012 in both tariff and budgetary assistance. Over that period there were some 5.1 million vehicles manufactured locally, equating to approximately $5,784 per vehicle of government support during this period. So, despite the most incredible amount of assistance, the industry has been unable to survive in a highly competitive market. When you reflect on Labor's record and the money that was thrown at the car industry and then reneged upon we can see that when an industry is struggling no amount of money will get them out of that struggle.

Let me reflect on Labor's record with the car industry. Back in 2008 it promised $6.2 billion in funding for the auto sector. Over 13 years it was called the New Car Plan for a Greener Future. By 2011 the cash for clunkers program was gone and the Green Car Innovation Fund was cut from $1.3 billion to only $439 million. The LPG vehicle scheme was cut by $96 million. Of course, we know that Labor slugged the car industry with $840 million in carbon taxes over a decade and $1.8 billion in FBT changes. Just before the last election, former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd joined the member for Corio and Darren Cheeseman, the former member for Corangamite, in Geelong and he promised $2 billion, despite the fact that Ford had shut up shop with its manufacturing and Holden was also on its knees. Here was the government recklessly throwing another $2 billion, irrespective of the fortunes of the industry.

Our government's focus is on what we can do for jobs. We recognise that we need to invest in the jobs of the future. We are doing that by investing in infrastructure. The East West Link project that I have referred to has $3 billion from the federal government. The western section will be an enormous boost for our economy. There is $2.9 billion of federal funding for the regional rail link. Yes, of course some was contributed by the previous government, but between 2013 and 2014 another $1.12 billion is in the budget and in this year's budget there is $331 million. So there is very strong investment by both our government and the previous Labor government in the regional rail link that will make an enormous difference to the people of Geelong.

Planning is underway to duplicate the Princes Highway between Winchelsea and Colac. There are a few issues with the stretch between Waurn Ponds and Winchelsea. It is running a bit behind time. Again this is very important investment in infrastructure and in jobs. There is also our $50 million upgrade of the Great Ocean Road, combined with $25 million from the state. That is another infrastructure project that Labor opposed.

Let us look at our investment in advanced manufacturing. I reflect on the member for Gellibrand's ill-informed comments about the growth fund. The Commonwealth is contributing $101 million of a $155 million growth fund. That is contributing—clearly the member for Gellibrand had not read his notes—$30 million for skills and training, a $20
million automotive diversification program, $60 million for a next-generation manufacturing investment fund and $30 million for a regional infrastructure fund. So there will be very significant investment in skills and training.

The Geelong Region Innovation and Investment Fund is also making very significant contributions to jobs in my region, and delivering, once again, hundreds of jobs. Locally, we have recently launched our $500,000 Geelong Employment Connections program and a terrific series of workshops called the Front Foot. As well, we have recently funded the Jobs for Geelong Jobs Fair, because we are also focused at the grassroots level on what we can do to help manufacturing workers transition into the jobs for the future.

And there are enormous opportunities through our $484 million Entrepreneurs’ Infrastructure program and $476 million—nearly half a billion dollars!—in our Industry Skills Fund. Our Work for the Dole program has been received very positively in the Geelong region, where there are some pressures on certain sectors of the employment market, because that is a program that will help develop skills as well as confidence. There is relocation assistance for jobseekers of up to $9,000 and a jobs commitment bonus of $6,500 for young people who remain in work for two years.

Then, for employees aged 50 and over who have been on income support there is a $10,000 restart bonus for businesses employing older employees. So, whether it is in infrastructure, our investment in advanced manufacturing or in our many programs which are working to help people get into work, our government is making a very strong investment in the jobs for the future.

I have enormous confidence that the Geelong region will become a premier hub for advanced manufacturing—for smart manufacturing. If you look at industries like the Carbon Nexus investment and a wonderful company called Carbon Revolution you see a company that is producing state-of-the-art carbon fibre wheels for the global market. They have identified an area where they can prosper in the auto component sector—where they are leading the world. That is where we need to focus.

As I mentioned, our growth fund, our Geelong Region Innovation and Investment Fund and our $50 million Manufacturing Transition program are all about ensuring that we grow the jobs of the future, because I know that across the Geelong region and in Corangamite there are many men and women who work in manufacturing, who are concerned about their futures.

I want to send a very strong message that, each and every day, as the member for Corangamite I am in there fighting for jobs—whether it is fighting for a half-million dollar fund to roll out a number of local programs to assist workers transition into new opportunities and identify new skills or being part of the Victorian Economic Review Panel. That was the panel chaired by Minister Macfarlane, where we identified the sectors that we need to invest in as a government to ensure that we can continue with the strong jobs growth that we have seen across this country. I commend this bill to the House.

Ms RYAN (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (13:18): I am delighted to follow the member for Corangamite in the second reading debate on the Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill 2014. Obviously, I rise to oppose the bill. I had the pleasure of listening to the member for Corangamite as she demonstrated political gymnastics at their best—on the
one hand celebrating the demise of the car industry, and on the other, showing her professionalism, claiming the regional rail link without even blushing. It was an extraordinary performance.

On this side of the House we are all for jobs. Sometimes that means providing extra assistance for jobs.

Ms Henderson interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Mitchell): The member for Corangamite has had her turn and will be quiet, please. I will not warn her again.

Ms RYAN: That is why, in 2009, Labor in government introduced this legislation. It saw the value in a scheme that encouraged investment and innovation in the Australian automotive industry—a scheme that did not provide handouts, but provided co-investment with car manufacturers to improve production and drive research and development. The industry only receives support when it invests.

The bill we are debating today seeks to cut existing funding. It seeks to cut $500 million between now and 2017, and then it seeks to end the scheme altogether. Although this seems incongruous to good sense, it is not surprising. This coalition government has form in this area. One of their first acts was to see off the Clean Energy Finance Corporation and Labor's Clean Technology Investment Program, condemning other industries, besides the car industry, to the dust bin.

This is in their DNA. This is a party that proudly wants to let the market rip—as if this is a blessing on the populace. It is Tea Party economics—survival-of-the-fittest economic policies. And Australian workers are left wondering where the trickle-down might fall. This government does not believe in direct assistance or in co-investment, or support for workers. It has no plan for jobs.

But do not be fooled. This government's actions do support the wealthiest in our nation while condemning industries that provide good jobs to the dust bin. You can follow the tracks of this government believes through their priorities.

Its failure to implement measures that would have ensured multinational companies pay their fair share of tax in this country is one indication. The government's fanatic derision of, and repeal of, the mining tax is another. No, this government and its legislative program gives us a clear idea of what is and what is not important to this government. Good jobs are not important. Manufacturing industry is not important. The renewables industry is not important. This bill clearly shows that the hardworking people of my electorate of Lalor are not important either.

I will share with the House some of the things that have been going on in Lalor around this area. In the Wyndham Star Weekly, on 11 June this year, Laura Michell wrote:

More than 4000 Wyndham residents will lose their jobs in the next three years as a result of Australia’s auto industry closures, a University of Adelaide study has found.

The article went on:

The study of the Australian Workplace Innovation and Social Research Centre and National Institute of Economic and Industry Research analyses direct and flow-on job losses resulting from the closure of Toyota, Holden and Ford plants. The study predicts 200,000 job losses nationwide, with about half of those in Victoria. It finds Wyndham residents will be among the states hardest hit with the municipality
likely to record the fifth highest number of job losses by employee residents. It is expected that 4,360 Wyndham residents in the auto industry will lose their jobs by 2017.

I would add: if the automotive industry survives that long. The article continues:

In a bid to reduce the impact of job losses on Wyndham, the council has joined other western suburbs councils, the state government and advocacy group, Lead West. They commissioned research on businesses that will be affected by the closures and will use the research to promote the creation of local jobs. The Wyndham council's economic development unit is meeting companies to discuss the issues they are dealing with and to identify training opportunities. The council's research found there could be flow-on losses from the auto industry closures, forcing Wyndham manufacturers to close their doors. Manufacturing accounts for 14.4 per cent of total employment in Wyndham, so any downturn in that sector will have an impact on the resident workforce.

They are not my words, but are taken from my local weekly newspaper.

It is never pleasant to pick up your local paper to see headlines that outline over 4,000 jobs will be going. This measure will have a dreadful impact across Australia, with estimates of around 200,000 job losses. The impact is broader than just the employment in the automotive industries. The impact will flow through to a variety of businesses, from the laundries that service the Toyota plant to the contractor technicians and cleaners and to the local cafe where the workers stop to get their morning coffee. The reduced money flowing through the community will impact on small business and retailers. The unemployed do not buy new white goods or furniture, they do not renovate or improve their homes and they do not eat out or take holidays. All this will impact our economy broadly.

I celebrate that our local government engaged so quickly with others to put a plan in place, to commission work that would outline the impact locally so that a response could be devised and implemented. What I am not happy about—and certainly not celebrating—is the lack of support for my area, for that local government, for the people of Lalor and for the whole of western Melbourne from the state and federal LNP governments. Yesterday's local paper, with its headline 'West left in the lurch: taskforce says region missed opportunity for support', had some interesting points to make. I quote:

Industry in the west has been overlooked for a $24.5 million fund designed to create new jobs, despite losing hundreds of manufacturing jobs in the past two years.

A local is quoted:

When Toyota exited, we thought it would only be fair if Melbourne's west had a similar job stimulating funding pool, but our worst fears have been realised as there is no appetite from this government for doing that.

There are no funds for my area despite the impact and no support for the west of Melbourne through the Innovation and Investment Fund.

The Abbott government seems to have taken great delight in running down our automotive industry. Some businesses in the industry will, however, survive despite this attitude. These ongoing companies employ thousands of workers, and we must find ways to continue to support them. This view is shared by many of my colleagues on this side of the House. People like my fellow western MPs, the members representing Western Sydney and those in the north of Adelaide share my view that supporting jobs in the local economy is vital.

Labor is committed to working with all industries to maintain and create jobs. We recognise the unemployment numbers are increasing, with youth unemployment at a 15-year
high. We recognise that Victoria will be the worst affected state. That is why we oppose this measure. Contrast this with Prime Minister Abbott, who in this place on 12 February said, ‘Governments do not create jobs.’ Indeed, this government has no intention of even trying—no jobs plan and no support. There are a list of budget measures that support this view: cuts to apprenticeship programs, cuts to training programs, cuts to schools and the cruel cut to those under 30 in accessing Newstart.

Given this, it is difficult to understand why those opposite are not more vocal in defending jobs. People like the member for La Trobe, the member for Aston and, indeed, the member for Casey must surely receive feedback from their local constituents like I do. The University of Adelaide’s study referred to in my local paper indicates that Wyndham will not be the worst affected area; indeed, the worst hit municipality will be Casey, where 6,734 residents will become unemployed. I would be very interested to hear what those members opposite say in the privacy of the caucus room or the Minister for Industry’s office about unemployment in their areas. It is telling that so few government speakers have risen to speak in favour of this bill. Does that give some insight into their views?

Currently four of Australia’s top 10 selling cars are manufactured locally. Australia is only one of 13 countries in the world that can manufacture a car from start to finish. All of those 13 countries provide industry support for automotive manufacturing. Contrary to the assertions of the member for Corangamite, it has not been ‘money down the drain’ to support a major manufacturing industry. The current support per capita in Australia to the automotive industry is $17.40. This compares with $90 per capita in Germany, $264 in Sweden and $334 for every Swede. So currently we have a modest $17.40 payment that had the potential to support 200,000 jobs—a small price to pay, especially when you factor in unemployment, retraining and job support costs that the government will potentially need to provide. Studies have also shown that the cost of welfare payments and the lost tax revenue will have a $20 billion impact on the government’s budget. It is estimated that the economy will take at least 10 years to recover from the underlying hit to the GDP.

It is not just Labor that rejects this measure; industry experts also view this move as short-sighted. What Australian workers need at the moment is a plan—a plan to secure their future. In my area, the best the coalition can point to is the controversial East-West project. Somehow they believe this piece of very expensive road infrastructure will support workers in the west of Melbourne.

The support we need locally is deeper than that. We need projects that are long-term and ongoing—projects like the Bay West project—that can bring jobs during construction and then ongoing support jobs, and jobs in transport and logistics, for many years to come.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): Order! The debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 43. The debate may be resumed at a later hour and the member will have leave to continue her remarks then.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Hines, Private John 'Barney'

Mr HUSIC (Chifley) (13:30): On Thursday, 19 September, the Governor of New South Wales, Her Excellency Marie Bashir, delivered a special address dedicated to someone who was at risk of being forgotten, World War I digger Private John 'Barney' Hines. It was an
honour to be present at the dedication held at Sydney's Rookwood Cemetery because Private Hines's colourful story had a strong connection to our local suburb, Mount Druitt.

Barney Hines was famous among his mates in the 45th Infantry Battalion for his quirks, larrikinism and constant mischief. He picked up a few nicknames during his travels, including 'wild eyes' and the 'souvenir king', derived from his penchant for collecting memorabilia from German soldiers captured in battle on the Western Front. Barney was immortalised in a Frank Hurley photo, sitting atop a pile of wartime loot gathered on the battlefield. This photo is considered one of the most famous pictures to come back from the Great War.

Besides nicknames, Barney developed a reputation of bravery and risking his life to save the lives of those wounded and stranded on the battlefield. Western Sydney became his home, and he saw out his days in an almost hermit existence in a calico humpy on the outskirts of Mount Druitt. His days ended as a pauper in 1958, at the age of 80, and he was laid to rest in an unmarked grave at Rookwood Cemetery.

Fortunately, his fellow servicemen wanted to right this wrong and they ensured that Private Hines's new resting place was properly dedicated. As much as Barney is now remembered in Rookwood, it is also important that here at parliament today we remember his sacrifices. Rest in peace, Barney.

2014 Telstra Australian Business Awards
2014 Australian Institute of Management Excellence Awards

Mrs GRIGGS (Solomon) (13:31): The Northern Territory, and indeed my electorate of Solomon, punches above its weight when it comes to business innovation and achievement. It is on that theme that I rise today to acknowledge the efforts of Territorians in two business awards handed down in recent weeks.

In August, Country Wellness Pharmacy, which runs the Save Mart Pharmacy in Winnellie, won the Start-up award at the 2014 Telstra Australian Business Awards. This is a national award and it is a sizeable achievement for a Territory business to take on and beat its rivals in the bigger cities. It was established by Managing Director Boon Wai Lim, and Country Wellness is at the front line of telehealth in the Territory.

Last week another two impressive Top End businesswomen were recognised for their management skills. O'Donoghues First National General Manager, Lisa Hewlett, and Darwin Symphony Orchestra chair—and very good friend of mine—Marie-Louise Pearson were named Northern Territory Manager of the Year and Not-for-Profit Manager of the Year at the 2014 Australian Institute of Management Excellence Awards. Lisa and Marie-Louise will now compete with other winners from around Australia, at the national finals, on 7 November. I wish them all the very best and hope that the Northern Territory stars shine again, as we do so often on the national stage.

Batman Electorate: Yappera Children's Centre

Mr FEENEY (Batman) (13:33): Recently I had the privilege to visit the Yappera Children's Service in my home electorate of Batman. Like so many child-care centres across the country, Yappera provides a safe and supportive environment for children at a critical time of their development. Where Yappera differs from most centres is in the range of multifunctional child-care services provided, including a variety of maternal health and
specialist care programs to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from across Victoria.

Many of the children who attend Yappera are at risk. In some cases, Yappera provides the only stability in an often fragile young life. A stable and supportive environment provided for their young minds to explore and grow, gain confidence and pride in their culture is essential if we as a nation truly wish to close the gap in Indigenous disadvantage. That is why the Abbott government's decision to cut $230 million in assistance from the child-care benefit by freezing income thresholds, affecting more than 500,000 families, is significantly impacting on the Indigenous community and is an anathema to the Prime Minister's stated claim of being the Prime Minister for Indigenous Australia.

While Tony Abbott looks after high-income earners, with his unfair Paid Parental Leave scheme, he has clearly forgotten about the families and children who rely on the CCB and BBF to access the benefits of early-childhood education.

Robertson Electorate: Umina Beach

Mrs WICKS (Robertson) (13:34): This year marks the centenary of Umina Beach, a suburb of the beautiful Peninsula on the Central Coast.

Umina Beach is one of the most picturesque locations on the coast and is a veritable hub of activity, with a wonderful mix of residents who have known and loved the area for decades and of young people who thrive on the lifestyle and community the Peninsula offers. Umina Beach’s 100th birthday will be officially celebrated on 12 October, when the Peninsula Chamber of Commerce and Gosford City Council host an official opening of an historic exhibition, street activities and food stalls, from 9 am to 2 pm, along West Street.

Historian and former Umina Beach resident Julie Aitchison has spent more than a year researching and collating the history of this area. It was a privilege to meet with her earlier in the year and I am pleased to hear that her work will be on display in the Ocean Beach Hotel function room for this celebration.

This government knows how important it is to recognise events like this but also to invest in the local area to build a stronger local economy, with more jobs. That is why our growth plan for the coast includes $200,000 for CCTV cameras at Umina, Ettalong Beach and Woy Woy, $3.5 million towards the Woy Woy oval redevelopment on the Peninsula and other commitments to deliver local jobs and support businesses. Happy 100th birthday, Umina Beach, and thank you to all its local residents who are so important to our Central Coast community.

Wyatt, Mr Cedric

Ms MacTIERNAN (Perth) (13:36): Last Friday Western Australia lost one of its great Aboriginal leaders, Cedric Wyatt. I met Cedric over 30 years ago when he was a senior official with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and I was working in Aboriginal employment and training. He was a grand personality, intelligent, very funny and very committed to advancing the Aboriginal community but one who would never sugar coat the problems.

Cedric was taken from his mother as a baby and brought up in institutions. Although the loss of his family and heritage caused him extraordinary pain, he was very positive about his
life generally. He was well educated, served in the Air Force and sought adventure early in his career, in PNG as a teacher, where he met his wonderful wife, Janine. Cedric was politically eclectic, having stood for both the Labor Party and the Liberal Party. But he was very clear about his commitment to the Aboriginal community, having spent decades working in this area. He did not sit at a desk in Perth; he took on some of the most challenging gigs, working in remote communities in places like Laverton and Jigalong. To Cedric's family, particularly my very good friend, Ben, WA shadow Treasurer, be so very proud of this great man, and our full condolences to you.

**Ryan Electorate: University of Queensland Advanced Engineering Building**

**Mrs PRENTICE** (Ryan) (13:37): And our condolences to his relative, the member for Hasluck.

I was delighted to be asked to represent the Minister for Education recently to open the University of Queensland's Advanced Engineering Building. The innovative research to be undertaken there will boost three of Australia's most important industries—mining, construction and manufacturing. Supporting ground-breaking education in engineering will ensure that Australia remains globally competitive for generations to come.

This state-of-the-art building will enable teaching and research that is crucial for Australia's future. I believe the Advanced Engineering Building has the potential to rapidly improve productivity in industries that are not only important to Queensland but also to our nation. It is an example of outstanding, innovative and sustainable engineering. The university should be proud of the 5 star green rating achieved through the building design. It is no surprise the building has won several Australian Institute of Architects' Queensland Awards. Congratulations to everyone involved.

As the member for Ryan I am incredibly proud that the University of Queensland is one of the leading universities in the world. I have no doubt that the teaching and research delivered by the Advanced Engineering Building will produce many outstanding graduates in the years to come and I look forward to hearing about their many successes.

**Social Cohesion**

**Ms ROWLAND** (Greenway) (13:38): The great strength of Australia has been and remains the positive contribution made by each of the groups which comprise it. Whilst our personal narratives may be unique, our destiny is shared. We are all bound by the hope of a prosperous future and a set of ideals that speak to our egalitarian spirit—a belief that we must live free from fear in order to actively contribute to our nation. These values not only bind us but also guide us and inspire us. When we respect and learn from one another we are more secure. When we welcome a new Australian and encourage their desire to embrace our national values and add their culture to our wonderful country we are all renewed.

Today, we as a nation are faced with a moment of anxiety and friction and it is imperative that we should remind ourselves of these intrinsic values. A sense of inclusion must rally against all forms of bigotry, and it must be done vocally and unequivocally. Indeed, we must combat narrow-mindedness with words of education and reason. For bigoted attitudes and behaviour to change, we must be prepared to stand up and speak out. This takes leadership and it should come from every member of this place.
This has been exhibited recently where Muslims worldwide, including here in Australia, have utilised social media to denounce the violent actions of extremists in their own words through the 'Not in My Name' campaign. This campaign reminds us all that the tenets of Islam are not based upon prejudice, intolerance or violence, but on peace, compassion and understanding. We, as a community, must actively promote this message and remember that we are all stronger united than divided. (Time expired)

**Bass Electorate: Local Sporting Champions Program**

**Mr NIKOLIC (Bass) (13:40):** I recently had the pleasure of meeting 15 promising young Northern Tasmanian sportsmen and women—and their parents—who were the latest recipients of $500 grants under the government's Local Sporting Champions program. These athletes are aged between 14 and 19 and represented in 10 different sports. The parents and families of promising athletes often make great sacrifices to support their children compete at higher levels and it is always great to hear how these grants help them on their way. The government's Local Sporting Champions program is playing a part in helping these bright young sporting prospects achieve their goals, and I would like to put their names on the record: Charlea Malkin and Emily Heazlewood, who are soccer players; Juanita Cowling, a gymnast; Oscar Davie and Lauren Perry, who are cyclists. It is noteworthy that Lauren won a gold medal at the recent Junior World Track Cycling Championships in South Korea in the teams pursuit and a bronze medal in the individual pursuit. For the second year in a row, Lauren has the honour of wearing the rainbow jersey, the hallmark of a world champion. I acknowledge also Liam O'Brien and Trent Walsh, pistol shooters; Bailey Gillow, Oliver Sanders and Jonty Krushka, who are Australian Rules players; Ashley Nankervis, who is involved in orienteering; Leah Renton, Mackenzie French, Melanie French and Sophie Taylor, who are swimmers; Alissa Pearson and Miranda Grant, hockey players; Jordan Talbot and Jade Longstaff in athletics; and Tyler Blizzard, a boxing champion. I congratulate these young, talented sporting champions from Northern Tasmania.

**Ebola**

**Ms PARKE (Fremantle) (13:42):** As it fights desperately against the outbreak of Ebola in West Africa, Medecins Sans Frontieres, MSF, have said clearly to Australia and other countries that they do not want our money. But they urgently need our assistance, our cooperation, and the application of our health resources and capabilities. Until recently MSF and other NGOs and the WHO have been practically waging this battle alone. The Ebola outbreak, which has been declared a 'threat to international peace and security' by the UN Security Council, needs an appropriate and coordinated international response, a response that has so far been too slow—a response described by MSF as 'lethally inadequate'.

Currently many of those infected are returning to their communities because health centres do not have sufficient capacity. This means that, without additional resources, 1.4 million people could be infected by early next year. In addition, the health infrastructure of the affected countries has broken down, so that medical issues other than Ebola, such as malaria and tuberculosis are now either not being treated or such patients are being exposed to the additional risk of contracting Ebola.

Countries around the world are beginning to acknowledge their responsibility to combat this global threat, with the US, UK, China and Cuba having recently offered physical support. Australia, too, needs to take this responsibility seriously and make a commitment that is
greater and more useful than the $8 million that has been committed to date. This is a global threat that needs a global response. I urge the government to commit to logistical support, personnel and equipment to the region, and to develop a plan to evacuate and treat Australian health workers who are courageously assisting with this crisis. *(Time expired)*

**Phillips, Mr Matthew**

Mr WHITELEY (Braddon) (13:43): I am back with even more great news about the electorate of Braddon. There is something pretty special about this electorate of Braddon, but I don't need to tell you, Deputy Speaker Scott. I stand time and time again spruiking this electorate for all of its talents, but I must tell you we have another world champion in our midst. Wynyard's Matthew Phillips created history in France a few weeks ago, becoming the E3 Class World Enduro Champion just a year after winning at the junior world title. At just 21 years of age, the Waratah-Wynyard Young Australian of the Year, became the first rider to win consecutive junior and senior world championships.

Enduro racing appears to be a family tradition, with both his father and grandfather competing. Even with a busted foot and surgery needed only weeks before the finals, he came through and became the world champion.

With some of the best enduro trails in the world, a win like Matthew's will bring much welcome international attention to the north-west coast. The sport is massive in Europe and, with Matthew's fan base increasing day by day, the spotlight is certainly on our island home.

Matthew is an exciting example of what our young people can do when they dream big and work hard to reach that dream. After celebrating with his girlfriend, family and friends in France, Matthew is now back home in the beautiful city of Wynyard. On behalf of the electorate of Braddon I would like to say, Matthew, you have made our region very proud.

**Brien Holden Vision Institute**

Mr THISTLETHWAITE (Kingsford Smith) (13:45): I congratulate the board, staff and supporters of the Brien Holden Vision Institute, which is situated in the University of New South Wales and recently hosted me on a visit. The staff of this wonderful organisation have a simple mission: vision care solutions for everyone, everywhere. The dedicated staff and volunteers of the institute work on research, development, commercialisation, delivery, education and solutions for vision-impaired people throughout Australia, including in remote Indigenous communities, and in developing nations, most notably in the Asia-Pacific and Africa.

A staggering 625 million people throughout the world are blind or vision-impaired simply because they do not have access to eye examinations or glasses. This leads to poverty. The Brien Holden Vision Institute seeks to alleviate that by providing access to eye examinations, glasses and contact lenses and surgery for those who do not have such access. They work cooperatively, particularly through the Cooperative Research Centres, and have highlighted the value of the CRCs with their high-oxygen permeable contact lens project which globally co-developed sales of $25 billion, in-kind research revenues to Australia of $1 billion, and royalties to the CRC of $250 million. What a crying shame the Abbott government has cut $80 million from the CRC's budget.

I am proud to have the Brien Holden Vision Institute in my electorate and I congratulate and thank the wonderful staff of this great organisation.
Hasluck Electorate: Coffee with Ken

Mr WYATT (Hasluck) (13:46): I rise today to speak about my upcoming round of Coffee with Ken meetings for Hasluck residents at local coffee shops throughout the region from Monday 13 October to Thursday 16 October. I buy them a cuppa and discuss the issues that affect their lives.

Mr Husie: Where's my invitation?

Mr WYATT: Coffee with Ken provides an opportunity for members of the Hasluck community to sit in a familiar environment and chat with me about personal, local and national concerns. I have found many residents are more comfortable discussing important matters in a face-to-face conversation. I believe it is of the utmost importance to know the people I represent and understand the challenges they face every day.

Since the first Coffee with Ken in 2011, I have met hundreds of members of the Hasluck community who have inspired, encouraged and challenged me. I have also been able to connect with the owners and staff of the coffee shops who keep me up to date with the many and varied issues facing small business. Thanks to all the coffee shops for their generous hospitality.

Residents across Hasluck can call my office to find out where their nearest Coffee with Ken is and come down to join me for a coffee. It is my shout and my time, and it is a way I can connect with people that is enjoyable. I am quite happy for the members opposite to join me one day in my electorate for a coffee.

Clark, Mr Darian

Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (13:48): I will take the member for Hasluck up on that offer. For the last 11 weeks, I have been lucky enough to host Darian Clark in my office as part of the Australian National Internship Program. Darian is studying a Masters of Globalisation at the ANU and throughout his placement has been writing a paper assessing the potential for a workable international agreement to regulate the use of cyberweapons.

Examining the possibility of a multilateral cybersecurity framework has been a longstanding interest of mine, so I was delighted to find in Darian a bright and eager intern, fully capable of this task. But it is not just been cybersecurity that has been occupying Darian's time in my office. He has also: cooked a barbecue at a Save Medicare rally at Old Parliament House; set up and helped run a community forum at the Tuggeranong 55 Plus Club; mastered the art of turning on the camera; experienced the joys of large-scale electorate mail-outs; and learnt a thing or two about constituent liaison along the way.

Today is Darian's last day, so I wanted to take this opportunity to thank him for his excellent work. It has been an absolute pleasure having you, Darian, as part of our team, and I wish you all the best for your bright future and look forward to keeping in touch. To my fellow members, I strongly urge you to consider hosting an Australian National Internship Program intern. It has been a really worthwhile program for us and I am looking forward to hosting more interns in the future.

Hughes Electorate: Craig Kelly Bowls Open Day

Mr CRAIG KELLY (Hughes) (13:49): On 26 October I will be once again holding the Craig Kelly bowls open day, along with my friends, at Picnic Point Bowling and Social Club.
The open day will jam-packed full of family fun and everyone is invited, including you, Mr Deputy Speaker Scott. The Craig Kelly open day will take place at the Picnic Point bowling club, 124 Lambeth Street, Panania. We will kick off at 10 o’clock and go until late.

On the day we will have barefoot bowling, live music, market stalls, a display of historic police vehicles, a jumping castle for kids, face-painting and balloon twisting. The barbecue will be fired up all day. I will also be participating in an exhibition match in which I will take on, head-to-head, a legend of the game: Australian hall-of-famer, former world No. 1 and current Australian coach, Steve Glasson OAM. Although I may be very long odds, you never know which way the bowl may turn.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the president, Ian Geldard, and the rest of his team at the bowling club for their hard work in running this local treasure of our community, as well as for their help in once again putting on this open day. While I am at it, I would also like to thank Steve Glasson for lending his support to this event. I hope he won’t be too disappointed if I actually give him a hiding.

I invite all local residents to come down and have a roll. There will be something for everyone. It promises to be a great family day out and I look forward to seeing members of my local community there.

**Indi Electorate: Head in the Hole Festival**

**Ms McGOWAN** (Indi) (13:50): Last Sunday, a beautiful, sunny spring day in my gorgeous electorate of Indi, the township of Barnawartha—population 518; just south of Wodonga on the Hume Highway—hosted the inaugural Head in the Hole artistic and community fun day.

‘Head in the Hole?’ I hear you ask. I am sure you have seen these—human-sized cut-outs with a hole where the head goes. Sunday was a great day for all the family. There was a diverse range of fun activities: the Flying Fruit Fly Circus buskers, wood-chopping, market stalls, live music and dancing, golf, raffles and the wonderful spinning wheel. There was a library stall, face-painting, delicious food and cool drinks.

The day was an inspired success. I would like to acknowledge in this parliament the organisers—Anne, Fiona, Katrina, Wendy, Greg and Jordan, the President of the Barnawartha Progress Association. Thank you for a wonderful day and your warm welcome. It was good to see so many young people involved; thanks to Annette Walton from the Indigo Shire and FReeZA, and to Spud for managing the sound system and music.

I announce with great pleasure to this House that the winners of the inaugural Barnawartha Head in the Hole competition were—drum roll!—John Skillington, the Barnawartha Playgroup and the Chiltern cricket club. Barnawartha, or Barny as we locals know you, you have done yourselves proud.

**Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Program**

**Ms O’DWYER** (Higgins) (13:52): For many Australians, a childhood growing up kicking the footy, swimming in the local creek and running free with your mates presents an idyllic image. Two weeks ago, I witnessed a community of beautiful young Australians enjoying such a childhood, and I was impressed with their potential. As part of the Australian Defence Force Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Program, which aims to improve primary and environmental health and living conditions in remote Indigenous communities, I travelled to
Canteen Creek and Wutunugurra in the Northern Territory to help with their community building and health projects. I was impressed with the two-way opportunity presented by the Army's program to upskill local communities and also provide practical opportunities for our Defence Force personnel and Army Reserve volunteers to prepare for humanitarian missions overseas.

I both recognise and congratulate the Defence Force and the reservists for the valuable humanitarian projects that they undertake right here on our home soil. My experience at Canteen Creek and Wutunugurra brought home to me the economic barriers of isolation in very remote communities and the obvious limited opportunities for the community's children as they transition from childhood innocence to young adults wanting to participate in the economic prosperity of our great nation. It troubles me to think about the hurdles before these young people. I also worry about role models, where the majority of people in communities such as these receive welfare for their entire adult lives because there are limited incentives, or disincentives, to choose another path. I congratulate the Prime Minister for his leadership on this issue and for his view that we must look to new solutions, because more of the same will not give young people the opportunities that they deserve.

Newcastle Electorate: Stockton Bowling Club

Ms CLAYDON (Newcastle) (13:54): I rise today to congratulate the Stockton Bowling Club in my electorate of Newcastle which is celebrating its centenary this year. The club began shortly after the declaration of World War I when a few local residents decided they were tired of having to travel to play bowls elsewhere and wanted their own club by the sea. Today, at a time when so many clubs are finding it harder and harder to stay afloat, the Stockton continues to prosper. Earlier this year, the 'little club that roars' went up against some of the biggest names in the industry and took out the top award at the Australian Club Entertainment Awards for venue excellence and commitment to entertainment. The award is true testament to the outstanding efforts and community contribution of our club CEO and local legend, Gordon Laffan, and the club's president and board of directors.

Stockton Bowling Club works hard to support the local Stockton community. It lends out its bowling greens to local community groups and schools, features live music acts two to three times a week, hosts countless local groups and club events in the clubhouse free of charge, and sponsors a number of local sporting teams.

In August, I had the honour of bowling the first bowl to kick off the club's centenary celebrations. This week-long series of events highlighted the success of the club's 100 years of continual operations and all things that are good about local sporting clubs and the contributions they make to our communities. Thank you, Gordon, the board of directors, employees and club members for your ongoing commitment to the Stockton community. May the next 100 years be even better.

Berowra Electorate: Pacific Hills Christian School

Mr RUDDOCK (Berowra—Chief Government Whip) (13:55): During the last fortnight break, I had the opportunity of attending one of my schools, the Pacific Hills Christian School, to attend its initiative of Thank You Week. I am sure other members have been approached by their schools who appreciate the work that they do and undertake and have had students wanting simply to say, 'Thank you.' This is a week that involves schools extending
invitations to their members, local emergency service personnel and other local heroes to the school to thank them for their contribution to the community.

It may surprise colleagues to know that I was well received by the year 6 students. They are about to go to high school. They took the opportunity to speak about the positive role that they have to play in Australia in the future. I was particularly impressed by their questions, and they were well versed in much of the adversarial nature of our parliamentary system, and its political history. I think this is a great initiative from the school and others, and I commend the organisers. I thank the class for the opportunity to speak to them and for their hospitality. I encourage all members, when their schools invite them, to take up that opportunity.

**Carbon Pricing**

Ms BURKE (Chisholm) (13:57): I was outraged to receive a political campaign text on 1 September from my electricity provider, AGL, claiming that customers just like me would receive an average 8.9 per cent reduction in their bill with the abolition of the carbon price. This message is, of course, at the insistence of and comes from the government, and from a company determined to end meaningful action on climate change. Firstly, I buy 100 per cent renewable energy, as do many other customers. So this will have no impact on me, and I should not have got the message.

Secondly, consider what we are losing to save 8.9 per cent on some electricity bills. The carbon price saw a reduction of about 8.5 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per annum. Without a price on carbon, we will miss out on further much-needed reductions and, indeed, will go backwards. Now, those 8.5 million tonnes of pollutants will stay in the air, just to save 8.9 per cent on some bills—and that is not counting any potential emissions increases, nor the fact that Australian households were more than fully compensated for their increased energy costs. An ANU study proved that the carbon tax successfully decreased carbon emissions by 17 million tonnes over the course of its two years in operation. The price on carbon pushed Australian carbon emissions to their lowest level in 24 years. Now, though, we have no meaningful action on climate change. When those opposite go to sleep tonight, I want them to ask themselves: 'What did this cost for our children and our future?'

**Durack Electorate: Karratha**

Ms PRICE (Durack) (13:58): Recently, I addressed the Karratha business community at a breakfast hosted by the new City of Karratha. These Pilbara folks certainly understand the need for a long-term view in their planning. They are visionary. The Shire of Roebourne has experience strong growth and exceeded the minimum population of 20,000 to transition to city status. Now it seeks to raise its profile and attract more private investment, leading to jobs and diverse opportunities for its residents. Congratulations to the mayor of the new city of Karratha, Councillor Peter Long, and Chief Executive Officer Chris Adams.

Half-an-hour's drive north, and I was in the town of Roebourne to meet with the Ngarluma Yindjibarndi Foundation CEO, Evan Maloney. The NYFL trust, as it is called, was established in 2000 and is developing business activities that provide revenue streams over and above the initial funding from the north-west shelf partners. This Indigenous foundation has more than 2,000 members engaged in training, apprenticeships, employment and managerial roles. Primarily, NYFL commercialised enterprises include the general store, tyre store, housing and construction, nursery and a cafe. NYFL has recently opened stage 1 of its...
new development, which is the amphitheatre which will provide for commercial uses such as conferences and events. It has been a challenge for the people of Roebourne to access economic opportunities and build skills. However, NYFL has guided a partnership approach with companies such as ESS, Bright and NRW. It is a success story in the Pilbara.

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Middle East

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Prime Minister) (14:00): on indulgence—I would like to update the House on our forces in the Middle East.

As a peaceful democracy, Australia is reluctant to reach out to conflicts thousands of miles away. But, as this House knows, these conflicts can reach out to us. As this House has heard, at least 60 Australians are now fighting with terrorist groups in the Middle East and at least 100 Australians are supporting them with money and recruitment. The beheadings, crucifixions, mass executions, ethnic cleansing and sexual slavery that we have seen in northern Iraq and Syria are only the beginning if the ISIL movement has its way. This apocalyptic death cult has declared war on the world and it must be resisted at home and abroad.

Two-and-a-half weeks ago the government pre-deployed a force to the Middle East, with up to eight Super Hornet strike fighters, a Wedgetail early warning and control aircraft, a KC-30 refueler and a special forces contingent. We have not yet made a final decision to commit our forces to combat, but from today Australian aircraft will start flying over Iraq in support of allied operations. I stress that ours are support operations, not strike missions. Australian airstrikes await final clearances from the Iraqi government and a further decision by our own. But from today our refueler and our Wedgetail will operate over Iraq in support of United States and other coalition aircraft.

Because ISIL has global ambitions, our international security and our national security are indivisible. At all times, though, the government will respond in a prudent and proportionate way. The countries that are already conducting combat operations to disrupt and degrade ISIL include the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands have publicly declared their intention to join combat operations.

Australia cannot change the world, but we can make a difference. Our objective is to support governments that neither commit genocide against their own people nor permit terrorism against ours. Our objective is to allow people to live their own lives in their own way and to worship in whatever way they choose. I salute our armed forces in the Middle East, who fight for the universal decencies of mankind.

In these difficult times, the cooperation—even friendship—now growing between former rivals and the growing realisation, even in the Middle East, that there is no such thing as good terrorism, should be of some comfort. As always, the Australian government will do whatever is possible to keep our people safe.
Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:03): on indulgence—I thank the Prime Minister for updating the parliament.

Once again, I will take this opportunity to place on the record Labor's admiration for the bravery, professionalism and skill of the men and women of our Defence Force and the resilience of their families. Our defence forces have our complete support as they prepare for this humanitarian mission and we promise to look after their families, that they leave behind here in Australia.

As my colleagues and I have said consistently: Labor's support for Australia's involvement in Iraq is underpinned by four principles. Firstly, we do not support the deployment of ground combat units to engage directly in fighting ISIL. Secondly, Australian operations should be confined to Iraq. Thirdly, our involvement should continue only until the Iraqi government is in a position to take full responsibility for the security of their people and their nation. And fourthly, if the Iraqi government and its forces engage in unacceptable conduct or adopt unacceptable policies, we should withdraw our support.

These four principles represent the conditions we have set for our support. I do note and welcome the Prime Minister's comments regarding the negotiations underway on the legal and diplomatic framework to support our operations in Iraq. Labor has taken a strong interest in ensuring that Australia meets its international legal and diplomatic obligations and in guaranteeing that the appropriate force protection measures are in place for Australians serving in the region. This is part of Australia's responsibilities as a good international citizen, as well as providing important legal protections for our defence personnel. These decisions are too important to be rushed and we support the government taking the time to get them right.

In the days ahead our thoughts are with the men and women of the ADF. We wish them a safe and successful mission and a speedy return to the ones they love.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Ebola

Ms PLIBERSEK (Sydney—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:05): My question is to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Australia co-sponsored a unanimous UN Security Council resolution, calling on all nations to, 'Facilitate the delivery of assistance, including qualified specialised and trained personnel and supplies in response to the Ebola outbreak.' When will the government act to support skilled and experienced Australians who are willing and able to help fight the Ebola outbreak in Africa?

Ms JULIE BISHOP (Curtin—Minister for Foreign Affairs) (14:06): I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for her question. Australia has already taken action by providing $8 million in addition to the $40 million that we have provided this year to the World Health Organisation for its global work. As I have said publicly, the best contribution that Australia can make at this time is to provide financial resources to frontline services and organisations, which we have done.

What I need to point out to some opposite is that we have taken very specific advice. Military and health experts have advised us that evacuating a patient with Ebola is complex. If Australia had the appropriate aircraft to evacuate an Ebola patient, which we do not, the flying time of 30 hours from west Africa—
Mr Thistlethwaite: You could evacuate to London.

Ms JULIE BISHOP: would you please let me finish—to Australia is dangerous. The ideal time is under 10 hours, so a flight time of 30 hours to evacuate back to Australia is logistically and clinically unsafe.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: There will be silence so we can hear the answer.

Mr Pyne: Exactly.

The SPEAKER: There will be silence on my right as well.

Ms JULIE BISHOP: Therefore, we are working with partner governments and organisations to see if we could use their aeroplanes to evacuate Australian health workers to somewhere geographically closer than Australia. There are very few aircraft in the world that are capable of providing the support for a patient with Ebola. Those very few aircraft are currently being used by the United States and countries in Europe. We have asked, and we are working with these countries to see if Australian health workers could be evacuated to their countries on their aeroplanes, and those negotiations are underway.

But along with the rest of the international community, can I point out what would be required to medivac back to Australia? First there has to be a clinical assessment—

An opposition member interjecting—

Ms JULIE BISHOP: or to anywhere, shadow minister!

Ms King interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Ballarat will desist.

Ms JULIE BISHOP: There has to be a clinical assessment arranged to confirm that the patient is able to be evacuated, and that is not the case in every instance.

Mr Dutton: Stop playing politics with this issue!

Government members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The members on my right will desist.

Ms JULIE BISHOP: It also includes: arranging ground transport of the patient from their location to an airport; securing the use of an appropriate aircraft, noting that there are very few available with the capacity to transport a patient with active Ebola; negotiating access to a treatment facility in a country closer to west Africa than Australia because flying time must be kept to a minimum; obtaining overflight and technical stop clearances from other countries along every step of the air route. This is why the Prime Minister has set up an interdepartmental committee comprising representatives from the Department of Health, the Department of Defence and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade—because every one of these steps would have to be achieved, otherwise there is no evacuation. The Australian government will not put at risk Australian health workers without a credible evacuation plan.

Iraq and Syria

Mr IRONS (Swan) (14:09): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Will the minister update the House on the contributions other countries are making to combat ISIL and other terrorist organisations in Iraq and Syria?
Ms JULIE BISHOP (Curtin—Minister for Foreign Affairs) (14:10): I thank the member for Swan for this very important question. The actions of ISIL, or Daesh as it is also known, are unprecedented in their brutality. It is killing civilians indiscriminately, it is committing atrocities—executions, beheadings, rape, torture—and its unspeakable violence has highlighted the urgent need for a concerted international response. And under the strong leadership of the United States, more than 60 nations have made a contribution to or expressed strong support for international efforts to combat ISIL and other terrorist organisations in Iraq and Syria.

As the Prime Minister has confirmed, Australia has committed to supporting the Iraqi government to defend its own country. And as the Prime Minister of the UAE said yesterday: Not a single politician in North America, Europe, Africa or Asia can afford to ignore events in the Middle East. A globalised threat requires a globalised response.

The international coalition has conducted almost 300 airstrikes since operations commenced in Iraq in August and in Syria last week. These airstrikes are denying ISIL a safe haven and are degrading its ability to operate with impunity across the region.

And nations are making key contributions. The Arab nations, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Jordan, Qatar, Bahrain: all participated in the recent airstrikes in Syria. France has taken on a leadership role in conducting airstrikes. The United Kingdom parliament voted overwhelmingly in favour of undertaking airstrikes in Iraq. Denmark and Belgium announced they would deploy fighter jets to the region. These military actions have been supplemented by the provision of military equipment and training for the Iraqi security forces. In addition to Australia, Germany has provided weapons and has also deployed 40 paratroopers to Iraq to provide training to the Kurdish forces. Canada has delivered military supplies to Iraq and has deployed its armed forces personnel for the provision of military training. Albania, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Italy and the Netherlands have all contributed further military equipment, recognising the importance of a strong international coalition to address this threat posed by ISIL and other similar organisations.

So the international community is working cooperatively to starve ISIL of funding and weapons and prevent the flow of foreign fighters. Resolute international efforts have been directed at seeking to prevent the unfolding humanitarian disaster. Austria, Ireland, Japan, Kuwait, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Slovakia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland have all contributed significant packages of humanitarian assistance—as has Australia. The grave threat posed by ISIL and similar organisations both in the Middle East and beyond means that decisive international action is essential. The international community is uniting to combat the terrorist threat in Iraq and Syria. Australia will play its part.

Budget

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:13): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Prime Minister. The Treasurer was asked about further budget cuts this morning. 'Question: are you looking at new ideas in case you can't get some of these things through?' Treasurer's answer, 'Well, we'll have to.' Now that the government has finally woken up to the fact that the budget is a miserable failure, Prime Minister, what are the new ideas that the Treasurer is working on to inflict new pain on the Australian people?
Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Prime Minister) (14:13): The only miserable failures are members opposite, who failed to deliver a surplus—

Mr Hockey: Swannie!

Mr ABBOTT: in six years of government.

Mr Hockey: We love you, Swannie! Don't go anywhere!

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer will desist!

Mr ABBOTT: The former Treasurer, the member for Lilley, had the gall to stand up in this parliament on budget night 2012 and say, 'The four years of surplus I announce tonight'.

Mr Dreyfus interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Isaacs will desist.

Mr ABBOTT: He knows that a surplus is important. The Leader of the Opposition knows that a surplus is important because the Leader of the Opposition kept announcing that a surplus had been achieved.

Mr Hockey: Achieved?

Mr ABBOTT: Achieved! I am looking at Bill Shorten's Budget News from 2012—'A Budget Surplus For A Strong Economy'.

Mr Dreyfus: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, the Prime Minister was asked a direct question about this government's budget and he is not being relevant.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The member will resume his seat. He knows perfectly well that it was one of the widest questions we have heard.

Mr ABBOTT: Once upon a time when the Leader of the Opposition was a minister in a government, he said to the good people of Maribyrnong, 'A budget surplus for a strong economy'. That is what he wanted. He talked about a budget surplus for a stronger economy. This government will deliver a budget surplus for a strong economy.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER (14:15): I wish to advise the chamber that we have with us today in the Distinguished Visitors Gallery the Right Honourable John Bercow MP, the Speaker of the House of Commons of the United Kingdom, and we make him most welcome.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

National Security

Ms O'DWYER (Higgins) (14:16): My question is to the Minister for Justice. Will the minister update the House on the government's actions to give our federal law enforcement and security agencies the tools they need to combat the terror threat?

Mr KEENAN (Stirling—Minister for Justice) (14:16): I thank the member for Higgins for that question and also commend the exceptional work that she does here in this House. The Abbott government, as members would be aware, is making a very significant investment in counter-terrorism and in countering violent extremism, previously announcing $630 million as a response package, and today the Attorney-General George Brandis has announced that $196 million of this will go for extra resourcing for ASIO. Further to this funding, the
government is giving our security agencies the legislative frameworks and powers that they need to do their job of keeping us safe.

Earlier on today, we saw the first tranche of this legislation passed through the House. This bill comprehensively modernises and improves legislation governing the activities of the Australian intelligence community. This legislation has been put through a very significant amount of community consultation including two bipartisan reviews by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security. The committee recommended 16 targeted improvements to enhance oversight, accountability and other safeguards and the government accepted every single one of these recommendations. I commend the member for Wannon for the work that he did in chairing that inquiry and chairing that committee. I also commend the work of the member for Holt who previously chaired that committee before the government changed.

I appreciate that not all members in this House support the passage of this legislation and, clearly, in a democracy they are entitled to express their views. But what is not acceptable is to engage in or encourage conspiracy theories that the law enforcement and intelligence agencies in this country somehow collude with the government about the timing of their operations. This is untrue, and it is deeply unhelpful at a time when every member in this place should be mindful that their comments will be extensively reported to the Australian community, and we should all stand together with our law enforcement and intelligence agencies in the work that they continue to do to keep us safe.

I had the privilege earlier today of joining with the Prime Minister to announce that Mr Andrew Colvin will be recommended to the Governor-General as the next Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police. He is a man of enormous integrity, intellect and judgement and the country will be very well served by his stewardship of that organisation in what is a very challenging time. The passage of this legislation today through the House, notwithstanding that not every member of this House supported it, and the appointment of Mr Colvin as Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police, are two measures that will continue to keep our country and our community safe.

Budget

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:19): My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer to comments of his finance minister today. Is the Prime Minister firmly committed to all of the budget measures that were outlined in the budget and does the Prime Minister remain firmly committed to progress all of those measures?

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Prime Minister) (14:20): Yes.

Asylum Seekers

Mr SIMPKINS (Cowan) (14:20): My question is to the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection. Will the minister update the House on steps the government is taking to process the remaining 30,000 illegal maritime arrivals left unresolved by the former government?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) (14:20): I thank the member for Cowan for his question. He will be pleased to know also that, having just concluded the month of September, it was the eighth month out of nine this year when there have been no illegal arrivals in Australia by boat—eight out of nine months! The
member for Watson could not manage eight of nine days, neither could the member for O'Connor. But on this side of the House with the policies we have put in place to stop the boats, the month of September has passed and there has not been a single successful venture during that time. That has now become the common result under this government. It is not the exception, it is the expectation because of the measures that we have put in place.

But that is not the only challenge we have had to deal with. We have to deal with the 30,000 and more people who arrived illegally by boat and who were left behind here in Australia by the previous government. They were allowed to come and more than 22,000 of them were not even processed at all, and that goes back to people who arrived as early as August 2012. The Labor Party's policy was to give them a tick-and-flick assessment process, to give them a pathway to permanent welfare for life through the provision of a permanent protection visa.

That is not our policy. That is not the policy we took to the election. We took to the election a policy we have held for well over a decade, like all of our border protection policies, because on this side of the House we know what we believe when it comes to border protection. We are the ones who have the runs on the board. We are the ones who have a consistent approach to dealing with this problem.

Last week we introduced into this place legislation that would see temporary protection visas back on the visa books of this country. That is what will happen as a result of this legislation hopelessly being passed through the Senate. That legislation also does something important through those TPVs. They actually go further than the Howard government measures which ensured that there was no possibility of an application for a permanent protection visa under those arrangements. In addition, under these provisions we have introduced, we are claiming back for Australia how we decide who is a refugee and who is not. In this legislation, we enshrine in law what it is to be refugee, what protection involves and what protection does not involve.

I know those opposite and in other places would like to see those decisions made in Brussels, Geneva or wherever else. But that will not be the case under this government—because, as former Prime Minister John Howard said, we will decide, and we should decide who comes to this country and not allow the interpretations of others outside this place decide what our international obligations are.

Mr Perrett interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Moreton is warned!

Mr MORRISON: We will decide them; not those who sit in other places, as those opposite would do. We are cleaning up Labor's mess because that is what coalition governments do best.

Age Pension

Ms MACKLIN (Jagajaga) (14:23): My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister abandon his plan to cut the indexation of the age pension?

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Prime Minister) (14:24): There is no plan to abandon indexation. Age pensions will go up every six months every year. That is the situation. We will put in place the indexation arrangements that members opposite think are fair for family tax benefits—and, if it is fair for family tax benefits, it is fair for other social security benefits.
The member for Jagajaga and I disagree on some things but we do agree on some things as well. I would like to quote the member for Jagajaga, who said: 'As a parent, it is every parent's nightmare that your 15-year-old might drop out of school and basically do nothing.'

**Mr Burke:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order on direct relevance. It is impossible to have a more tightly targeted question than this one, and the Prime Minister's answer is way off relevant.

**The SPEAKER:** The Prime Minister has the call.

**Mr Abbott:** The shadow minister is entitled to canvass areas of disagreement and I am entitled to canvass areas of agreement. The member for Jagajaga said: 'As a parent, it is every parent's nightmare that your 15-year-old might drop out of school and basically do nothing. We do not want to see 15, 16 and 17—

**Mr Burke:** Madam Speaker, I was wondering what you ruled on the relevance point of order.

**The SPEAKER:** I said there was no point of order.

**Mr Burke:** No, you did not say that; that is why I am asking you.

**The SPEAKER:** Well, I will say it now. The Prime Minister has the call.

**Mr Abbott:** 'We do not want to see 15-, 16- or 17-year-olds sitting around doing nothing. No parent wants to see that. The kids want the opportunity to earn or learn.' That is what the member for Jagajaga thinks. Welcome to 'club sensible'.

**The SPEAKER:** The Prime Minister has concluded his answer. Is the member for Grayndler seeking the call for a question?

**Mr Albanese:** I'm just seeking some resemblance of relevance.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Grayndler will resume his seat. You know it is against the standing orders to—

**Mr Burke:** I am reluctant to back the member for Grayndler this side of the grand final but, in terms of how relevance is going to be applied to question time—

**The SPEAKER:** This is not the appropriate moment—

**Mr Burke:** Madam Speaker, he referred to 15-year-olds in answer to a question about the age pension. There are not a lot of 15-year-olds on the age pension. If that is relevant, anything is no matter what we ask.

**The SPEAKER:** I have been very tolerant in listening to the Manager of Opposition Business.

**Crime**

**Mr Katter** (Kennedy) (14:27): My question is to the Attorney-General. Is the minister aware that since September 2013, the home of stud breeder Heather Brown Pascoe, national campaigner for protection of prime farmland, has been broken into three times. A past lead columnist for the *Australian*, with four generations of farming, Heather had her computers and files rifled and information on government political figures purloined. Since no-one is aware of any police action to investigate the case, can the minister advise if there has been any communication between police and state or federal ministers and, if so, what that communication was?
Ms JULIE BISHOP (Curtin—Minister for Foreign Affairs) (14:28): I represent the Attorney-General in the House. I thank the member for Kennedy for his question. It is clearly a matter of some concern to a constituent or someone known to him. I am not aware of the specific allegations, but I will certainly take the matter on notice. I will raise it with the Attorney-General and, indeed, with the Minister for Justice, who is responsible for the Australian Federal Police, and I will come back to him when I have some details.

Budget

Mr HOGAN (Page) (14:28): My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer outline the importance of sound budget management to repair the legacy of debt and deficit left by the previous government?

Mr HOCKEY (North Sydney—The Treasurer) (14:28): That is a cracker of a question from the member for Page—a real cracker. He is absolutely right. We are cleaning up the mess left by Labor and we are determined to do it both on the economy and on the budget, because if you have a strong budget you can also have a strong economy. There was some good news today. According to CommSec, retail trade is at a 12-year high, and I quote: ‘Retail trade rose by 0.1 per cent in August after a 0.4 per cent rise in July. Over the past 12 months retail sales grew by 7.4 per cent, marking the best rolling 12-month period since January 2002.’ So we welcome good news and a continuation of the good news—the best 12-month period since 2002. And that is on the back of the fact that now Australian businesses, this year under the coalition government, are creating jobs at six times the speed that occurred each month under Labor last year. Nearly 30,000 jobs a month were created in Australia—that is welcomed as well.

Now we are getting on with fixing Labor's mess in the budget. They left a budget debt trajectory of $667 billion. If nothing was done about the legacy of Labor, every single Australian in 10 years would have $25,000 of government debt against their name. Every child born would have $25,000 on their day of birth against their name as a result of what Labor left.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The members for Sydney and Parramatta will desist!

Mr HOCKEY: So we are setting about fixing that. Some of that comes down to tax initiatives. You would have thought that, after creating a mess and then partly offering a solution for fixing it, Labor would honour their word. Labor are now opposing a $1.1 billion integrity measure in taxation in relation to research and development—$1.1 billion. The member for Lilley announced in February last year that he was going to crack down on 20 top Australian multinationals who were gaining an advantage under R&D. He said, ‘We're going to crack down on them’—a $1.1 billion crackdown.

Labor yesterday were full of commentary about tax integrity. They are defending 20 businesses with a turnover of more than $20 billion. They want to give them a tax advantage that in government they said was wrong but in opposition they are now defending. Labor are the best friends of the tax rorters and Labor should not be trusted with tax policy—no integrity; no principles; no honesty.
Mr SNOWDON (Lingiari) (14:32): My question is to the Prime Minister.

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Lingiari will wait. There will be silence so we can hear the member's question.

Mr SNOWDON: That is very nice of you, Madam Speaker. Will the Prime Minister abandon his cuts to veterans' pensions? A simple 'Yes' or 'No' will suffice.

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Prime Minister) (14:32): There are no cuts. The member opposite, if he was being fair dinkum with people, would not spread lies. He would not do it. He absolutely would not do it. What we are doing is making our—

Mr Snowdon interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Lingiari has asked his question and will remain silent for the answer.

Mr ABBOTT: social services system sustainable for the long term. We are putting in place the same indexation system for all benefits that members opposite think is fair for the family tax benefit. If members opposite think it is fair and reasonable for the family tax benefit, why is it not fair and reasonable for other benefits as well?

Ms Macklin interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Jagajaga will desist!

Infrastructure

Ms LANDRY (Capricornia) (14:33): My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development. Will the Deputy Prime Minister outline how the government's commitment to building the infrastructure of the 21st century will help to strengthen the economy?

Mr TRUSS (Wide Bay—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development) (14:33): I thank the member for Capricornia for her question. The coalition government really remain committed to building the infrastructure of the 21st century and we are getting on with the job. We have committed $50 billion towards road and rail projects right across the nation. That is at least $16.4 billion more than Labor were prepared to commit—$16.4 billion more than the opposition were prepared to commit. Our plan is seeing already significant development in every state, in the cities and in the country, building the infrastructure our country will need for the future, because we have always believed that building new and improved infrastructure boosts our economy.

Of course, today we have learnt that the International Monetary Fund agrees with us—that we have got it right. It even argues that building new roads and railway lines can actually end up reducing debt overall, and that is particularly important in Australia, where we have to pay more than $1 billion every month just on interest on the debt that Labor left behind. So, in a country that is deeply indebted because of the spending policies of our predecessors, it is good to have initiatives underway they can make a real difference to the quality of our nation's infrastructure but also put downward pressure on our debt. That is why the job of building infrastructure for Australians is so important.
Labor, in its last year in office, actually spent less on infrastructure—on roads and rail—than the Howard government did in its last year in office, six years earlier. Labor was great at spending the savings of the previous government, but, when they were all gone, it lost interest in infrastructure and the expenditure drifted away. We as a government are delivering on our commitment to deliver the infrastructure of the 21st century.

Mr Perrett interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Moreton has already been warned! One more and he will take his leave.

Mr TRUSS: There are at least 58 projects currently underway and another 69 in detailed planning stages. We are getting on with the job of building the roads and railway lines that this country will need for the 21st century. And the IMF agrees with us: it is a good strategy to deal with the future of our nation.

Health Care

Ms KING (Ballarat) (14:36): My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister abandon his unfair GP tax?

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Prime Minister) (14:36): The government support the budget measures that we put forward because we do need to tackle the debt and deficit disaster that members opposite have left this country. We do need to tackle the $25,000 in debt hanging around the necks of every man, woman and child in this country that they now have as a result of members opposite.

We are absolutely determined to tackle the debt and deficit disaster that Labor has inflicted on this country—the Shorten sinkhole of debt which we have inherited. Part of that is a modest co-payment on Medicare. In the same way that members opposite support a modest co-payment on the PBS, we support a modest co-payment on Medicare. If it is right and proper to have a modest co-payment on the PBS, it is right and proper to have a modest co-payment on Medicare. Former Prime Minister Hawke thought it was right and proper. The member for Jagajaga, just as she supports our learning or earning initiative, supports us in spirit when it comes to the modest co-payment on Medicare. We know the member for Fraser supports a modest co-payment on Medicare. And the member for Lingiari voted for a modest co-payment. He has buried his head in his papers. Something fascinating in his lap right now!

Anyway, I have more than made my point. I have concluded this answer.

The SPEAKER: The member for Fraser: I made an undertaking to you yesterday that I would make a ruling concerning yesterday's point of order on standing order 68. I intend to do that at the end of question time, and I think it will cover this question as well.

Dr Leigh: So I don't have an opportunity for a point of order to the Prime Minister?

The SPEAKER: Not after he has sat down.

Infrastructure

Mr TONY SMITH (Casey) (14:39): My question is to the Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development. I ask the minister to update the House on the latest developments on the East West Link in Melbourne. I further ask whether the minister is aware of any risks to this important project and other vital investments across our country.
Mr BRIGGS (Mayo—Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development) (14:39): It is a great privilege to answer a question from the member for Casey, who is a great fighter for this project along with the member for Deakin and other colleagues in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne, including the Minister for the Environment, who mentioned last week that he should have been included. The member for Aston is fighting for this project as well, as is the member for Dunkley, the Minister for Small Business. All are fighting very hard for the eastern side of the project, and you can understand why. A traffic study from Traffic Group found that average travel time savings for vehicles using East West Link would be 27 minutes for westbound Eastern Freeway to Citylink traffic in the AM peak and 33 minutes for eastbound Citylink to Eastern Freeway traffic in the PM peak. The maximum travel time savings for vehicles using East West Link would be 40 minutes for westbound Eastern Freeway to Citylink at AM peak and 55 minutes for eastbound Citylink to Eastern Freeway in the PM peak.

Earlier this week the Premier of Victoria got on with the job, as we wanted him to do, and signed the contracts for the delivery of the first stage of East West. The member for Casey can tell his constituents, who have been fighting for this—

Mr Conroy interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Charlton is warned.

Mr BRIGGS: how important that signing session was earlier this week. It includes, of course, bike paths as well. There are bike paths as part of the project—a comprehensive investment in bike paths, which I understand the Scooter Appreciation Society has endorsed, as part of the project.

Mr Albanese interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Grayndler will desist or leave. The choice is yours.

Mr BRIGGS: It comes from a report done by Sir Rod Eddington that was supported by the group of four MPs from the western suburbs of Melbourne because they want the western side done as well, and that is fair enough. I appreciate the passion of the member for Maribyrnong for the western side of this project to be completed, because that too will have huge benefits, as the member for Corangamite argues: benefits to the people of the member for Corio in his electorate and the member for Ballarat in her electorate.

All of these benefits will be put at risk—these 3,700 jobs on the eastern side project alone—if Andrew Daniels gets his way and rips up the contract later in the—

Mr Mitchell: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Maybe the lunch boy should be made to refer to members by their proper title! The name of the Leader of the Opposition is Daniel Andrews, and this two-bit humour is just not worth it.

The SPEAKER: The minister has the call, and he will refer to people by their correct titles when referring to members.

Mr BRIGGS: I think the member for McEwen should get back to tweeting while he's in the chair!

It is a very important project, and it is a risk because you have a Labor Party who is opposing this very important investment and these 3,700 jobs on the eastern side alone. The member for Maribyrnong got it right when he put in a submission supporting the East West
Link. The member for Maribyrnong should overrule the member for South Sydney and make sure this project goes ahead.

**Budget**

**Ms CHESTERS** (Bendigo) (14:43): My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister abandon his $5.8 billion in cuts to universities that will mean young Australians will pay $100,000 for a uni degree?

**Mr ABBOTT** (Warringah—Prime Minister) (14:43): I guess, as a relatively new member, the member who asked the question is not aware of the canons against misleading the House, but plainly that is exactly what she has done.

**Honourable members interjecting—**

**The SPEAKER:** There will be silence so we can hear the answer.

**Mr ABBOTT:** I just make these essential points in response. First—

**Honourable members interjecting—**

**The SPEAKER:** The Prime Minister will resume his seat. I know it is the second-last day before the end of a second week of sitting and the behaviour usually does deteriorate. We will have some silence while we listen to the answer.

**Mr ABBOTT:** The first point I make is that no-one will pay a dollar up-front. No-one need pay a dollar up-front. Everyone's fees will be covered by the FEE-HELP scheme that the former government put in place and which one way or another has been in place for a long time. Third, the taxpayer will still support every student's university education to the tune of about 50 per cent.

Given that university graduates are about 40 per cent of our population, and given that university graduates earn on average 75 per cent more over their lifetime than those who do not go to university, it seems fair and reasonable that university graduates should bear a slightly larger proportion of the costs of their benefit.

**Ms Chesters interjecting—**

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Bendigo has asked her question and will remain silent.

**Mr ABBOTT:** It seems fair and reasonable that this should be done. Let me conclude this answer by reminding the member who asked the question—who, I suppose, is a new member and might not be aware of the record of her own party—that they cut almost $7 billion out of higher education when they were in government.

What we are proposing to do is to liberate our universities to be the very best they can be. It is what we are proposing would be good for universities and good for the students of Australia.

**DISTINGUISHED VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER** (14:45): Before I call the member for Deakin I would like to advise the House that we have with us Ms Kristina Sogavare, Chair of the Solomon Islands Young Women's Parliamentary Group. We make her most welcome.

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!
The SPEAKER: We also have with us a delegation from the Lockyer Valley Youth Council, who were very active in the devastating floods in Queensland. We make them most welcome.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Carbon Pricing

Mr SUKKAR (Deakin) (14:46): My question is to the Minister for the Environment. Will the minister outline how councils have been passing on savings from the repeal of the world's biggest carbon tax to ease electricity price increases for Victorian families and businesses, including in the City of Whitehorse in my electorate of Deakin. Are there any threats to these plans?

Mr Conroy interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Charlton has been warned. One more utterance and he will leave the chamber.

Mr HUNT (Flinders—Minister for the Environment) (14:46): I particularly want to thank the member for Deakin. I was, in fact, reading the Whitehorse News just this morning. The Whitehorse City Council, on page 4, makes a very interesting statement. Let me just read the headline. It says, 'Council passes on carbon tax savings.' It goes on to say:

Following the 17 July Carbon Tax Repeal Act taking effect from 1 July 2014, we expect landfill operators will reduce their gate price and as a result, Whitehorse Council has already taken steps to reduce its waste management fees.

Savings of approximately $360,000 will be passed back to the community as a result.

And it is not savings just on gate fees or landfill fees or waste fees for the residents of Whitehorse, it is, as the member for Deakin says, savings which they will receive on their electricity and gas bills. But there are two members in this House that represent the City of Whitehorse—one of whom, the member for Deakin, wants to see council rates go down and electricity prices go down. Another one is the member for Chisholm.

Just before question time, the member for Chisholm gave her views on what the residents of the City of Whitehorse deserve. She said:

I was outraged to receive a political campaign text on 1 September from my electricity provider, AGL, claiming customers just like me would receive an average of 8.9 per cent reduction in their bill with the abolition of the carbon price.

She was half right. Customers just like her would receive an 8.9 per cent reduction if they are with AGL. What do the latest figures show?—8.9 per cent for AGL residential customers in Victoria.

But there are two approaches. The member for Deakin says yes to the savings. The member for Chisholm says no. If you are a small business customer with AGL in Victoria you will get a 9.7 per cent reduction in your electricity bill. The member for Deakin says yes. The member for Chisholm says no.

If you happen to be a gas customer with AGL in Victoria you will receive a 7.2 per cent saving. The member for Deakin says yes to the savings; the member for Chisholm says no to
her constituents. And if you are a small business customer with AGL in terms of gas savings you will get 10.3 per cent. The member for Deakin says yes; the member for Chisholm says no. There are two choices in this House. We say yes to savings; you say no.

**Age Pension**

Mr BOWEN (McMahon) (14:50): My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister abandon his plan to make Australians work until they are 70 to get the pension?

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Prime Minister) (14:50): This government supports all of the measures that we put forward in the budget, because all of those measures are important to deliver the surplus that members opposite promised time and time again and never delivered. This is a government which is determined to get our budget back under control. This is a government which is determined to make our system sustainable. The only way to make the system sustainable is to take some tough but necessary decisions. Because for six years we had drift and betrayal we need to take the decisions which are necessary now in our national interest.

I would like to offer the member who asked the question this important insight. It is a very important insight. It says:

So in terms of life expectancy, 70 is the new 64. And in terms of health, 74 is the new 64.

With a steady decline in the share of backbreaking jobs, and ongoing improvements in medical technology, it is reasonable to expect these numbers to keep rising. Yet to look at many of the statutes on our books, you would think that none of these changes had ever occurred.

Who said that?

*Government members interjecting—*

Mr ABBOTT: No, it was not Bill Shorten—because he lacks the courage to tell the truth.

Mr Burke: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order on two matters: on both referring to people by their titles and on making reflections on members.

The SPEAKER: The Prime Minister will return to the question and not reflect on members.

Opposition members: Just withdraw!

Mr Hockey: Withdraw what?

The SPEAKER: There is no need to withdraw; I have instructed him not to reflect on members.

Opposition members: Withdraw!

Mr Hockey: What—that you haven't got courage?

*Opposition members interjecting—*

The SPEAKER: There will be silence!

Mr ABBOTT: The person who made these eminently sensible observations—

*Mr Shorten interjecting—*

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will desist!

Mr Burke: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Given that you ruled he had reflected on a member, he ought withdraw.
The SPEAKER: No, I instructed him not to do so.

Mr Burke: But he just had. I am not going to repeat the words to you, Madam Speaker, because then I would be doing the same thing. You just ruled that he needed to return and not reflect on members. He should withdraw for when he did.

The SPEAKER: I did not hear him say anything which required withdrawal. However, if the member wishes to advise me what it is, then I will pay attention to that.

Mr Dreyfus interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Isaacs will leave the House under standing order 94(a).

Mr Albanese: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It is perplexing that you drew the Prime Minister's attention to not reflecting on members and then said you did not hear it—

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The member for Grayndler will resume his seat. I said: 'The minister will return to the question and not reflect on members', and that is a statement that I will make frequently. The Prime Minister has the call.

Mr ABBOTT: In all the hyperventilation they might have missed it but, to keep them happy, I am going to withdraw. In terms of life expectancy, 70 is the new 64 and, in terms of health, 74 is the new 64.

Government members: Who said that?

Mr ABBOTT: If what this government is proposing is so wrong, I suggest to the Leader of the Opposition: sack your shadow Assistant Treasurer—because it is him, it is him, it is him!

A government member: He is telling the truth!

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr ABBOTT: Another member of club sensible.

The SPEAKER: The cacophony will cease. The call goes to the member for Barker.

Medicare

Mr PASIN (Barker) (14:55): My question is to the Minister for Health. Will the minister inform the House regarding what the government is doing to make Medicare sustainable? Can the minister also inform the House what other examples of co-payments for health services exist in Australia?

Mr DUTTON (Dickson—Minister for Health and Minister for Sport) (14:56): I thank the member for Barker for his question and his interest in making Medicare sustainable, because that is exactly what this government wants to do. At the moment there are 263 million free services a year on Medicare. So, when people go to the doctor, four out of five of those services are being provided for free at the moment. We want to make sure that Medicare survives and strengthens over the course of the next generation. The reason that we want to do that is not just that we were left an enormous debt by Labor but also that we have an ageing population and we have huge costs—with medical technologies, personalised cancer medicines and all of those which will have to be paid for over the coming decades.
We introduced a modest co-payment in this budget to make Medicare sustainable and to strengthen it for the future. Why? Because we are the best friends that Medicare has ever had. Jenny Macklin was a great friend of Medicare.

_Opposition members interjecting—_

**Mr DUTTON:** The member for Jagajaga was a great friend of Medicare, because she worked with Brian Howe, the last health minister to introduce a co-payment. We looked at what Labor did otherwise. The honourable member asks whether or not there are other examples of a co-payment and the way in which it operates. There are a couple of examples, as it turns out. One is the PBS. Australians know, the people in the gallery know, that in this country, when you go to the chemist and you see the pharmacist, regardless of how sick you are and regardless of how poor you are, in this country you will pay $6.10 for the first script and each and every script until you get about 60 scripts. So the effective co-payment that Labor introduced when it comes to medicine for the sickest and poorest is about $360. We say that we want to retain bulk-billing in our co-payment proposal. We do that so that we can help the sickest and the poorest. Exactly what we have proposed in this policy, Labor did not do when they introduced a co-payment when it came to the PBS.

Secondly, we have said that for concession card holders and for those people under the age of 16, once you get to 10 services within a year—a maximum of $70—you do not have to pay anymore than that within a 12-month period. Let us contemplate that for a moment. You can go and see a GP on five separate occasions, you can have three blood tests and you can have two x-rays for a maximum amount of $70 within a 12-month period. I believe that is a fair and balanced approach. Labor's approach, as we know with the economy, is to spend the money and worry about the problem afterwards. I know that Labor cannot handle the economy, they cannot handle health and they certainly cannot handle themselves. I am going to have a lot more to say about other co-payment models in future days and weeks ahead.

**Budget**

**Mr SHORTEN** (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:59): My question is to the Prime Minister. In question time today the Prime Minister recommitted the government to every one of its unfair budget measures. And today the Treasurer has revealed that he is working on new budget measures, saying on radio, 'We are working them through. I mean, I'd love to share them with you.' Prime Minister, when will the government share its secret plans to inflict more pain on Australian families?

**Mr Hockey:** You're the biggest—

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer will desist! The Prime Minister has the call.

**Mr ABBOTT** (Warringah—Prime Minister) (14:59): The ultimate unfairness is the $25,000 of debt—

**Mr Champion interjecting—**

**Ms Owens interjecting—**

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Wakefield and the member for Parramatta! Either or both of you will leave if you utter again.

**Mr ABBOTT:** for every man, woman and child that members opposite have saddled every single Australian with. The ultimate unfairness is the $1-billion-a-month interest bill
that every single Australian is paying now as a result of Labor's spending spree and which, unchecked, would be $3 billion a month, every single month.

Ms Plibersek interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Sydney will desist.

Mr ABBOTT: This is what this government was elected to change. This is what the government was elected to repair. Members opposite might be suffering from selective amnesia but, let me remind them, this government—

Ms Owens interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Parramatta will leave, under standing order 94(a). She has been warned.

Mr ABBOTT: promised to stop the boats, to scrap the carbon tax, to build the roads of the 21st century and to get the budget back under control. Time and time and time again, till I was blue in the face I said that we were going to get the budget back under control. That is what the public expect from us. That is what we will do. That is what we are doing.

If members opposite wanted to deal themselves into relevance they would join us in delivering the surplus that they promised but never ever delivered. They know that a surplus is important, because the Leader of the Opposition himself, in his newsletter, kept saying a 'budget surplus for a strong economy'. But it was not just the Leader of the Opposition. We have the member for Lilley who told his people, 'Back in surplus, on time, as promised,' and on the other page he says—it says, 'Dear resident'—and remember, I'm always here to help. There is never any issue too big or too small'. So they know it is important to get us back to a situation of surplus. That is what we are doing. If members opposite had the guts and the integrity of people like Prime Minister Hawke and Treasurer Keating they would join us to rescue the economy, by rescuing our budget.

Economy

Dr HENDY (Eden-Monaro) (15:02): My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development. Will the Deputy Prime Minister outline how the government is delivering the necessary resources to ensure the growth of Australia's regions and local communities?

Mr TRUSS (Wide Bay—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development) (15:02): The assistant minister and I were delighted to be with the honourable member in his electorate, earlier today, to announce the launch of the National Stronger Regions program. This was a $1 billion election commitment that we made to the regions of Australia to help them build the economic infrastructure they need to improve their economies, to address areas of disadvantage, the areas with high levels of unemployment, to give them a chance to build their economies and be a part of a much stronger nation.

So today we announced the opening of the first round, under the Stronger Regions program, inviting applications from community groups, local government and others who have good ideas to help build their local economies. The $1 billion will be provided over five years and the contributions will be in the order of $20,000 up to $10 million for good projects, matched by the applicant, to do what we can to address disadvantage in our community and help build a stronger future for all Australians.
This was a key election commitment and will bring to reality local projects in areas that might struggle otherwise to renew their economy and provide new job-creation activities.

Dr Chalmers interjecting—

Mr Conroy interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Rankin will desist. The member for Charlton clearly does not wish to be here for the MPI.

Mr TRUSS: I am encouraging our regional communities to get behind the National Stronger Regions Fund, to apply for this funding so that the projects they have been working on for perhaps years and were not able to provide the necessary funding may now become a reality. We need to strengthen local communities. We need to have vibrant local regional areas, because we all know that if you have strong, resilient regions you then have a stronger national economy. By working together, we can help ensure those areas that have been missing out over recent times have the opportunity to build a new future for themselves. This is a government that is prepared to back them in their initiatives.

Racial Discrimination Act 1975

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (15:05): My question is to the Prime Minister. Liberal senators Cory Bernardi and Dean Smith are cosponsoring a private senator's bill that will give the green light to racist hate speech. In plain English, will the Prime Minister commit, here and now, unambiguously—

Mr Hutchinson interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Lyons will desist.

Mr SHORTEN: to join with Labor and vote against this divisive legislation?

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Prime Minister) (15:05): As the Leader of the Opposition well knows, the government has no plans to change section 18C. Some years ago, in the wake of the Bolt case—a most unfortunate case; a prosecution that should never have been brought—the coalition did commit to the repeal of section 18C in its current form. But we have all moved on since then. It is important to preserve national unity. It is important to ensure that all people in this rich multicultural society of ours feel included as members of 'Team Australia'. For that reason, this government has no plans to change section 18C. The private member's bill in question is something that is highly unlikely to proceed under the normal rules that govern the introduction of private members' bills into this parliament.

We are interested in trying to ensure that people in this country show respect, civility and decency to each other. We are determined to ensure that people who preach hate and people who try to divide Australian against Australian is minimised and eliminated from our society. That is why the government has taken the decision that it has.

Mr Burke: Madam Speaker, the opposition wishes to offer leave to the Prime Minister to extend the time of that answer, so he can deal with which way the government will vote.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. That is grandstanding!

Agriculture

Ms PRICE (Durack) (15:07): My question is to the Minister for Agriculture. Will the minister outline how the government's policies are contributing to the growth and prosperity
of agriculture in Australia? How is this helping to strengthen our bilateral trade relationships with our nearest neighbours.

Mr JOYCE (New England—Minister for Agriculture and Deputy Leader of The Nationals) (15:08): I thank the member for Durack for her question. The member for Durack's seat is the largest in Australia, as we all know. In fact, it is the second-largest single seat in the world. The other one, I think, is Nunavut in Canada, which is held by the minister for the environment.

Just in August I signed with Chairman Siregar a reaffirmation of our commitment on the Indonesia-Australia partnership on red meat and cattle. Why did we need to sign that reaffirmation. Why did we need to put $60 million towards building our relationship with Indonesia? Why would we have to do that? One good reason is that last year we exported $460 million worth of cattle to them and $1.2 billion worth of wheat.

There is another reason. I went back to the former Prime Minister's book where she said that when she was in power she was helping us out with the live cattle trade and she wanted to act swiftly to put the industry on a sustainable footing. We know how she put it on a sustainable footing—she shut it down; she shut the industry down. She sent a whole range of people in Northern Australia broke. She actually put complete and utter turmoil into beef industry. I just cannot comprehend how they could possibly do it. I look at my own side and I look around. I know that the member for Wentworth is actually one of our biggest cattle producers, so he would not have done it. I look at the member for Groom. You are in the agricultural industry, Member for Groom, so you would not have done it. The member for Wide Bay is in the rural industry. He would not have done it. Even the Treasurer, the member for North Sydney, he has got cattle so he would not do something like that. The member for Dickson, the health minister, actually has cattle as well. If you wait until after question time, he will give you their names! He would not have done it. The member for Calare would not have done it.

The SPEAKER: The minister will resume his seat. The member for Grayndler on a point of order?

Mr Albanese: Madam Speaker, this answer is just a lot of bull!

The SPEAKER: The member for Grayndler can have a gold star!

A government member: He has got his scooter!

Mr JOYCE: If there was an issue about going down the scooter trade, well, you might have done it. Even the member for Hinkler—he is a farmer, and he would not have done it. The member for Mallee is a farmer. He wouldn't have done it. How could you have shut down the live cattle trade? So here is a question for you: is there one of you over there, just one of you, who owns so much as a beast—and I am not talking about your car. Do you own any sheep? Is there anybody out there who is a farmer? Is there one farmer? Just put your hand up. That's it.

Mr Abbott: I ask that further questions be placed on the Notice Paper.
STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Member for Fraser

The SPEAKER (15:12): Yesterday the member for Fraser raised a point of order under standing order 68 in relation to remarks made about him by the Prime Minister. I said after the member raised the point of order I would watch to see what the Prime Minister had said, and I have done that. Should the Prime Minister wish to refer to the views of the member for Fraser as those as being expressed in his book, he must make this clear so as not to infringe standing order 68. In yesterday's case this was not clear and the member for Fraser was entitled to invoke standing order 68.

QUESTIONS TO THE SPEAKER

Responsibilities of Speaker

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Education) (15:12): Madam Speaker, my question is to you and it goes to your responsibilities as the Speaker. At 1.17 today the member for McEwen tweeted:

LNP MP says "why should we listen to industries". Arrogance personified

My question is whether or not the member for McEwen was in the chair as the Deputy Speaker at the time that he posted that tweet, and, if in fact he was the Deputy Speaker in the chair at that time, is it appropriate for him to reflect on other members via social media while in the chamber? I would ask you to reflect on that and answer at the appropriate time.

The SPEAKER (15:13): I can say this here and now. The standing orders apply to social media and electronic devices just as they do to individuals within the chamber. Therefore, a reflection upon another member which comes from the chamber, if it is brought to the attention of the chair, is out of order. As a reflection on a member it would be required to be withdrawn. What I will do is consider whether or not it was in fact his tweet, whether or not the words that were stated in the chamber by yourself as being at the words that were tweeted were in fact those tweeted by him, and then have something further to say about it then.

Reflections on Members of the Judiciary

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (15:14): Madam Speaker, I refer to page 520 of the practice regarding reflections on members of the judiciary. There was a lot of noise at the time, but I would ask you to have another look at the answer given by the Prime Minister today when he referred to specific cases and whether or not actions ought to have been brought. I was not able to hear it with enough clarity to be able to determine whether or not it conflicted with that standing order, but I would ask you reflect on that and check it against practice.

The SPEAKER (15:15): A question as to whether or not a matter is prosecuted is not a reflection on the judiciary, but I will have a look at it anyway.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER (15:15): Before I call the Leader of the House, I would like to say we had in the chamber earlier today three young people—Andrew Short, Patricia Kay and Jared Horvath—who were the short-listed applicants for the Speaker's University Challenge, which is an open challenge to young people to speak on freedom of speech. Patricia Kay was the
winner, and I would like to acknowledge her and the work she has done. Although they have left the chamber now, it is very rewarding to see young people engage in the programs we conduct in parliament which give opportunities for young people to express themselves in the public arena.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

DOCUMENTS
Presentation

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Education) (15:16): Documents are presented as listed in the schedule circulated to honourable members. Details of the documents will be recorded in the Votes and Proceedings.

COMMITTEES
Selection Committee
Report

The SPEAKER (15:16): I present report number 14 of the Selection Committee relating to private members’ business on Monday, 20 October 2014. The report will be printed in the Hansard for today and the committee's determinations will appear on tomorrow's Notice Paper. Copies of the report have been placed on the table.

The report read as follows—

Report relating to the consideration of committee and delegation business and of private Members' business

1. The committee met in private session on Tuesday, 30 September 2014.
2. The committee determined the order of precedence and times to be allotted for consideration of private Members' business on Monday, 20 October 2014, as follows:

Items for House of Representatives Chamber (10.10 am to 12 noon)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Notices

1 MR WILKIE: To present a Bill for an Act to give the community rights in relation to the development of phone towers and certain telecommunications facilities, and for related purposes. (Telecommunications Amendment (Giving the Community Rights on Phone Towers) Bill 2014)

   (30 September 2014.)

   Time allotted—10 minutes.

   Speech time limits—

   Mr Wilkie—10 minutes.

   [Minimum number of proposed Members speaking = 1 x 10 mins]

   Presenter may speak to the second reading for a period not exceeding 10 minutes—pursuant to standing order 41.

2 MS T. M. BUTLER: To move:

   That this House:

   (1) notes that:

   (a) in the document 'Our Plan', the Liberals and Nationals promised Australians, prior to the election that: 'We will deliver greater stability and certainty on superannuation—we won't move the goalposts.'
... We will ensure that no more negative unexpected changes occur to the superannuation system so that those planning for their retirement can face the future with a higher degree of predictability;

(b) the Government has subsequently revealed, in breach of that promise, that there will be a freeze on superannuation guarantee increases until at least July 2025;

(c) the Prime Minister has said of the changes that: 'By delaying the increase in the superannuation guarantee levy we are keeping more money in workers' pockets';

(d) between 7 September 2013 and 2 September 2014, the Fair Work Commission received thousands of applications for approval of enterprise agreements; and

(e) enterprise agreements' nominal expiry dates can be up to four years after the enterprise agreement is approved;

(2) recognises that:

(a) parties negotiate the terms of enterprise agreements, including terms providing for pay increases, having regard to, among other things, the superannuation guarantee rate;

(b) the parties who negotiated enterprise agreements for which applications for approval were made between 7 September 2013 and 2 September 2014 would have done so on the basis that the superannuation guarantee rate would increase during the life of the agreement;

(c) employees to whom such enterprise agreements apply are generally covered by 'no further claims' provisions, so they are not at liberty to negotiate for greater pay increases; and

(d) accordingly, any money that is not going into their superannuation fund will also not be going into their pockets, despite the Prime Minister's claim; and

(3) accordingly, calls on the Government to:

(a) concede workers, whose enterprise agreements were negotiated between the election and 2 September 2014, have lost 'money in their pocket' because the negotiations were conducted on the basis there would be 'no negative change to superannuation'; and

(b) enable those workers to renegotiate pay increases, to compensate for the unexpected freeze on superannuation.

(Notice given 23 September 2014.)

Time allotted—30 minutes.

Speech time limits—

Ms T. M. Butler—5 minutes.

Other Members—5 minutes each.

[Minimum number of proposed Members speaking = 6 x 5 mins]

The Committee determined that consideration of this should continue on a future day.

3 MR WOOD: To move:

That this House:

(1) notes with concern that:

(a) over the past five years, the average number of suicide deaths per year in Australia is 2,415;

(b) in 2012, 1,901 males and 634 females died through suicide—an average of 6.9 deaths by suicide every day;

(c) suicide is the leading cause of death in Australia for men under 44 and women under 34; and

(d) Australian Bureau of Statistics data from 2009 shows us that more people die from suicide than from road deaths;
(2) recognises that the Government and the community must do everything they can to prevent death by suicide; and

(3) calls on the House to acknowledge all Australian lives lost to suicide and the suffering felt by their friends and families.

(Notice given 25 September 2014.)

Time allotted—50 minutes.

Speech time limits—

Mr Wood—10 minutes.

Next Member—10 minutes.

Other Members—5 minutes each.

[Minimum number of proposed Members speaking = 2 x 10 + 6 x 5 mins]

The Committee determined that consideration of this should continue on a future day.

4 MR CONROY: To move:

That this House:

(1) recognises the importance of Government support for child care in order to improve workforce participation and early childhood education;

(2) condemns the Government for its $157 million cut to Family Day Care (FDC) funding by changing the eligibility for the FDC component of the Community Support Program and forcing existing services to re-apply;

(3) notes that:

(a) FDC:

(i) supports more than 98,000 families and 165,000 children across Australia; and

(ii) employs more than 25,000 educators, as well as coordination unit staff;

(b) Department of Education figures indicate that over 80 per cent of all FDC services will be denied essential funding due to these cuts; and

(c) these cuts will force FDC services to increase fees, reduce services or close; and

(4) calls on the Government to reverse its cruel and short-sighted decision to cut FDC funding.

(Notice given 30 September 2014.)

Time allotted—remaining private Members’ business time prior to 12 noon.

Speech time limits—

Mr Conroy—5 minutes.

Other Members—5 minutes each.

[Minimum number of proposed Members speaking = 4 x 5 mins]

The Committee determined that consideration of this should continue on a future day.

Items for Federation Chamber (11 am to 1.30 pm)

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ BUSINESS

Notices

1 MR CHAMPION: To move:

That this House:

(1) notes that:

(a) Australian Hearing:
(i) has delivered hearing services since 1947 and currently provides services to children, young adults, Indigenous Australians and age pensioners every year; and

(ii) provides services at 468 hearing services centres and visiting sites throughout Australia including many rural and regional centres;

(b) the National Commission of Audit recommended Australian Hearing be privatised; and

(c) the Government has responded to this recommendation by funding a scoping study in the budget;

(2) acknowledges:

(a) that the Australian Government provides funding to Australian Hearing that is vital for the provision of hearing health services;

(b) that Australian Hearing delivers quality, low cost hearing health services to over 450,000 people every year; and

(c) the privatisation of Australian Hearing will result in an interruption to service delivery and impact the quality of services and access to services; and

(3) calls upon the Government to:

(a) reject the National Commission of Audit recommendation to privatise Australian Hearing;

(b) ensure that the Australian Hearing research division and National Acoustic Laboratories be guaranteed certainty of continued operation at current capacity or greater;

(c) guarantee the service level and quality of the current hearing health services provider; and

(d) provide certainty to rural and regional centres in the provision of hearing health services to the same standard or better than the current provider.

(Notice given 24 September 2014.)

Time allotted—30 minutes.

Mr Champion—5 minutes.

Other Members—5 minutes each.

[Minimum number of proposed Members speaking = 6 x 5 mins]

The Committee determined that consideration of this should continue on a future day.

2 MR MATHESON: To move:

That this House:

(1) notes that National Police Remembrance Day will be held on 29 September 2014;

(2) recognises and acknowledges the significant role that officers across Australia make to our local communities and the great deal of risk and sacrifice that comes with the job;

(3) acknowledges the:

(a) ultimate sacrifice made by the officers who have been tragically killed in the course of their duty, and honours their lives and memories; and

(b) good work of Police Legacy who look after the remaining loved ones of the police officers that have been killed in the line of duty; and

(4) expresses gratitude and reaffirms its support for the nation's police officers whose dedication and commitment ensure continuous peace and safety across our communities.

(Notice given 30 September 2014.)

Time allotted—50 minutes.

Mr Matheson—5 minutes.

Other Members—5 minutes each.
Orders of the day

SUPERANNUATION: Resumption of debate on the motion of Ms T. M. Butler—That this House:

(1) notes that:
   (a) in the document 'Our Plan', the Liberals and Nationals promised Australians, prior to the election that: 'We will deliver greater stability and certainty on superannuation—we won't move the goalposts. … We will ensure that no more negative unexpected changes occur to the superannuation system so that those planning for their retirement can face the future with a higher degree of predictability';
   (b) the Government has subsequently revealed, in breach of that promise, that there will be a freeze on superannuation guarantee increases until at least July 2025;
   (c) the Prime Minister has said of the changes that: 'By delaying the increase in the superannuation guarantee levy we are keeping more money in workers' pockets';
   (d) between 7 September 2013 and 2 September 2014, the Fair Work Commission received thousands of applications for approval of enterprise agreements; and
   (e) enterprise agreements' nominal expiry dates can be up to four years after the enterprise agreement is approved;

(2) recognises that:
   (a) parties negotiate the terms of enterprise agreements, including terms providing for pay increases, having regard to, among other things, the superannuation guarantee rate;
   (b) the parties who negotiated enterprise agreements for which applications for approval were made between 7 September 2013 and 2 September 2014 would have done so on the basis that the superannuation guarantee rate would increase during the life of the agreement;
   (c) employees to whom such enterprise agreements apply are generally covered by 'no further claims' provisions, so they are not at liberty to negotiate for greater pay increases; and
   (d) accordingly, any money that is not going into their superannuation fund will also not be going into their pockets, despite the Prime Minister's claim; and

(3) accordingly, calls on the Government to:
   (a) concede workers, whose enterprise agreements were negotiated between the election and 2 September 2014, have lost 'money in their pocket' because the negotiations were conducted on the basis there would be 'no negative change to superannuation'; and
   (b) enable those workers to renegotiate pay increases, to compensate for the unexpected freeze on superannuation.

(Notice given 23 September 2014.)

Time allotted—20 minutes.

All Members—5 minutes each.

The Committee determined that consideration of this should continue on a future day.

Notices—continued

3 Mr E. T. Jones: To move:

That this House:

(1) welcomes Australia's contribution to the Multinational Observer Group at the recent Fijian election;
(2) notes that the conditions were in place for Fijians to exercise their right to vote freely;
(3) recognises Fiji’s place as an important neighbour and strong nation in the Pacific;
(4) thanks the Australian High Commission and the Australian public servants who worked hard to ensure a good and fair result; and
(5) congratulates the Fijian people on the turn out and the manner in which they conducted themselves on polling day.

(Notice given 24 September 2014.)

Time allotted—20 minutes.

Mr E. T. Jones—5 minutes.

Other Members—5 minutes each.

[Minimum number of proposed Members speaking = 4 x 5 mins]

The Committee determined that consideration of this should continue on a future day.

Orders of the day—continued

FAMILY DAY CARE: Resumption of debate on the motion of Mr Conroy—That this House:

(1) recognises the importance of Government support for child care in order to improve workforce participation and early childhood education;
(2) condemns the Government for its $157 million cut to Family Day Care (FDC) funding by changing the eligibility for the FDC component of the Community Support Program and forcing existing services to re-apply;
(3) notes that:
   (a) FDC:
      (i) supports more than 98,000 families and 165,000 children across Australia; and
      (ii) employs more than 25,000 educators, as well as coordination unit staff;
   (b) Department of Education figures indicate that over 80 per cent of all FDC services will be denied essential funding due to these cuts; and
   (c) these cuts will force FDC services to increase fees, reduce services or close; and
(4) calls on the Government to reverse its cruel and short-sighted decision to cut FDC funding.

(Notice given 30 September 2014.)

Time allotted—remaining private Members’ business time prior to 1.30 pm.

All Members—5 minutes. each.

[Minimum number of proposed Members speaking = 6 x 5 mins]

The Committee determined that consideration of this should continue on a future day.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Superannuation

The Speaker (15:16): I have received a letter from the honourable member for McMahon proposing that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely:

The Government undermining the retirement savings of working Australians through its adverse changes to superannuation.

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 BOWEN (McMahon) (15:17): When it comes to the retirement incomes of Australians, we are seeing one very clear thing: the wilful sabotage of Australia's universal superannuation system by this coalition government. Each side of parliament has a legacy when it comes to superannuation. We on this side invented it, built it and protected it. The members opposite opposed it at its birth. They drag it down at every opportunity and they hold it back from growing, and there is another pattern of behaviour from members opposite: they do so by stealth.

On two occasions the Liberal and National parties have won an election with a superannuation policy. On two occasions they have replaced Labor governments with plans to take our superannuation rate to 12 per cent. They did so in 1996 and 2013. On each of those two occasions, the Liberal and National parties won those elections with a policy of continuing the work of the previous Labor government and taking superannuation to 12 per cent; and on both of those occasions they breached that promise and their faith with Australia's working people, who deserve dignity in their retirement.

We have a pattern of behaviour here because the Liberal and National parties do not understand superannuation and they certainly do not believe in it. They do not believe in the rights of Australians to live in retirement in comfort, dignity and security. They do not understand that superannuation was designed by previous Labor governments for several reasons, so that people who were saving for their own future could live their life in retirement independent of the age pension. Labor governments also saw the changes in our nation and that it was necessary to take pressure off the age pension.

We hear a lot of whingeing from the other side about the age pension. We hear a lot of whingeing from the Prime Minister and the Treasurer that the age pension is too high; that we cannot afford an age pension for Australian workers at the current level; that people should work longer; and that Australians should work longer than anybody else in the world before they get the age pension. But what they do not understand is that superannuation was designed to take pressure off the age pension, and our superannuation system is already saving $7 billion a year in age pension costs.

The Treasurer says to the Australian people—whether they are police men and women, soldiers, carpenters, bricklayers, nurses, people in difficult manual or physical jobs, or in jobs that are demanding psychologically: 'You must work until you're 70. You must work longer than any other people in any other country in the world.' But he also says: 'We will make it harder for you to save your retirement.'

The Treasurer can be a tricky character and he has worked out that parliament will not have a bar of his plan to make Australians work until they are 70; that his plans to make Australians work until they are 70 will be blocked in the other place. So he has come up with a different way of doing it. He has made it harder for Australians to save for their retirement through their superannuation system. He has said there will be a freeze on superannuation contributions. He has said that those Australians on a low income will receive zero tax incentive to save for superannuation, by abolishing the low-income superannuation contribution. What does this mean for Australians and when they can retire? We already know that a 25-year-old, as a result of decisions taken by this Treasurer and this government, will lose $100,000 in retirement income over their working life. And we know more now: we know the analysis has been done and, to make up for that shortfall, someone who is 25 today
and on an average salary of $70,000 a year will have to work 3.2 years longer to make up for the income they lose as a result of this government's changes.

But it gets worse, because some people are affected more. Take an older worker—someone who might be 35 compared to the 25-year-old I mentioned before—who might be part-time. They are probably a single parent, struggling with their work/life balance, bringing up a child or children by themselves, working hard, doing the best by their children but also wanting to save for their retirement and their future. Well, that person will have to work 4.7 years longer—to spend almost five years longer in the workforce—just to have the retirement incomes that they would have had under the previous Labor government's policies. These are people working hard. Nobody should ever dare call them leaners. Nobody should have the contempt to walk into this House and call these people leaners. They are workers doing their best for their families, trying to save for their own future—not to be reliant on the age pension. And this arrogant Treasurer dares categorise them as leaners. And worse, he dares make it harder for them to save for their own retirement, to do the right thing for themselves and their families. No wonder this Treasurer is seen as the most arrogant and contemptuous this nation has had.

We know that this government does not understand superannuation, but we know that there are plenty of people out there who do, and they are the experts in the field. We know the Australian people understand superannuation and support it. We know the Prime Minister does not understand it. He stood on the opposition backbench and called it a 'con job' when Prime Minister Keating was introducing it. He wrote in his book about superannuation and showed he clearly did not understand it. But other people understand it. The CEO of the Association of Superannuation Funds of Australia, Pauline Vamos, said:

... we are greatly concerned that the changes to the timetable for SG increases will leave many Australians much worse off in retirement.

She said:
The reality is, at the present SG rate of 9.5 per cent, most people will not build up enough super to provide them with adequate financial security when they finish working.
The CEO of the Industry Super Association said of the government's measures in the dirty deal with the Palmer United Party, freezing the superannuation guarantee:

It's an incredibly short-sighted decision.

Then we had the Chief Executive Officer of the Financial Services Council, John Brogden. He said this: 'The seven-year freeze means that working Australians will have $128 billion less in their superannuation savings by 2025.'

We are concerned it could exacerbate the nation’s low savings rate and that costs will be passed on to future generations.

And then we had Liz Westover, the head of superannuation at the Chartered Accountants. She said this:

We are even further away from a fully mature super system in which Australians can truly be confident.

But we have had a very worthwhile contribution today from one of Australia's leading business people—somebody who, on this side, we have respect for. He has a different perspective, a different job to do, but we have a lot of respect for Craig Meller, the chief
executive of the AMP—one of Australia's largest funds management businesses. This is what he said about this government's policies today:

We need to take action now to counter what is the most predictable threat to our prosperity over the next 20 to 30 years.

And he is right, because this is a threat to our prosperity. He said:

I think the challenge we've got as a country is that it is always very easy to put off until tomorrow the savings that we need to do.

And he has condemned this government's policies. He has condemned the freeze in superannuation. He knows the impact that it has on his members at AMP. He knows the impact it has on Australians going about their working lives, saving for their future. He knows the impact it has on the Australian economy. He runs one of Australia's largest businesses. He runs a business which has as its very reason for existence the retirement incomes of Australians, improving their lives so that they can live their retirement in dignity and in some degree of comfort—not luxury. We are not talking about luxury; we are talking about dignity, and some degree of comfort in retirement.

Everybody in this House will get to retire with an income which provides them with that dignity—every single member will do so. Why shouldn't Australians who are not in this House have the same right to retire in dignity and comfort? Why shouldn't Australians have the ability to live not reliant on a full age pension but on their own savings, supported through the taxation system. Every high-income Australian gets that right. Many middle-income Australians get that right. And this government is denying that right to low-income earners. It says all about the values of this government; it says all about its priorities—this government which says to low-income female workers across this country in hard manual labour that they will get no support. Well, they will get support as far as this side of the House is concerned, because we will defend and protect superannuation.

Mr McCormack (Riverina—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance) (15:27): It has now been more than 12 months since the Australian people voted the Australian Labor Party into opposition—7 September 2013. Remember that date? You should. I would have thought that, after six years of chaos, they probably needed a bit of a breather. Certainly, the Australian people thought that. I would have thought they needed to put their feet up, Labor members, with a cup of tea and maybe an Iced VoVo, to review the soap opera that was the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd administration. Certainly, I would have thought that the jumped-up member for McMahon—a failed Treasurer, a failed immigration minister—could have spent some time in some much-needed soul-searching.

At some point in the past 12 months you would have thought that Labor could have found the time—just a little bit of time—to formulate some policies and to come up with some alternative ideas. Just about everything about Labor in opposition is either a vain attempt to rewrite the narrative of their time in government or an attempt to distract themselves from the smashing defeat they copped at the last election. They will not let the nation move forward because they cannot move on from their own crushing electoral defeat. They cannot move on from the poisonous in-fighting that was at the heart of their demise. After 12 months, all they can muster—

Mr Brendan O'Connor: You wish! You wish!
Mr McCormack: Well, the Australian public could wish, too, member for Gorton, because, certainly, all they ever cop from that side is endless confected outrage. The repeal of the mining tax is a case in point. It is true that we had to make some compromises, including a delay in planned increases in the rate of the superannuation guarantee. But we would not have had to do it if Labor had respected the clear mandate we were given at the last election to abolish the mining tax. We were always up-front about the need to abolish the low-income superannuation contribution scheme. We were very clear with the Australian people that Labor's failed mining tax did not raise anywhere near the revenue needed to pay for it. Even with the compromises that needed to be made, the repeal of the mining tax and associate measures will still improve the budget bottom line by around $10 billion over the current forward estimates.

Now, if Labor really cared about working Australians they would not have left a legacy of debt and deficit, because leaving a country with a surplus provides jobs. Labor goes on about being the party of the workers, but how many people lost their jobs because of Labor's failed policies? We had a timely reminder of the debt and deficit legacy just last week with the release of the final budget outcome for 2013-14. Labor initially forecast a surplus of $5.4 billion for 2013, but we now know that the result for the year came in at a deficit of $48½ billion. That is a $53.9 billion difference. That is pretty close by Labor's standards—'missed it by that much'! Just that much!

We are taking decisive action to address serious unresolved issues left to us by Labor. We have restored the health of the Reserve Bank's capital buffer, cleared the ridiculous backlog of unenacted tax measures and addressed a funding shortfall for the processing of unauthorised maritime arrivals. We are putting spending on a sustainable path and repairing the budget at a time when a weakening economy is continuing to put pressure on tax receipts. We are growing the economy with record investment in productive infrastructure which will create jobs. If Labor really cared about working Australians—really, genuinely cared—they would get on board with our efforts to re-energise enterprise in this country, in this nation—particularly in regional Australia, where our food, fibre and mining wealth are derived.

Today, the Deputy Prime Minister launched round 1 of our $1 billion National Stronger Regions Fund. We heard in question time a list of just how much that is going to make a difference to regional areas and regional jobs. This is a fund which will deliver real money—not like the phoney money that Labor comes up with—to fix real problems in local communities, creating the right conditions to create real jobs. The fund will invest in important infrastructure projects nominated by local communities, ensuring that Australia's regions are investing in their own futures. Projects funded will have a focus on strengthening economies in Australia's most disadvantaged regions by improving their productivity, economic opportunity, employment and workforce skills. That is exactly what we need.

The National Stronger Regions Fund will complement a reinvigorated Roads to Recovery program, and I know how much that has meant to the Riverina electorate. It was just announced yesterday. As the Deputy Prime Minister announced yesterday, we are making good on our commitment to double Roads to Recovery funding next year to $700 million. This will greatly assist local councils in being able to meet local construction and repair needs.
Today, we also took a significant step towards a Western Sydney airport at Badgerys Creek, with the Deputy Prime Minister commencing discussions with the Sydney Airport Group. We are getting on with the job of fixing the nation. He is a busy bloke, the Deputy Prime Minister, and the fine work that he and other Nationals in government are doing makes a mockery of the claims made by those opposite that the Nationals are not sticking up for rural and regional Australia—the Nationals, and some excellent regional Liberals too, I might add. We are going to hear soon from the member for Corangamite, an outstanding representative for her electorate. Earlier today she dared other members to sign up to her petition to secure the future of the East West Link. I hope she mentions it again so that the relevant members opposite—that is, if any of them bother to turn up—have a chance to reconsider.

We are also going to hear from the member for Eden-Monaro, another great local member who understands business.

Mr Brendan O'Connor: Another oncer! He won't be here next term!

Mr McCormack: He understands business. I am really looking forward to joining him next week to talk tourism with local businesses in Pambula.

And we are going to hear from my good friend the member for Page. It was great to be with him in Lismore a couple of weeks ago, meeting with local businesses and talking about how to bring greater prosperity to Northern New South Wales. And we are going to hear from the member for Banks, another fine member—

Mr Brendan O'Connor: He won't be here!

Mr McCormack: You will not be here either, the way you are going. He is another fine member with a strong background in business. He is getting on with the job of advocating for his constituents in south-western Sydney.

It is passionate local members such as these who understand—they actually get it—the needs of local business both big and small. Do you know what the definition of a medium-sized business is? It is a business which was a big business before Labor came into power! Do you know what the definition of a small business is? It was a medium-sized business when Labor came into power. But we are getting on with the job of getting those businesses back, firing. We are getting on with the job of producing real jobs with real money; to ensure that the National Stronger Regions Fund, that Roads to Recovery and that good local representation is going to put them back on track to make money. And by making money they will be paying more taxes. By them paying more taxes we will be able to help repay the debt and deficit that Labor left us.

If Labor really cared about working Australians they would not have voted in the Senate yesterday to waste thousands of taxpayer dollars. Apparently, there are not enough issues to be dealt with in the Commonwealth sphere; the Palmer United Party and Labor think we need to go into the affairs of Queensland as well. How disgraceful! Let's be clear: we are only talking about the Queensland Liberal-National Party government, not the previous Queensland Labor administration. Oh no! No! We would not want to shine a light too brightly on Labor's record of failing to deliver for Queensland. No—we would not want to do that. I do not think the people of Queensland have forgotten that, and they will be only too happy to remind them at next year's Queensland state election. I tell you what—that is when the
Queensland voters will have their say and they will not forget the years of Anna Bligh and the years of Labor misadministration.

This committee will deliver money into the pockets of the committee chair, but I am not all that clear on what it does for Australian taxpayers. It is certainly not good value for money.

Kevin Rudd, the former member for Griffith—

Mr Ripoll: Who?

Mr McCormack: Yes—who? You have forgotten him already! I know it is forgettable! It is certainly forgettable, member for Oxley! But he summed up his party's outlook when he said in his maiden speech that politics is all about power. That is what he said in his maiden speech to this House, that politics is all about power.

Well, politics is not all about power. Politics is about people. It is about the people of Australia, and the people of Australia have elected the coalition—2013, 7 September, if you have forgotten—because we understand that the business of this place is to make a better future for all of us. That is what we were elected to do. We are getting on with the job of doing it, and those opposite would be well advised—absolutely well advised—to look at the national interest if they want to avoid being on the wrong side of history.

I will just finish with this, a line from the Treasurer—and a good Treasurer he is, too. In a 25 July media release last year he said:

Labor does not practice what they preach. All Labor does is use the superannuation system as their own personal ATM.

They simply—

Mr Brendan O'Connor: You're kidding!

Mr McCormack: No, I am not kidding:

They simply can't be trusted.

Families across Australia can be sure that they will be better off under a Coalition Government. This is because the Coalition will not treat Australians families and small businesses with contempt by saying one thing and doing another.

That is exactly what Labor did. For six years they said one thing and they did another. They treated the Australian public and the Australian taxpayers' purse with absolute contempt. That is why on 7 September last year they were booted out of office, as they should have been. And the Australian people voted the sensible people into the House. That is us, and we are getting on with the job of creating real jobs with real money.

Mr Ripoll (Oxley) (15:37): If you ever needed more evidence that this is a government completely confused not only about its role in government but also about superannuation, we just had it all. Ten minutes of all sorts of speeches smashed together, not once talking about superannuation—one of the most important issues that faces the Australian people—for an ageing population, budgets or the economy. It is one of the most important matters that face us as an economy, but they did not mention it once.

I, on the other hand, am very proud to talk about our history on superannuation. Not only have Labor created super for ordinary working Australians and making sure that we add to the national savings pool in our country but we have also created a super that underpinned our ability to sustain during the global financial crisis, with a country of just 24 million people,
the No. 4 spot for the country with largest funds under management in the world. We have a national savings pool of around $1.84 trillion—I will repeat that: trillions dollars—because 20-plus years ago it was Labor who structured and put forward one of the most important economic policy decisions that this country would ever make. That was called Superannuation Guarantee.

It is on the public record, and in Hansard, that it was the Liberals, and Tony Abbott then in opposition, who opposed superannuation every step of the way. This is a government that continues to oppose it. Only just recently, on 25 September 1995—recent enough—Tony Abbott said this:

Compulsory superannuation is one of the biggest con jobs ever foisted by government on the Australian people.

How wrong he was then and how wrong he is today. How could he ever have had those views? It is clear that there is just purely an ideological hatred against superannuation.

You would have to ponder what that means and how that has come about. Why would the Liberal Party and the National Party—it is very, very odd: why would there be this ideological, pathological almost, hatred of superannuation? What it does for our country and what it does for ordinary working Australians is to give them an opportunity to have some independence in retirement, and to have a decent retirement. Not a wealthy retirement—

Mr Neumann: To have some dignity.

Mr RIPOLL: Absolutely; dignity! There is still not enough there, and this is really what is before us here today. Even though we have had a bit over 20 years of Superannuation Guarantee and workers’ retirement savings building to a reasonable but very modest position, it is still not enough. That is why, when we were in government, we moved to have superannuation raised from nine per cent to 12 per cent. How can anyone argue against that?

We heard the shadow Treasurer talking about Craig Meller from AMP before, talking about the importance this has not only for working men and women but also for the national economy, for the budget. When will this government acknowledge the fact that by virtue of Labor’s Superannuation Guarantee policies over the past 20 years the budget saves $7 billion every single year? Seven billion dollars less expended on the budget, on the taxpayer, because we have Superannuation Guarantee and more people saving for their retirement. This should be something that is celebrated.

Mr Brendan O’Connor: It should be bipartisan.

Mr RIPOLL: It should be completely bipartisan, celebrated by every single person.

But there is one thing I do understand really, really clearly, as do the Australian people and as do Labor—that is, while the Liberal Party and the National Party have an ideological hatred of Superannuation Guarantee, they know they tread a very fine line because they know the Australian people do not agree with them, do not side with them. The Australian people actually understand that they need to save for their retirement. So when we hear the government, the Liberal Party and the National Party, talking about tearing down superannuation, getting rid of the low-income superannuation contribution—one of the smallest but most significant steps to help ordinary working Australians who earn less than $37,000 a year to save for their retirements—you have to ask the question: why would this
government be opposed to that? What is it about the Liberal Party, in government and in opposition, that is so pathologically opposed to ordinary working people—

Mr O'Dowd interjecting—

Mr RIPOLL: Including people in business, including people in small business, because they save for their retirement too. A lot of them do it through retail funds and industry funds and they do it through their fund managers; they are the beneficiaries of Labor’s policies as well. But it is this government, the Liberal-National parties government, that will tear this down. The evidence is clear. It is clear to all Australians; when will it become clear to the government?

Mr COLEMAN (Banks) (15:42): Rarely have we seen such a clear-cut example of why we are over here and those opposite are over there. This is yet another example of Labor’s reflective solution to every single issue—that is, spend more money. It does not matter what it is; whatever the topic is, spend more money. They believe that is the solution. You want to create a political distraction? Spend more money. You want to avoid the real issues? Spend more money. You want a cheap headline? Spend more money. Absolutely anything, they will want to spend more money.

The Australian people know that governing is a serious business and that simply saying, ‘We're going to spend more; we're going to do more and spend more on absolutely everything,’ is not sustainable. Frankly, it is a childish approach that leads to terrible problems. We have seen that no more clearly than in relation to the mining taxes. We do have to back up a little bit; we do need to talk, unfortunate though it is, about the mining tax because the situation we face in superannuation is so closely linked to that. That party over there is the party that said the mining tax would create $12 billion of revenue in the first two years.

Mr Sukkar: How close did they get?

Mr COLEMAN: Not very close, Member for Deakin. They were just out by 98 per cent.

Government members interjecting—

Mr COLEMAN: No, come on; let us be reasonable. It was only 98 per cent. They are working through their calculations and hopefully they will do better in the future. But the funny thing is there are still some forecasts out there in relation to what the mining tax would have done—they are more sensible forecasts now because they are not by Labor—and they say that the mining tax would generate about $660 million over the forward estimates. But what Labor had, and still clings to, was a desire to spend $17 billion against $660 million of revenue.

Mr Sukkar: Seventeen billion?

Mr COLEMAN: That is a problem as well, member for Deakin, because that involves a net deterioration in the budget over that period of over $16 billion, and $600 million is about four per cent of $17 billion. So it is slightly better than the two per cent but still very bad. It is the right direction but still out by 96 per cent. As a consequence, the government needs to make sensible adjustments because we are not just going to sleep walk into the future, pretending the budget situation is okay, pretending that two-thirds of a trillion dollars of debt in 10 years—which is the trajectory we are on—is okay. We are not going to pretend that is
okay because it is not. We need to make some sensible adjustments and deferral of the superannuation guarantee increase is one of them.

You do wonder about the previous government. The member for McMahon was in here earlier, very excited and speaking passionately. He was here when the member for Lilley introduced the mining tax. Why did he not take him aside and say, 'We need to go through the numbers in a sensible way before we commit to tens of billions in spending'? Why did he not make sure that there was some reality? He did not do that. It is unfortunate because the member for Lilley was not the Treasurer for the under-7 sausage sizzle; he was the Treasurer for the entire nation and that is just not an acceptable standard.

The key point on the superannuation guarantee deferral is that, as many people have noted, when superannuation guarantee goes up, that comes out of wages. Obviously, businesses cannot just invent money, much as the opposition probably think they can. Business cannot say, 'Okay, we'll just find an extra three per cent.' That is not the sort of thing that happens in the real world. Consequently, there is a negative impact on short-term wages. So there is no question that, if the guarantee goes up more quickly, wages come down. So deferring it by three years—a sensible budget saving—makes no difference to the total compensation paid to an employer but it means they get more of it up front than they otherwise would have. So this is a very sensible response to some appalling public policy by those opposite. Let us just be thankful that the government has changed since these initiatives were put in place. (Time expired)

Ms RYAN (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (15:47): I am really pleased to be speaking on this matter of public importance today because I want to talk about women and the low-income superannuation contribution. I note that neither speaker opposite mentioned women. This measure will have a disproportionately higher impact on women. Approximately 3.6 million people will be affected by these changes and two-thirds of those will be women—that is, over two million low-income women set to retire with less in their savings. Overall the impact will probably affect the retirement savings of one in two women. Yet again this government shows its true colours when it comes to equal opportunity. We have seen it before—only one woman in cabinet, a lone female voice in the cabinet room. I suspect, due to overseas commitments, that lone female voice is often absent from cabinet meetings. What does that leave us with? It leaves us with wall-to-wall men making decisions ignorant of or worse knowingly hurting the lives of women.

Ms Henderson: You have got to be kidding!

Ms RYAN: I give you my heartfelt thanks. Oh! Feigned outrage! I am glad that you are in the chamber today. I will tell you what: I am so pleased you are in the chamber today but I am tired of you knocking on that cabinet door. Why don't you walk through it? Why don't you get into that cabinet and speak to them about low-income superannuation and what it will mean to women's earnings at the end of their working life and what it will mean to the dignity of their retirement? Women who earn $37,000 a year in this country are being hit triplefold by this government but it is okay as long as those on high incomes do not take the cuts, no. The cuts by this government are hitting low-income women. I am really pleased to see some women in here with me. There was no modelling done on the budget's impact on women because this government does not care about women.

An opposition member interjecting—
Ms RYAN: That is the other problem—as I hear behind me. Perhaps they do know but they do not care. That is how it feels on this side, when measure after measure dished up by this government in 12 months has hurt women.

Mr Tudge: Like paid parental leave.

Ms RYAN: So we are going to talk about paid parental leave—12 months and we have not seen legislation on the floor of this chamber about a PPL and why would we want to see legislation about that PPL? We have a perfectly good PPL scheme already and that one is a rolled gold one for millionaires, as we have pointed out several times.

The small benefit in the low-income superannuation contribution was designed to support low-income women, many of whom juggle family commitments and their careers with flexible, often part-time working arrangements. It was one form of tax break for which they were eligible. It was a small measure that went some way to support women who retire currently on approximately 40 per cent less than men. Given women live longer, this is an important measure that Labor was proud to support. It was a modest support measure for those earning less than $37,000 a year. It was a maximum contribution of $500 per annum. What a lousy deal this government struck with the Palmer United Party.

High-income earners often find ways to ensure their superannuation can be concessional by salary sacrificing, for example, option low-income workers rarely have the ability to access. So layer upon layer, we see what this government thinks about low-income earners and about women. Not only are they removing the low-income superannuation contribution but they are delaying general superannuation increases until 2025.

Under Labor, superannuation was projected to increase each year until it reached 12 per cent in 2019. It was a good plan. The coalition government first announced a delay to postpone increases until 2021, then a further announcement saw a delay until 2022—(Time expired)

Dr HENDY (Eden-Monaro) (15:52): This is the second debate on superannuation, aged care and related issues that I have been involved in in the last month. Labor raised this issue a few weeks ago and, interestingly, only two people were sitting on that side of the chamber after we got past the first speaker. That actually shows you the extent to which they are interested in this matter of public importance.

The way I started my speech last time is quite relevant to how I start it this time. Where is the money coming from, Mr Shorten? Where would the money come from to pay for all these policies you are carping about—

Mr Brendan O'Connor: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I ask the honourable member to refer to members by their title.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): I ask the member for Eden-Monaro to refer to members by their title or their seat.

Dr HENDY: I am very happy to, Mr Deputy Speaker, because it gives me an opportunity to basically say the same thing. Where is the money coming from, Leader of the Opposition?

I would like to note that there are two myths coming from the opposition benches on this issue. The first myth—and you heard it from the member for McMahon, who is leading this debate from the opposition side—is that Labor invented superannuation. Labor should realise
that superannuation started in this country in 1860. It was not invented by the Labor Party just the other day, by Paul Keating. The second part of this is that superannuation is about a savings policy and savings in this country. There are two parts to savings in this country: there are public savings and private savings. Superannuation is part of the private savings in this country.

The second great myth is that Labor care about savings. They obviously do not care about public savings; they just spend money. The fact is that, in the last six years, the legacy that was left by the Howard government—a brilliant legacy in terms of having the budget in order—has been completely squandered. The sum of $123 billion was run up. You ran up forward estimate spending policies that would lead to an eventual debt in 10 years time of $667 billion.

A government member: Shame!

Dr HENDY: That is an absolute shame. It means that, at the moment, the federal government is borrowing money to pay $1 billion a month in interest bills. That money we are borrowing is coming from overseas so that we can pay the interest bill, 70 per cent of which goes back overseas. That is what Labor think about savings. They have no concept of savings across the whole of the national economy, because what does that debt mean? That debt, $667 billion within 10 years, amounts to $25,000 per man, woman and child in this country.

The other hypocrisy about the proposals being debated today is that Labor care about super. Let me tell you: in the lead-up to the 2007 election, Labor said they would not change super. In fact, Kevin Rudd, as the then Leader of the Opposition, explicitly stated in the 2007 election that Labor would not change superannuation laws, 'not one jot, not one tittle'. And what did he actually do? I will tell you what he did: in the six years that Labor were in office, they cut almost $9 billion out of super benefits and some $3.3 billion from super benefits for lower income earners in this country. That is your record. You come here with great hypocrisy—

Mr Brendan O'Connor interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Gorton. The member for Eden-Monaro has the call.

Dr HENDY: So $9 billion in cuts to superannuation in six years! That is what these guys did. What did they actually do? Well, there were a whole series of things: they increased taxes on voluntary savings by lowering concessional contribution caps, they reduced the government’s superannuation co-contributions—(Time expired)

Mr KELVIN THOMSON (Wills) (15:57): The member for Eden-Monaro said that the Labor Party did not invent superannuation. That is true; superannuation for rich people has been around for a very long time but, by crikey, what we did do was spread superannuation to ordinary Australians. Ordinary people can now find, through the superannuation guarantee, over $1 trillion which was not there before we set up the superannuation guarantee and never would have been there if those opposite had their way. They have sought to undermine the superannuation guarantee at every turn and even now I hear the right-wing economists, from whom they take their cue, deriding superannuation by saying that this is forced saving and that people ought to be free to spend their money however they please. The fact is that those
opposite do not give a damn about the future; they feign concern about the future. They cry crocodile tears over things like the budget deficit, which they have been adding to, and population ageing. But they do so merely to serve a big-end-of-town agenda. When it comes to issues which really affect future generations like superannuation and climate change, they sit on their hands and they white-ant and undermine real action.

In my electorate of Wills, over 26,000 workers will be adversely affected by the plan to reimpose a 15 per cent superannuation tax on low-income and part-time workers, with shop assistants, waiters, bartenders and cleaners being the hardest hit. This superannuation tax plan will slash the retirement savings of these 26,000 low-income workers in my area, the majority of whom are women.

The member for Lalor pointed out in her contribution that some 2.1 million or 60 per cent of those low-income earners are women and women are already retiring with less in their super accounts because of the disparity in their pay compared to men. Women also take time out of the workforce to have children and so they are impacted by lower superannuation savings. The policy that we are debating this afternoon would mean that over 40,000 women in my electorate would have less super in their retirement.

Around a third of hospitality and childcare workers and around a quarter of the electricians in the Wills electorate will suffer from this government policy. Some 57 per cent of all food preparation assistants and 53 per cent of all checkout operators would be worse off. This is an attack on some of the poorest people in the Wills electorate whose retirement savings are modest at best. We should be doing all that we can to boost those savings. The key point here is that the Treasurer cannot argue on the one hand for the need to make the age pension more sustainable by restricting its eligibility and cutting its amount and then on the other hand cut the very means by which workers could achieve less dependence on the pension. As was reported in *The Guardian* on 30 September there are six in 10 Australians drawing the full age pension and eight in 10 receiving some form of pension support. So why does the government want to cut superannuation, which is the sustainable and responsible avenue to lessen the load on taxpayers for retirees?

The Liberal government is undermining the retirement savings of working Australians both through the delay in the introduction of the increase in the superannuation guarantee from nine per cent to 12 per cent by seven years and by removing the low-income superannuation contribution. The increases in the superannuation guarantee were due to come in from the current level to 12 per cent by 2019-20. The Liberal government first said it was stopping them in their tracks until at least 2021. Then in the budget they announced the 12 per cent would not be reached until 2022. Now they have announced a third delay meaning the full 12 per cent will not be reached until 2025. At this rate, we will never get an increase to the superannuation guarantee.

We also have issues to do with the low-income superannuation contribution. This was something being done for low-income earners. Together with the halt to the superannuation guarantee, the estimated combined negative impact on national savings by 2025 will be $150 billion. This sells out the future. There is one side of politics concerned about superannuation and it is the Labor side of politics. *(Time expired)*

**Ms Henderson** (Corangamite) (16:02): I welcome the opportunity to talk about boosting the savings of Australian workers because that is one of the principle reasons why
members opposite are sitting on that side of the House. Members opposite have squandered all the savings of all Australians. The way we were going under your previous government when you were in power was heading towards $25,000 in debt for every man, woman and child, skyrocketing towards $667 billion of debt. You have squandered the national savings and that is why members opposite are sitting where they are.

Mr Conroy: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I ask that the member for Corangamite refer her remarks through the chair, not at the chair.

Ms HENDERSON: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I want to reflect particularly on the member for Oxley's contribution today. He made some comments. I come from a background as a journalist where the facts are important when telling the story. We have seen an appalling display of dishonesty in this debate, talking about the coalition being pathologically opposed to superannuation. I want to put on record the comments of the Prime Minister just a few weeks ago when he said that compulsory superannuation is an important part of our overall social safety net. It is an important part of our retirement income policy. That is why compulsory superannuation will rise to 12 per cent by 2025.

On that note, I also want to put on the record the contribution in recent times of the Leader of the Opposition, who, I note, is not contributing to this debate today because essentially he has taken the view that proposed increases in the superannuation guarantee are funded from reductions in take-home wages and business profits. He has made that clear, absolutely. It is startling. Perhaps the member for McMahon is in some way undermining the Leader of the Opposition in bringing on this debate. It is very clear, as the opposition leader said in 2012, every superannuation increase comes out of workers' wages. We are concerned about all workers and we are concerned about building the future of all workers. Again, for the record:

Analysis suggests that, over time, superannuation guarantee increases have come out of wages, .... That is not something we have heard from the members opposite in this debate.

But I also want reflect on the member for Lalor's contribution. I was quite stunned by some of the comments she made in relation to working women. One of the most startling differences between our policy and the policy of those opposite is paid parental leave. What an appalling situation it is that superannuation has been excluded for women on paid parental leave. That is a very poor reflection on members opposite's commitment to women and saving for women's retirement.

I had a conversation the other day with a woman who worked for Centrelink in Geelong. She said to me, 'Do you know the change made by the previous government that caused more alarm and distress than any other change was moving 60,000 single mothers, primarily mothers, onto Newstart. It was the chaotic way in which members opposite ran the government when they were in power. So we are concerned about building the futures of all Australians.

The member for Gellibrand, if you were concerned about building the future for all Australians, you would back my petition. You would back the East West Link. The East West Link will deliver 6,200 jobs. It is so important for Geelong, so important for Western Melbourne. The member for Gellibrand, the member for Lalor, the Leader of the Opposition,
the member for Corio and the member for Ballarat are letting down their constituents extremely badly because they are standing in the way of one of the most important infrastructure projects in Victoria's history, and more than 6,000 jobs. Imagine what that would do for manufacturing workers in the member for Gellibrand's electorate and in the member for Lalor's electorate and in my electorate of Corangamite. So get out of the way and support the policies that grow jobs.

Mr WATTS (Gellibrand) (16:07): I rise to speak on the Prime Minister's cradle-to-the-grave approach to increasing inequality in Australian society. Instead of expanding opportunity for Australians at every stage of their lives, the Abbott government seems to be determined to take these opportunities away—from babies born in public hospitals in my electorate, forced to struggle as the government rips out more than $50 billion of hospital funding in this year's budget to the children studying in our schools, deprived of Gonski funding intended to ensure all children have access to a quality education; to the students in our universities, where the Prime Minister's higher education reforms will price many bright students from disadvantaged families out of the dream of a university education; to our pensioners who are seeing their age pensions cut; and, finally, to our self-funded retirees, whose retirement savings are now under attack from the Abbott government.

Under a dodgy deal signed with the Prime Minister's coalition partner, Clive Palmer—a noted everyman—the government has worked to make saving for retirement harder for everyday Australians. With the repeal of the mining tax came the repeal of the low-income superannuation contribution and a freeze on the lifting of the superannuation guarantee from nine to 12 per cent. Both of these measures were crucial to Australia's future not only in amassing a wealth of savings that could be invested in the economy over the long term but also in ensuring that all Australians would be able to live the retirement they deserved after a lifetime of work.

The low-income superannuation contribution was mostly targeted at remedying the inequalities that currently exist within our superannuation system. It allowed for a contribution of up to $500 towards the superannuation savings of those workers earning $37,000 per annum or less. It was crucial support for the members of our society least likely to have a strong personal superannuation balance when entering retirement.

In particular, the low-income superannuation contribution—as outlined by the member for Lalor in great detail—addressed the superannuation gap that currently exists between men and women. Over two thirds of those receiving the low-income superannuation contribution were women, and Industry Super Australia called the LISC:

… the single most important policy setting in the super system which helps to address the inequity in savings gap whereby women are currently retiring with about 40% less than men …

Those opposite can talk about PPL all they want but it will not address this gap.

I am sure the Minister for Women fought this measure hard in the cabinet room before rolling over and letting it through, but the Prime Minister, the Minister for Women and his Coalition partner, Clive Palmer, are not content with making it harder for our most disadvantaged women to save for their retirement. By freezing the increase in the superannuation guarantee, they have ensured that workers will have fewer savings when they retire. And, once again, this freeze will adversely affect those who had fewer retirement savings to begin with, in particular our youngest workers.
Modelling from Industry Super Australia suggests that, while a worker aged 50 earning $80,000 will lose $15,310 from their super, a worker aged 30 will lose double that amount, or over $31,000; if you are a worker aged 50 earning $175,000 or more, these changes will see you lose around $33,000 from your retirement savings; but our 30-year-old workers on $50,000 a year will lose around $20,000—more than half that amount from a far smaller pool of earnings to begin with.

But the true evidence of the Abbott government's commitment to inequality isn't in making the lives of our low-income workers even harder; no, it is in its efforts to make the lives of our high-income workers even easier. The Abbott government has complemented the inequality introduced by these superannuation changes with its move to cut taxes on superannuation earnings of over $100,000 a year. Sixteen thousand of Australia's wealthiest citizens will pay even less tax on their super; while at the same time 8.4 million Australians will face a future after work with far less money to survive on.

Once again, we see the perverted priorities of this Prime Minister—a prime minister who promised before the election that changes to superannuation were off the table, and that there would be 'no adverse changes' in store for Australians. Yesterday, the Prime Minister told the House that his attack on the retirement savings of working Australians was justified, because he had promised to do so at the last election. That just sums it up.

This is a government that studiously keeps its promises to the top end of town, while breaking every promise it has made to everyday Australians. This is an extreme, out-of-touch government that has broken its commitment to working Australians and it will pay the price at the next election.

On election eve, the Prime Minister promised to be a government for all Australians. Since then, this has been a government for the rich and few, a government for the 16,000 Australians with more than a million dollars in their super and one that makes the rest of Australia—pensioners, patients, students, the unemployed and low-income earners—pay the price for it. Australians did not vote for this at the last election. They do not want it and they will have another say at the next election.

Mr HOGAN (Page) (16:12): There is one really clear thing that I think the opposition need to understand: if they are talking about the savings for people's retirement, this money comes from—and it has been acknowledged by the Leader of the Opposition, no less—the wages of the workers who pay it. The designers of this scheme back in the eighties—I forget which union leader was running the country with the Labor Prime Minister at the time; I think it was Bill Kelty—said that the superannuation levy was negotiated and wage increases were forgone to build that levy.

When we talk about this money and this superannuation levy, this isn't a mean government not giving them the money; this is simply the government making a decision that these people will keep that money as wages for longer than they would for retirement. Let's understand that before we start.

Then we have all these confected and made-up figures. I love it when the Labor Party start talking about figures, because, with budget estimates and everything else they talk about, you cannot trust or believe anything. They will make up some 25- or 35-year old and how much it
is going to cost for their retirement. That may or may not be true. Are they assuming what that person would have done with the money if they had kept it as wages?

Let's assume this 25- or 35-year-old, instead of the increased levy going to their superannuation, paid off their mortgage quicker. What would that mean? Would it mean more money for their retirement, because they have not had to pay more in mortgage costs? These rubbery figures that they always come up with need very much to be examined.

We talk about undermining savings. Some of my colleagues have talked about that already. But, if we want to talk about undermining savings, we need to look at the behaviour of six years of Labor governments. How did they undermine savings? Let us look at a few examples. The carbon tax helped! We are talking about superannuation? A lot of the superannuation of these people is invested in public companies. The carbon tax helped them: increased costs, less cash-flow, more non-competitiveness! Live export bans—that helped their savings! That helped the savings of everyone whose superannuation was invested in agribusinesses! The mining tax helped the savings of everyone's superannuation! As mining companies continue to become more non-competitive, the red tape that that side loves helped everybody's savings as well!

But what do we want to do? We are about people's savings. We are about building jobs; it is pretty hard to have a superannuation scheme when you do not have a job. We are about increasing job competition, and we are about abolishing red tape. We want the $1.8 trillion that is invested in superannuation to not have the costs of a mining tax. We want to encourage exporters. A lot of our savings, a lot of our superannuation, is invested in companies that want to export. What do we do? We do free trade agreements with countries like Korea and Japan—and with countries like China in the next few months. We want our public companies and investors in Australia to do well. That will increase the savings of our people as well.

They say with confected outrage that we are 'haters of superannuation'. But do you know what we did when we were in government last time? We built the Future Fund. That's right. 'What is the future fund?' The Future Fund was a $50 billion superannuation fund for public servants. It has grown to be $100 billion. Do we 'hate superannuation'? We built the biggest sovereign fund that this country has ever had and one of the biggest, if not the biggest, single superannuation fund this country has.

This side of politics did that. When did we do that? How did that how did we do that? Again, let's go into figures and numbers. We paid back $96 billion of debt; we ran good public savings surpluses; and we put that into superannuation. That is our history. We believe in people's savings. Everything we do here is to increase the economy of Australia and our superannuation. (Time expired)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): Order! The discussion is now concluded.

BILL

Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill 2014
Second Reading

Debate resumed on the motion:
That this bill be now read a second time.
Ms KING (Ballarat) (16:17): I rise to speak on the Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill 2014. In three years time, Australia will no longer have a local car manufacturing industry. Sixty-five years of proud achievement in manufacturing, employment, research, development, skills and productivity will come to an end. That great site of the first Holden rolling off the assembly line, being delivered to Ben Chifley—now 65 years down the track—gone. This has been a devastating blow for tens of thousands of Australian automotive workers and their families, many of whom work in my electorate. But not content with that timetable, the Abbott government is now determined to drive not only the car manufacturers to the wall, but the entire car component sector, and with it, tens of thousands, possibly hundreds of thousands of jobs, many of them in rural and regional Australia.

The Abbott government's Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill cuts $500 million in funding for the car industry, ending all assistance by 2017. The only transformation this bill will achieve is to transform the car components sector from an industry that directly employs 50,000 people, and a further 200,000 indirectly, into oblivion.

The news in February that Toyota would join Holden and Ford in ceasing its automotive manufacturing operations not only signalled the end for the local car industry; it was a devastating blow to those employed throughout the car component supply chains. This will have a lasting impact on our economy that goes way beyond the direct jobs lost at the three car makers.

Manufacturing is a critical part of the Victorian economy, and Holden and Toyota sit at the heart of Victoria's automotive manufacturing industry. Australia's car makers directly employ thousands of people, and with around 70 per cent of Australia's automotive industry's component manufacturers based in Victoria, indirect employment through their supply chains results in many more thousands of jobs, many of which are in regional Victoria, many of which are in small and medium enterprises.

In my own electorate of Ballarat, local car component manufacturers produce metal pressings and assemblies, disk brake pads, seatbelts, exhausts and automotive electrical harnesses. There are small companies in very small towns throughout regional Victoria making seat covers, making seatbelts; all of them highly reliant on Toyota, Ford and Holden.

The jobs, design expertise, manufacturing skills and investment provided by our automotive industry flow through the economy and into other sectors. Without a local car industry many of these businesses will simply not have enough work to be viable. The wilful destruction of the automotive industry rips the heart out of manufacturing in Australia, cascading through the economy like a series of dominoes. That is why Labor believes our automotive industry is vital for our economic future and it is vital for Australia to stay at the forefront of innovation. This government's decision to compound its destruction of local car manufacturing by slashing the Automotive Transformation Scheme, and then terminating it in 2017, is a further betrayal of the small businesses in the car components sector, and tens of thousands they employ.

Holden's Managing Director, Gerry Dorizas, has warned that suppliers are extremely vulnerable without the additional $500 million worth of funding originally allocated by Labor under the Automotive Transformation Scheme. He points out that suppliers have invested based on the ATS to break even: 'They needed this kind of subsidy and, at this particular time,
they're in dire straits,' Mr Dorizas said. And, without this support, the car industry might not be able to even continue in this country until 2017, because, without the supplier base, nobody will be able produce cars, especially for the parts that are specific to Australia.

About two-thirds of the parts in a Ford Falcon and a Ford Territory are made locally, and up to 70 of the parts in a Toyota Camry. Even though less than half of a new Commodore is now made with locally produced parts, the reality is that those vehicles cannot be built here without Australian-made components. Without this support not only will car manufacturing be driven out of Australia, but so too will the car component sector. People who have invested their life savings in businesses that supply the car makers now risk seeing everything gone. Workers who have spent their lives training to work in manufacturing now risk seeing their jobs taken away with little prospect of alternative work. Anywhere that occurs is devastating for the businesses and those they employ; but outside the major cities those effects are multiplied, with the crucial skills base that supports regional economies like my home town of Ballarat lost forever.

Labor has always supported a strong local car industry because it has always been about so much more than Falcons and Camrys and Commodores. Government co-investment in the automotive industry has always delivered far more in return that was ever put in. That investment delivers a return on jobs, a return on the multiplier for local economies and a return for design and innovation across the entire manufacturing sector. The $2.7 billion that Labor invested in the industry has seen $26 billion in new investment. The car makers wanted to stay in Australia and wanted to continue to invest in this country—invest in manufacturing, invest in innovation, invest in jobs and invest in local communities. Instead, we had the Treasurer taunting them to leave, insulting their contribution to this nation and casting aside 65 years of a proud local industry.

Everyone in this parliament would have driven a locally produced car at some time in their lives. For many it was their first car. My first car as an 18-year-old was a cyan blue HQ Holden. My brother did his apprenticeship at Fishermans Bend as a fitter and turner. Holden has been very much a part of my own family's story and history. My brother-in-law still works on the assembly line at Toyota today—but not for much longer. For other families it was Ford or Toyota. Particularly in recent years Australians took great pride in knowing that the locally built cars they drove were as safe and as well made as those they could buy from overseas—in fact, even better.

In recent years the car industry has struggled with changing tastes—families have abandoned the traditional big six for an SUV—and especially the high dollar. In many ways the car industry has been forced to pay the price for the success of our resource economy. But with modest government support it still had a future building cars here and driving employment, research and development, and skills and innovation in Australian manufacturing.

The facts are that, even today, four of the 10 best selling cars in Australia are still locally made; 50,000 people are directly employed by Ford, Holden and Toyota and their 150 component manufacturers; and the auto industry is still the largest R&D contributor in the Australian manufacturing sector, contributing almost $700 million annually. These are hardly the vital signs of an industry in its death throes. But still this government, which is obsessed with ideology above common sense, has decided it as industry Australia could best do
without. The reality is that it will cost taxpayers many times more to let this industry fail than it would have cost to support it. Modelling by the University of Adelaide shows the loss of the industry will cut our economy by $9 billion, or about two per cent of GDP. Higher welfare payments and lost tax revenue will exceed $20 billion and it will be a decade before the economy overcomes this shock.

In South Australia and Victoria it could be nearly two decades before the local economies overcome the loss of a critical part of their manufacturing base—and it is even worse for regional communities. In Ararat, for example, the local car component factory there is one of the only employers in town. What do you do to the economy of that town when you rip that out? Do you tell people who have been employed for 20, 25 or 30 years in that particular components factory that they could go into retail or the services sector? What do you do in Ballarat, which already has a higher than average unemployment rate? Where are the next jobs coming from? The cascading effect for regional and rural communities, particularly for car componentry in Victoria and South Australia, is going to be quite staggering for our local economies. What is so disappointing about the government's decision to rip this money out of the car componentry sector is the compensation and assistance to transform our economies. Do think that is going to make its way to Ararat and to Ballarat? It might make its way to Geelong and Broadmeadows, but I can absolutely assure you that we have not seen one dollar come into our local councils and economic development groups to assist those smaller communities to deal with these shocks.

And it is not as though the Abbott government have not seen this coming. Indeed, they have been repeatedly warned of the consequences of their $500 million cut in assistance for the industry and what effect it would have on the automotive manufacturing industry and our economy. They were warned before the election when they announced that this was their policy, they were warned when they shut down the car industry, and they continue to be told how damaging this policy is now. My most immediate thoughts are with the businesses and employees who are going to be directly affected by this decision. Within the next three years thousands of workers who have produced world-class cars will through no fault of their own be staring at the loss of their livelihood.

In the years to come the destruction of this industry will spread across Victoria and South Australia as many workers and businesses not directly employed by Ford, Holden and Toyota—small to medium enterprises in this sector—experience the shockwaves of this collapse. Many of them are in small regional communities. They were established as family businesses. They have worked really hard to win contracts to supply our major car manufacturers. They have worked incredibly hard to deal with the shocks of Chinese manufacturing and the high Australian dollar. They have diversified what they have been doing within the car componentry sector. But literally overnight they have been told that they are not getting any more support from this government.

Many of these companies have been looking to diversify, to find new contracts that will allow them to survive and continue to grow their business and their workforce. This is precisely why the early winding up of this scheme is so devastating. With just a little support and some certainty, many of these businesses might have been able to find a way to transition from cars to other forms of manufacturing, despite the best efforts of the Abbott government to finish them off. I have seen examples of car component companies that started to look at
how they might actually engage in renewable energy manufacture particularly in the solar area. Good luck with that under this government as well! Instead, many now risk premature closure, being forced out of businesses even while Holden, Toyota and Ford still seek to build their final locally produced cars. Having finished off locally produced cars, the Abbott government now seems determined to rid this country of all evidence we even once had a car industry.

Labor will stand up for manufacturing jobs and the tens of thousands of Australians employed directly or indirectly by the industry and the 150 car component manufacturers. We will stand up for jobs and businesses and innovation and do everything in our power to stop this ill-judged attempt to hasten the demise of our car industry by cutting suppliers off at the knees before they have a chance to reposition themselves. This bill and the cuts to this assistance, particularly to the car componentry sector, will have a devastating impact on communities across this country but particularly in my home state of Victoria, in South Australia and in rural and regional economies. The fact that the government has failed to engage with any of those communities about how we may transition our economies, how we actually deal with what is a substantial shock to the manufacturing base of these economies, is, frankly, appalling. It is easy on the headlines. We know that there are large-scale job losses in Broadmeadows. We know the large-scale job losses in South Australia and we know the large-scale job losses in communities like Geelong who have had many, many shocks. But this bill and the implications of this bill for the hundreds of car component employees and the hundreds of businesses that have been feeding those industries, and the failure of the government to effectively transition those through our economies right through country Victoria and country South Australia, frankly, show that this government has absolutely abandoned them. It is not interested in manufacturing jobs or in growing regional economies particularly when it comes to manufacturing—those great jobs that allow us to earn a good living and provide a great opportunity for young people to be trained and stay within their local communities. Frankly, this government should be ashamed of the decisions it is making when it comes to regional and rural Australia.

Mr HAYES (Fowler—Chief Opposition Whip) (16:32): Once again, Mr Deputy Speaker Goodenough, it falls to Labor members to stand up for workers in this country—stand up for workers, their families, their livelihoods. It will not surprise you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that I oppose the Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill 2014, as does every member on this side of the House.

This bill, if passed, will give effect to a $500 million cut to the Automotive Transformation Scheme, which will now end effectively in 2017. It is certainly one of the most callous attacks on an industry which has really been in this government's focus for some time, notwithstanding the fact that they came to an election a little over 12 months ago promising to give everything they could to support the automotive industry in this country to make sure that it flourished. Ever since taking up the power they have done everything possible to ensure that this industry retreated out of this country. As a matter of fact, along with that they have ensured that a lot of the high-grade manufacture that we have been noted for in this country also goes by the wayside. This bill will also give effect to what is a termination of the Automotive Transformation Scheme in its entirety and beyond 2018 this will effectively mean another $400 million cut.
These have been investments which have been quite well thought out in supporting an industry. They have not been well thought out in terms of giving a handout to an industry, but in giving an industry the opportunity to coinvest particularly in terms of research and development. Since coming to office, this government has done nothing except oversee the slashing of many thousands of jobs and taking thousands of dollars out of the pockets of pensioners, families, job seekers, university students and TAFE students.

This is a heartless government. But when it comes to an issue of advanced manufacture in this country, this is something that goes to the country's future itself. If we lose the strategic ability for advanced manufacture, we lose a lot of our strategic ability right across the wide parameters of our economy. One of those areas can be looked at in terms of the construction of submarines. If we lose that ability, we will be dependent on foreign powers to provide our defensive ability for the future. But I will not digress onto submarines on this occasion.

This bill is going to leave not only the automotive manufacturing companies, which are winding down but still producing quality cars here—as you can see from our Comcar fleet, Mr Deputy Speaker—but importantly, it will leave the component manufacturers in this country with no support. I do not know whether people opposite appreciate this, but not everything in a car is actually made by Holden, Toyota or Ford. They access the instrumentation, the fabric and the paint, for example. These all come from other forms of manufacturing within the Australian economy.

The list goes on. As a matter of fact, when you look at the amount of componentry that goes into a vehicle, it sustains something like 200,000 people in this country at the moment. We know that they will not all be working in the automotive industry into the future, but we want to make sure that they have the ability to transfer into other areas of advanced manufacture, and this is where a level of coinvestment, strategising and assistance is required to help these companies target future markets both in this country and abroad.

We have very good-quality trade skills in this country when it comes to component manufacture. We do not want to lose that by turning off our ability to give assistance to these companies and help them target other markets and help their staff acquire the skills necessary to transform their positioning for the future.

We are talking about something that has really come very quickly. Bear in mind that it was the Labor government in 2008 that responded to a downturn in the industry, a downturn in the dollar, to ensure that there was investment being made in the automotive industry of this country and, more importantly, to ensure that the automotive industry would continue to employ people. It was not just about employing the people of Broadmeadows, Elizabeth, Geelong or other areas where the manufacture of vehicles took place; it was about employing people from all over, including from areas in my electorate of Fowler. If people opposite started looking around their own electorates, I can assure you that they would find that there are many companies in their electorates that have downstream aspects associated with the automotive industry. This is something that members opposite should not close their minds to simply because they have the view that they do not support vehicle manufacture in this country.

Whilst we might have brought in the scheme initially to help stabilise the industry and the challenges faced by the global financial crisis, the fact is that this scheme, the ATS, has been particularly important in encouraging co-investment. This scheme was never a blank cheque.
It was never a government gratuity. It applied where there was co-investment—where there was investment being made by the industry in its own future. In Australia, we pride ourselves on trying to develop as a research and development hub. The fact is that the automotive industry in this country is the largest R&D contributor in the country. These are things which should not be taken for granted and they are certainly things that we should not be rushing to try to close off as quickly as possible.

It was not all that long ago that we had discussions about the likelihood of Holden remaining in this country. Ford had indicated some time back that it did not see its future in manufacturing here—but Holden did not and nor did Toyota at that stage. It was the incoming Treasurer who goaded Holden on whether they wanted to stay here or not. It was all based on whether there would be investment from the Commonwealth, public funds, in a company such as Holden. The truth of the matter is that every advanced country that produces a motor vehicle all invest in and subsidise to an extent manufacture.

On last count, I think, there are only about 13 countries in the world that have the capability of mass production of motor vehicles. At the moment we are fortunate—we are one of those 13. That is why I get very angry when those opposite just want to rally around this call that, 'If you cannot produce at our insistence and at our costs and under our conditions, then get out.' This is not just about Ford, Holden and Toyota getting out of our country; it is also about the fact that they are going to deprive the development of many of the skills needed for those skilled jobs in the industry—skills that can actually be transferred into other areas into the future. They are the skilled jobs which are being closed off here and now.

That is something about which members opposite should hang their heads pretty low. To be able to say that one of the things they have been able to achieve in government has been to drive out of existence in this country not only the manufacturing of motor vehicles but also the component manufacturing industry is not something to be proud of. No-one should be rushing to take credit for that, because it is something that goes to our very future.

Holden were goaded by the Treasurer as to whether they should stay or go and whether they could 'stand on their own two feet'—as, I think, the Treasurer put it at the time. It is interesting to note what the current managing director of Holden, Mr Gerry Dorizas, had to say only last week. In focusing on the components industry, Mr Dorizas was quoted as saying:

... underlying component suppliers—not car manufacturers—were most vulnerable without the additional $500 million worth of funding originally allocated by the Labor government under the Automotive Transformation Scheme.

This is the reason why we're actually very focussed on the supplier base, because if that happens then nobody will be able to produce cars, especially for parts that are specific to Australia.

Similarly, last week, the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries put out a press release that said that this will have 'serious consequences for the 45,000 workers directly employed, and the more than 100,000 workers indirectly employed in the automotive sector, around Australia.'

The chief executive of the chamber, Mr Tony Weber, went on to say that it 'was important the government realised the impact any cut to the scheme would have on the Australian automotive supply chain, who have already factored ATS funding into their long-term business plans.' He was talking about how they are using the funds that are there—the funds
that they have relied upon—to target future markets. This is not about propping up an industry; this is about supporting an industry that is important, in my humble submission, to our future.

It just beggars belief that it was only 12 months ago that the Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, said:

I want to see car-making survive in this country, not just survive but flourish.

If you look what they have done ever since that comment, it certainly belies any sense of reality, because everything that they have done has gone the exact opposite way. They have chased Holden out of the country and Toyota has followed. When it comes to not protecting but now supporting the manufacturers of advanced componentry, even the industry is saying that it is important to them to be able to reshape their operations to target markets in not only the automotive industry but other areas in advanced manufacturing itself. This is something that should not just be glossed over.

I know the speaking list for this debate has changed somewhat and not many from the government wish to speak on this legislation, but if they start talking to people in their electorates I think they will change their minds. I know that all members at least have car dealers in their electorates and I suspect most members have received letters such as these. I have received letters from two car dealers, Lansvale Holden and McGrath Holden. They wrote to me about the changes the government is proposing to allow large-scale importation of second-hand vehicles into the country, primarily from Japan and Korea. They make the point in their letters that this will have an impact on the local second-hand car market. It will basically make your second-hand car worthless and certainly drive its value down as a trade-in. In addition to that, they wanted members of parliament to focus not only on what their dealerships do but on what they support in the automotive industry throughout my electorate—and this point would apply to other electorates. A number of jobs are supported locally through local mechanics and local suppliers of various componentry for vehicles, whether it be tyres, radiator repairs, gearboxes or transmissions. These car dealers make the point that, when we talk about cars, it is not just about what you get in, drive and get rid of when you want to change the colour; this industry sustains many, many jobs on an ongoing basis.

They say that from the point of view of their car dealerships and yet we are sitting here this evening ignoring the position that the industry overall is putting—and that is to retain skills in this country. We will not retain these skills if we do not invest in the transformation of this industry. We need to give it a competitive footing so it can go on and do good things for this country, sustain employment and provide us with a future.

Mr CONROY (Charlton) (16:47): I rise proudly to oppose the Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill 2014. This bill represents the final nail in the coffin of the automotive industry in this country. It is a bill that demonstrates yet again the rank duplicity of the Liberal Party and the Prime Minister—a Prime Minister who said before the last election:

… above all else, without a motor industry is not an Australia that makes things any more and is not a first-class economy.

He also said:
I want to see car making survive in this country, not just survive but flourish.

These are the two statements that the Prime Minister chose to make on the auto industry before the election. Unfortunately, we have gone from Prime Minister Chifley, who built this nation and drove the first Holden off the assembly line, to this shadow of a Prime Minister. While we have President Obama in the United States, who killed Osama bin Laden and saved GM, we have Prime Minister Abbott in this country, who killed Holden and saved glib slogans.

The ultimate tragedy of this bill is that the death of the auto industry was not inevitable. It could have survived and prospered. Before I turn to why it was not inevitable, I would like to highlight the massive contribution the auto industry makes to our economy. Those on the other side in this debate have derided it. We even had the member for Herbert claiming, ridiculously, that only 1,600 jobs were at stake because of this bill, which is patent nonsense.

This industry employs 50,000 workers directly and most studies have identified that around 200,000 indirect jobs depend on the manufacture and assembly of automotive components and vehicles. It spends $700 million on research and development annually. To put this in context, this is four times the total business expenditure on R&D conducted by the entire agricultural, forestry and fishery sector—four times that entire sector’s investment on R&D. It is equivalent to the investment in R&D by the entire media and telecommunications sector. That is a sector that people perceive as much more innovative and high-tech than the automotive sector, yet almost exactly the same amount of R&D is conducted by the automotive sector as by the entire media and telecommunications sector. The automotive industry contributes 4.1 per cent to Australia’s total BERD—business expenditure on research and development—10 times its contribution to total employment. In other words, it punches well above its weight. The auto sector employs more researchers than the scientific research and services industry, for example. The industry spends a disproportionate amount on training. Many skilled tradespeople I have met in other manufacturing industries undertook their apprenticeships in the auto industry and then went out to work in other industries or set up small businesses in metal fab industries or the engineering sector. They got their start in the automotive sector. The auto industry has also been responsible for the adoption of advanced production techniques that have modernised our industries and boosted productivity.

Lean manufacturing and ‘just in time’ production methods were pioneered in this country in the automotive sector and then spread not just to other manufacturing industries but to other sectors of the economy. The automotive industry provides critical mass for the machine tools industry, metal-processing industries and many other industries. Without the automotive industry, these upstream industries will take a hit. The multiplier effect of automotive employment is much higher than in other industries such as mining. It is an industry that is much more deeply embedded in our economy.

These are all positive economic spillovers that economic flat-earthers never acknowledge. Commentators who argue that all jobs are equal and that people and capital can flow seamlessly from one industry to another not only have no idea how the real economy operates but also ignore the significant theoretical advantages modern economies enjoy from an advanced manufacturing sector such as the automotive industry. We will miss it when it has
gone. As other contributors to this debate have noted, modelling from the University of Adelaide has found that its death will be a two per cent hit to gross domestic product.

And the tragedy of this debate is that it was not inevitable. We are one of only 13 countries in the world that can design and produce a car from start to finish, and every one of these nations recognises the huge positive spillovers associated with this industry and provides assistance to support the industry. The difference is that our level of assistance was comparatively low. It was the equivalent of $17.40 per capita compared to $90 in Germany and $264 in that bastion of free enterprise the United States. The truth is our industry can compete.

We need to make an important differentiation between the plight of companies such as Ford and Mitsubishi versus General Motors Holden and Toyota. Those on the other side have been trying to throw in the face of the Labor Party that Ford and Mitsubishi ceased production under a Labor government and therefore we are equally culpable for the death of the industry and are all hypocrites. Nothing could be further from the truth. The real truth of this matter is that Ford and Mitsubishi either never had or lost their export mandate.

By the end of their production Mitsubishi was producing around 10,000 vehicles in this country purely for the domestic market. It was clearly unsustainable. Another issue with the Mitsubishi departure is the timing. Mitsubishi announced it would cease manufacturing in early February 2008, around two months after the election of the Labor government, and it is well known that they made that decision prior to the 2007 election and gave a commitment to then Prime Minister Howard not to announce it during the election period so as not to politicise the issue. I am not criticising that decision. I am not even criticising the request from Prime Minister. But it has been well known that Mitsubishi was on its last legs for a number of years under the Howard government.

When Ford chose to cease manufacturing they were producing around 30,000 purely for the domestic market. They did not have an export mandate, which was a crucial weakness in their business model. The last time they had a real chance at developing a sustainable presence in the Australian manufacturing market was in the early 2000s when they were looking at exporting Ford Territories—an excellent SUV; I drive one—to the Thai market, where there was perceived to be a market gap for what would be considered medium-size SUVs that handle like a car. Much hope was pinned on the Thai free trade agreement to give them this access to enter that market. What we saw was another dud trade deal by the coalition, who have a history of getting signatures on paper but rarely getting deals that follow through with real, concrete economic benefits.

With the Thai FTA we saw a reduction in tariffs between the two countries on automotive goods reduced to zero almost overnight. This was seen as a great hope for getting Territories into that market. But the Thai government changed their motor vehicle registry and licensing scheme to apply a much higher licensing charge for vehicles with large engines. It effectively established a much higher barrier for Territories getting into the market than the tariffs that previously applied. This is an example of behind-the-border barriers that often are much more significant to export chances than the nominal tariff rates. This was the last hope that Ford had of winning an export mandate and having a sustainable manufacturing presence in Australia.
So let's have none of this attempt to divert this debate by talking about what happened to Ford and Mitsubishi. The truth is that both Toyota and General Motors had strong production presence in this country. They were producing well over 100,000 vehicles in Toyota's case and slightly under 100,000 in Holden's case. Toyota was exporting more than half their production of Camrys to the Middle East. It was a Camry that was seen as the best-quality Camry outside of Japan. Holden was in an excellent position to export more of their vehicles once the Australian dollar had dropped as it now has.

In the industry it is well known that, once the dollar drops below 85 or 90 US cents, Holden is then in a great position to export tens of thousands of vehicles to the United States and other countries. In the US they love our large rear-wheel-drive sedans. They are very popular as police vehicles, as high-end limousines and, in fact, as relatively comfortable taxi cabs. The leadership of Holden were very confident that, if they got through the strong headwinds of a high Australian dollar and the need for renewed capital investment, they would be in a position to export tens of thousands of vehicles to North America and would be in a great position again.

But what these companies needed was strong support for co-investment to make the large capital investments necessary to update their production line and increase efficiency. What had happened was the Liberal Party broke the bipartisan commitment to this industry that not even Prime Minister Howard dared to break. Holden was very clear that, if the Liberals followed through with their threat to cut $500 million from the Automotive Transformation Scheme, they would have to leave. Holden's head of government affairs, Matt Hobbs, stated in June 2013 that they would cease manufacturing if there were any reduction in taxpayer support. When asked about this comment, Holden's then GM, Mike Devereux, said that this was absolutely true. It is exactly what happened.

The disgraceful bullying and bellowing by the Treasurer did not help either. I remember those days in question time in parliament in December or late November where the Treasurer of this country dared General Motors to leave this country. He bullied them and dared them to leave this country. Once Holden left there was no critical mass of suppliers to keep Toyota in this country. What is worse is that this bill not only represents a $500 million cut to the ATS but also embodies a $900 million cut to the ATS. It is in fact the final nail in the coffin for the automotive industry.

What we have seen since this announcement have been glib words and slogans from the government—pandering, patronising words to the workers affected. We have the Prime Minister of this country talk about auto workers. He said many of them will be liberated to pursue new opportunities to get on with their lives. What an offensive, patronising comment. We had the member for Herbert in this place today saying that workers should get on with their lives—like the termination of this industry and loss of at least 50,000 jobs, if not hundreds of thousands of jobs, is somehow something like a football team losing where you get over it quickly and get on with your life.

The truth is that, not only will these workers and their families be devastated; communities will be devastated. The impact of this loss will be very severe. A survey of redundant workers in the components sector following a couple of mass shutdowns last decade found the following: the unemployment rate amongst these people six months after they were made redundant was 48.2 per cent. Fifty per cent of workers six months after losing their jobs were
still unable to find work. Only 41.4 per cent of the workers who had managed to find jobs were able to secure employment in the manufacturing sector, and 31 per cent of the workers who found jobs had to accept casual jobs. Of those lucky enough to find employment, 89.7 per cent suffered a reduction in wages, with the average reduction being 28.3 per cent.

Let me repeat that. Half of the workers impacted could not find jobs. Of the half that were lucky to find employment 90 per cent suffered a wage cut, and the average wage cut was almost 30 per cent. Exactly half of those who were made redundant believed that their long-term financial security has suffered significantly from this redundancy.

This survey's findings were supported by outcome data from the Mitsubishi labour adjustment package. Of the 1,117 workers who exited Mitsubishi, one year later 20 per cent had retired. Of the 936 who received support services, 261 have been unable to find a job, representing an unemployment rate of 27.9 per cent compared to the general South Australian unemployment rate of 5.1 per cent at that time. So to tell these workers that they will be liberated to pursue new opportunities when they are facing years, if not decades, of unemployment is offensive and patronising in the extreme. It demonstrates, yet again, that this Prime Minister is out of touch with what everyday Australians face in the community. It is appalling behaviour.

And there has been hypocrisy by others in this debate. For example, the member for Dawson was railing against automotive subsidies when he was recorded as standing up for ethanol subsidies very recently. The member for Corangamite was equating this mythical 6,000 temporary construction jobs that might accrue to the East West Link if it ever begins construction with the 50,000 direct long-term sustainable jobs of the automotive sector. So the contribution of those on the other side has been, at worst, middling but in reality quite appalling.

A future without assembly operations is very dire for components producers and R&D. There are real advantages that accrue from collocation, and I fear for the rest of the industry once general assembly finishes in this country. It is symbolic of who really controls the cabinet, because it is well known that the Minister for Industry tried to fight for this industry but he had zero influence in cabinet and got rolled, yet again, just as the Minister for the Environment gets rolled time and time again. I sometimes wonder why the Minister for Industry and Minister for Environment bother showing up to cabinet given they have zero influence on it.

The truth is that this bill represents the final nail in the coffin of a once-proud industry—an industry that both sides of politics profess to support; an industry that the Prime Minister said was a test of a modern economy. You could tell that Australia had a modern economy because we had an automotive sector. Well, under his watch and under the watch of the Treasurer, the member for North Sydney, we have lost that industry. We have lost the claim that we were one of 13 countries that could make a car from scratch. This country will be poorer for it. Workers, their families and communities will be devastated, and it will be the epitaph of this government.

Ms CHESTERS (Bendigo) (17:03): I will pick up where the previous speaker, the member for Charlton, just finished. Thirteen countries manufacture cars from beginning to end. All of them had some form of co-investment. Our nation had the lowest. Now our nation,
because of this bill, will have no co-investment. That is the final nail in the coffin of an industry that currently employs 50,000 Australians.

The Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill 2014 and this government's vision for this industry are not only unfair—because they place thousands upon thousands of Australian families onto the unemployment line—but also economically reckless. They will cause the rapid withdrawal of those high-skilled wages from communities that can least afford those wages to be withdrawn. It is an economically silly reason as well as being a socially silly reason.

As I said, Ford, Holden and Toyota currently employ 50,000 Australians. There are 150 component manufacturers, including some in my electorate. In Bendigo we do not have as many as other electorates. There are lots of electorates throughout Victoria that have car component manufacturers. Their entire markets have been the big three—Ford, Holden and Toyota—and those jobs are also at risk. Once those manufacturers lose that market we will lose an entire industry and those jobs.

About 200,000 jobs rely directly on the business created by the auto industry—from fields including metal manufacturing to scientific services. In my own electorate we have a small manufacturer that creates some of the mufflers. Another manufacturer creates some of the rubber components. They are looking to new industries and new opportunities because they do not want to close their doors.

One in four of Australia's top selling cars is made locally. That is a point that the government has failed to highlight. This is not an industry that just exports. This is an industry that makes our own cars. Australians are quite proud to own a car. I am not too old but I can remember the debate people had when they first got their licences: would they buy a Holden or a Ford? Is was a classic debate—a debate that has gone on for generations. At the time it was a debate about Australian cars but in the future it will be a debate about cars that are imported.

As I mentioned, only 13 countries including Australia make cars from beginning to end. That is something that we have always been quite proud of in this country. Auto is the largest contributor of R&D in the manufacturing sector—contributing almost $700 million annually.

This government keeps saying that workers will go from good jobs to better jobs. What jobs are they talking about? What are these better jobs that they keep talking about if we lose our R&D capacity and our science capacity? The government talk about jobs being created in the construction industry—an industry that they quite like to demonise. The union is in there working to ensure that jobs in the construction industry are high-skilled high-paid jobs. This government likes to criticise them for being union jobs but at the same time the government says they are highly skilled and highly paid. But they are temporary jobs.

As has been mentioned, members on the other side of the chamber keep talking about the jobs that they are going to create with the dud tunnel—the East West Link tunnel. Again, they are temporary jobs. What happens when that tunnel is built? Do we build another tunnel? Do we just keep building tunnels? Building tunnels is not a decent policy for creating jobs in this country. We actually need to have industry.

It is really simple economics. If you want to have a service industry, you need another industry for that industry to service. If you are someone who works in hospitality, if you are
someone who works in cleaning, if you are someone who works in one of our many service-based industries, there needs to be other people employed in other work for you to actually have a job. The strength of any economy is its diversity. That means having a strong manufacturing sector. That means having a strong service sector. That means having a strong retail sector. That means having a strong agricultural sector. We need to be doing well across the board. You cannot put all your eggs, all your jobs, in one basket and say, 'That will be how we keep Australians employed.'

This government fails when it comes to having a vision for industry. It also fails to acknowledge that government has a role to play in income investment. The reports from both academics and industry show that it would cost the government more to see industry fail than it ever would cost in support. That is that pragmatic economics policy that this government fails to have and which previous government on the other side did have—that pragmatic, economic view where it will cost more economically and it will cost the budget more long-term if we fail to support the industry.

The greatest impact will be in my state of Victoria, where an estimated 100,000 jobs will be lost—and that is in the same state where youth unemployment is already at a 15-year high. If we go more locally to where these jobs are—in the seats of Corio, Corangamite, Hotham, in parts of Dandenong and my own electorate—we see that youth unemployment is even higher, because, due to the uncertainty created, employers in the component manufacturer industry have not been taking on young people.

That is my next point on youth unemployment. We need industry if we want to have skilled people in the future. One of the reasons that we do not have as many apprentices today is that they do not have an opportunity to get an apprenticeship. One example of where this really stands out in my own electorate is Bendigo Thales. In their day, when they were an Australian defence manufacturer, they had 100 apprentices—25 in each year level. There was a fraternity of apprenticeships and an apprenticeship system. Today they have two apprentices. Where are we going to be in a generation's time if we are not recruiting, training, skilling up apprentices? What this bill does, and what this government is doing, to the auto industry is shutting down another avenue for skilling up future tradespeople.

Again, I call on the government to explain exactly where they plan to get these better jobs from. Being in government has to be more than just about rhetoric. If you are going to stand up and say that people are going to go from a good job to a better job, then you need to say what that better job is. It cannot just be construction jobs; there has to be some other form of better jobs. We are seeing attacks on universities, attacks on TAFE and attacks on industries that are high skilled. We are seeing job cuts in the Public Service and job cuts in the CSIRO—the scientists who are working in this space of innovation—and cuts to any single form of innovation fund. Where exactly is this government going to create these better jobs?

The gross regional product in Adelaide and Melbourne will not recover until 2031. That is nearly two decades away. That is what the academics are saying about completely losing this industry—again, another example of pragmatic economics and how bad this decision is for this country. Employment levels will not recover until 2020 in some of these areas. Yet, with, the panic going on in Geelong, we get, 'That is okay; we'll put our hand up for the Land 400 contract—a defence manufacturing contract.' At best, that contract will have 200 high-skilled, high-tech jobs—not production jobs. That does not make up for the 2,000 people currently
working for Ford. That does not make up for the 50,000 people working for Ford, Holden and Toyota, and it does not make up for the tens of thousands of people working in components manufacturing. So that solution is not going to help solve this problem going forward.

The Automotive Transformation Scheme was legislated to encourage investment and innovation in the automotive industry. This scheme was about keeping up with the other 12 countries that manufacture cars. These are countries that have high labour costs—countries like Germany and Great Britain. Because their governments actually had vision, they were able to work in partnership with industry to ensure that they continued to have an auto industry. This scheme provides assistance to form co-investment to firms for the production of motor vehicles and engines and to invest in eligible R&D, plants and equipment. If this bill is passed it would cut $500 million in funding from the ATS between now and 2017 and, in the government's shocker budget, $200 million will be cut instantly.

It is critical for this government not to pre-empt the closure of the industry and put at risk an early closure. That is another point: this bill, coupled with the bill that was debated yesterday in the House, the fair entitlements guarantee legislation and the recently negotiated Korea-Australia Free Trade Agreement accelerates the withdrawal of this industry. It will cause a knock-on effect in this industry that will quickly place more people on the unemployment line. That is the thing I find really frustrating about this government. Rather than seeing a growth in an industry, rather than seeing it survive—or the slow wind-down of an industry and transformation to a new industry—what we will see as a result of this government's bad policy is a rapid knock-on collapse. When you have a rapid knock-on collapse and loss of jobs very quickly you create panic and unemployment, and it will not allow some industries, in the components sector, to survive and find new markets.

Cutting millions of dollars of funding from the ATS now risks premature closure of motor-vehicle producers and hundreds of firms in the auto supply chain, sending thousands of jobs offshore. It is as though the government's policy is about creating jobs offshore not about creating jobs onshore. The wilful neglect of this government is a major reason behind the decision for Toyota to end its car manufacturing in Australia. To foster industry you need to have multiple people in the space to create industry. We are seeing from this government a lack of understanding of that very basic principle.

The Prime Minister will go down in history as the Prime Minister who cost Australia its car industry and changed the direction of this nation for the worse. This is because it will take a generation—decades—for these regions to return from very high unemployment and to return economically. The PM's vague talk about boosting road-infrastructure projects and replacing good jobs for better jobs from the car-components area employed. You cannot just down tools on building a Ford car and pick up new tools to become an electrician on a construction project called the East West Link Tunnel. You cannot just go from being a painter of a Holden car and pick up a hammer and nails to start constructing a tunnel. They are two very different skill sets, two very different apprenticeships and two very different jobs. For one to replace the other is just not possible.

This government does not have a jobs plan. What we are seeing from this government is attack after attack on our industry. If this government is serious about creating better jobs it needs to work with industry—not shut the door. We need a government that believes in
investing and partnering with industry and the community to ensure that we have good jobs, jobs that people can count on into the future.

Ms MacTIERNAN (Perth) (17:18): This bill is further evidence that the Abbott government's fundamental solution to our economic woes is cutting baristas' wages so that we can get a cheaper cup of coffee and save a few bucks going out on New Year's Eve. That seems to be their vision—cheaper coffee is going to drive our economy.

We know that is complete nonsense but, when we look at their action here today, the introduction of this Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill, we know it is really the limit of their perspective. It displays a massive misunderstanding of modern economies and what modern economies need to drive themselves forward. This piece of legislation demolishes the assistance to automotive manufacturers. I note in passing that it will have a direct impact in WA. There are about 2,000 Western Australians who are directly involved in supplying the automotive industry. Our state is not a major player, but it will have that impact. The real issue is not the loss of jobs but the loss of advanced manufacturing capacity and skills and the impact this will have on playing a role in the development of emerging industries.

We should be very clear that the automotive sector involves advanced manufacturing with highly developed robotics technology, which will be a massive growth area in manufacturing. If we look at the various reports, the number of data systems driven out of the automotive sector is huge. We are not talking about propping up an industry that belongs to an industrial museum, we are talking about cutting out an involvement with an industry that is driving forward much of the R&D.

My friend the member for Bendigo made comment about this too, that the auto sector is the largest R&D contributor to the Australian manufacturing sector. It delivers over $700 million worth of R&D annually. That is massive, if you think about the skill sets involved in this. The importance of the automotive industry is not simply in having the capacity to produce motor vehicles per se. It is about the production of these motor skills, of doing the R&D that is embedded in that manufacturing process. It creates a skill and research base that can be leveraged off to generate new technologies and products. We need those skill sets to be here, in a sufficient volume, in order to allow us to participate more fully in future industries.

As has been pointed out by many of my colleagues, it is precisely for that reason other developed countries financially support their car industries. As has also been pointed out, our contribution is relatively modest. Per capita, Australia gives $17.40, Germany gives $90, the US gives $264 and Sweden gives $334. These are economies that are not frightened by investing in this sector, because they understand that that advanced manufacturing capacity and research base that is constantly being driven in the automotive industry is critical for other industries.

Putting aside even that long-term impact, it is interesting to note that the direct loss for the industry will be a significant depressor. We have had University of Adelaide modelling showing that the impact of cuts contained in this legislation will produce a negative annual impact of around 29 per cent, or around two per cent of Australian GDP. They are pretty big figures. Already we have seen Australian manufacturing losing ground, despite the falling exchange rate. I think it is interesting to note that just today the Australian Industry Group performance of manufacturing index for September slipped to 46.5. That is edging further
below the 50.0 level which separates expansion from a contraction. So we are very much into the contraction phase. This is notwithstanding the steep falls we have had in the Australian dollar. Particularly alarming—again, notwithstanding those steep falls in the Australian dollar—in the index that was released today was that manufacturing exports experienced a large deterioration, dropping a whole 11 points to 42.4, which is the lowest reading in 18 months. It is interesting to note that it is the Australian Industry Group that has made the assessment that it is the winding back of Australia's automotive assembly that has been one of the principal reasons for that. We have to be concerned. This is not some fanciful projection about the role of this industry; the role of this industry has been widely understood in the Australian economy and we are already seeing the decisions made by the government at the end of last year already feeding through, in the view of the Australian Industry Group.

If I can pick up some other comments made by the member for Bendigo previously, she was talking about the Abbott government's view that instead they can go and build a tunnel, do all this infrastructure work—'We'll go out and borrow and build.' That is really to misunderstand the significance of manufacturing. At the end of 2012 the McKinsey Global Institute produced a paper on the role of manufacturing in modern economies. I just want to quote some of this to help us understand the importance of manufacturing and the reason we should not be scrapping manufacturing and saying that everyone can just go and make cups of coffee or go and lay a bit of bitumen. Their conclusion was:

Manufacturing makes outsized contributions to trade, research and development (R&D), and productivity… The sector generates 70 percent of exports in major manufacturing economies—both advanced and emerging—and up to 90 percent of business R&D spending. Driven by global competition in many subsectors, manufacturing's share of productivity growth is twice its share of employment in the EU-15 nations and three times its share of US employment.

So if we want real productivity, we are not going to get real productivity by cutting the price of a cup of coffee; real productivity is going to come from investment in the manufacturing sector. They go on to comment:

The role of manufacturing in the economy changes over time.

… … …

As economies mature—

as in Australia—

manufacturing becomes more important for other attributes, such as its ability to drive productivity growth, innovation, and trade. Manufacturing also plays a critical role in tackling societal challenges, such as reducing energy and resource consumption and limiting greenhouse gas emissions.

So here we have got, again, a demonstration of the complete lack of a sophisticated understanding of how an economy works and the need for innovation. Unfortunately in Australia we are not performing well in terms of innovation. On the surface we may feel we can be a bit complacent, because we are ranked 17th on the global innovation index and 15th on OECD research collaboration. But as Dr Paul Jackson from Edith Cowan University points out, these measures can be very misleading. At an aggregate level we look quite good, but when we break it down into innovation efficiency—that is, the translation of innovation inputs to outputs—we actually do very badly. So, while we might be providing the precursors, we are showing a very poor capacity to translate those innovation inputs into outputs. Dr
Jackson goes on to comment that one of the major problems is the level of direct funding for Australian business, which is one of the lowest in the OECD.

There have been cases where we have seen Australian companies driven overseas because we have failed to support those companies. We had a very interesting case where an Australian company had, using the innovation fund, developed a technology for the treatment of the symptoms of Parkinson's. It was a small Australian company which took on a research project and developed a product which is being marketed in 12 countries, which is a great measure of success. The company is called Global Kinetics Corporation. They say it would not have happened without the $1.3 million of federal government funding from Commercialisation Australia, a fund which has now been scrapped.

Likewise, on Friday I was speaking at a rally supporting the architecture around renewable energy and carbon abatement. I was approached by a Western Australian entrepreneur who had developed a very innovative energy-assessment tool that gives a very fine-grained assessment of energy outputs, down to the individual valve level, at a very cost-effective price. They had developed this technology in Australia. They were wanting to sell it in Australia. They have now been advised that, since we have dismantled all the infrastructure to do with carbon abatement, there is no longer going to be a significant market in Australia for this fine-grained, powerful assessment tool for energy-use assessment. Their financiers have said they should now move their company over to the United Kingdom, where companies are required to do these energy assessments, and produce for those companies great cost savings because they can more readily identify their energy outcomes.

The point here is: we need an advanced manufacturing industry. We need it because it brings with it inherently strong R&D facilities. That R&D capacity, and the advanced manufacturing skills that go with it, is what we require as a mature economy to drive our industry forward and create the jobs of the future. That is not all going to come out of cheaper cups of coffee generated by lowering the overtime rates of baristas.

**Mr HUSIC** (Chifley) (17:32): What we are witnessing today from the coalition is an attempt to camouflage cowardice. What we are seeing are these after-the-event explanations occurring. They did not extend to the Australian public the decency, as they were leading up to the election, of saying what would happen after the election in reference to support for the auto industry. Bear in mind that, as much as you hear members of the coalition suggest today that we can no longer extend this type of assistance and it is not right for us to support one industry over another—prior to the election, they were making out they would be the friend of the auto worker. They were making out that they would be there in tough times to support people.

We heard this from no-one less than the Prime Minister who, in the weeks leading up to the election itself last year, said, 'I want to see car making survive in this country, not just survive but flourish.' There is no way in the world, when you reflect on that quote, that there is any suggestion this would be a piecemeal level of support; rather this would be, as suggested by the coalition, a level of support that would allow the sector to flourish. It would allow the sector to continue. It would ensure that jobs remained in the sector and that the coalition would be there when the auto sector needed it. What did we have afterwards? We witnessed a number of things. For instance, knowing that decisions would need to be made by the auto manufacturers by Christmas, instead of backing up the sneaky words they used to try to snare
votes from people concerned about the future of the auto sector—instead of backing those commitments up—what we had was the coalition trying to refer things off for further studies or Productivity Commission reviews.

They were not there to allow the industry to flourish. There were not there to allow the industry to survive. They were basically building the edifice, the framework, with which they would stab auto workers in the back. They did not fulfil the commitment they made back on 21 August 2013 when the then opposition leader, now Prime Minister, was saying he wanted to see car making not just survive but flourish.

As a result we see this bill before the House now referring to the Automotive Transformation Scheme, which is a legislated scheme encouraging investment and innovation in the sector. It is supposed to provide the form of support that would be evidenced through co-investment by firms in the production of motor vehicles and engines and in eligible R&D and plant and equipment. This bill amends the Automotive Transformation Scheme Act 2009 and we oppose it. We oppose it strongly because, if it is passed, it will see $500 million cut in funding from the ATS between now and 2017, and effectively terminate the scheme from the end of 2017 with no support whatsoever for surviving component companies.

What does this mean for the 200,000 Australian men and women who rely on the auto manufacturing industry for their jobs? We will see those jobs put under direct threat. The opposition has argued that it is critical that government does not pre-empt the closure of the industry and risk the early closure of firms before 2017 through this reduction in funding. The proposed early closure of the scheme ignores the fact that dozens of component manufacturing companies employing thousands of workers will still exist. The intention is that they will exist post 2017, so it is absolutely vital we have this scheme in place so we can work with an industry in transition and ensure we rebuild jobs and maintain capabilities.

But this government is not interested in that. This government now, having deceived the Australian public, has no intention of fulfilling their commitment to seeing this industry survive. And, in fact, I was stunned to see the Treasurer of this country stand at that dispatch box and basically goad Holden out of the country, not prepared whatsoever to support those jobs. The government now put on this brave face; they don courage now and claim that they want to see public funds spent in such a way that they are not picking winners and that they are not there supporting particular industries. But they never had the decency to say that before the election. They never had the decency to look people in the eye and say, 'We will not be there for you when the crunch comes.' And then we had the Treasurer goad GMH out of the country and refuse to support them.

What are the government actually there to do to support the economy? They want to see the end of auto manufacturing; they are happy to see the decline of manufacturing. They are not there for innovation. You see them now basically pulling back on the NBN and slowing down the rollout, despite the critical need for us to invest in better broadband infrastructure. We have those on the other side cheer that they will get better mobile phone coverage, but, for the actual critical infrastructure of the nation in broadband—which will help support the growth of the digital economy, as the rest of the world is basically getting ready for the digital era—the government is slowing down the rollout. They are not interested in that level of innovation. On anything that has to do with innovation policy, they are either delaying, avoiding or not making decisions that will help support it. Basically, all the government want
to see this country do is mine stuff, shear stuff and bank stuff—and that is it. They do not have any plan for or any notion about where they want to see the economy go into the future. And they are happy to see people's jobs go in the meantime because they have no direct capacity and no direct plan themselves.

In the now nationally archived Real Solutions document—now shredded, hidden from view, and in some sort of witness protection program, not to ever see the light of day—they promised, they made a commitment to, one million jobs. It was never done through any economic work. It was merely, as has been evidenced now and as is on the public record, a plucked-up figure. It has basically been picked out of the air: one million jobs created—or, the intention is, to be created—by this government. And what have we seen since they came to office? We have seen unemployment rise higher than what was experienced in this country during the GFC. The unemployment figure in this nation has now got a six in front of it, and it is going to stay that way for a considerable period of time. So you would think that a government which has been confronted by that unemployment figure would actually want to do everything it can to either protect jobs or find new ways of lifting jobs. And what do you see? You see this bill being placed before the parliament, with 50,000 direct Australian jobs in the car industry now at risk and a further 200,000 jobs which rely indirectly on the industry on the line. We think that there is a fight worth having in this country not only to protect Australia's manufacturing capabilities but to ensure that the people who have jobs in this sector keep them. And we will do everything we can to stop these cuts to the Automotive Transformation Scheme. We are certainly calling on the crossbench and minor parties to stick up for Australian jobs, too. We think they are worth fighting for, and we believe that they should fight for them as well.

It is also worth noting and bearing in mind, as to maintaining the sector, that four in 10 of Australia's top-selling cars are locally made. People want to see Australian cars produced. Certainly, the impact of the dollar cannot be discounted. It has increased production costs to the tune of 30 per cent, and Holden has had to confront that, as have other companies. But only 13 countries, including Australia, can make a car from start to finish. Every single one of them supports their industry. In this country, the amount that we support the sector by is a mere $17.40 per capita. That is the cost of the car-industry support for Australians. What are they doing in other parts of the world? If you look in Germany, it is $90. It is $17 here; $90 in Germany. In America, $264 is extended to the auto industry. If you are in Sweden, it is $334. So, to save the mere per-capita cost of $17.40, this government is withdrawing that support and, as a result, seeing those jobs go.

The government are happy to see those jobs go because they want to pursue ideology instead of protecting people's jobs right here in this country. It is something that people should be well aware of: the government failed to meet their promise of protecting these jobs. People might think, 'Okay, maybe it is a lot to support this sector; maybe we are investing too much', but the minute they recognise that other countries are supporting their industries way more than we are, they recognise that this is not a bad proposition whatsoever but is actually something that is worth following up. You then wonder: 'If those jobs go, what happens to the people who lose their jobs?' Instantaneously, they will need to turn to support, because, bear in mind, there are no jobs in the broader economy to support them now.
As I mentioned a few moments ago, unemployment is higher now than what it was during the GFC. So, if they are turning to support, what will be the cost to the public purse of that? The indication is that welfare payments, plus lost tax revenue from an industry shutdown, are projected to exceed $20 billion. So for the $500 million that this government saves in the short term, we lose $20 billion in total. And it will be more than 10 years before the economy recovers from the underlying hit to GDP as a result of this short-sighted decision—a decision that is founded upon deceit, because it was founded upon a suggestion extended to the Australian public that Tony Abbott, the Prime Minister, would be there in tough times for the auto industry. The minute he got into office, the job he was more interested in was his own and not the jobs of those auto manufacturing workers who needed him to be there. In parts of the country—like Melbourne—gross regional product will not recover until 2031, two decades away. And what are they supposed to do in the meantime?

Now, looking at the reaction from the sector, I have had drawn to my attention an article that appeared in *The Age* last month—sorry, not last month, in August; we have already hit October:

Holden has warned the local car industry could crash early as a result of proposed cuts to the federal government's funding scheme.

This is what Holden is saying. The article continues:

The company's managing director Gerry Dorizas delivered the bleak assessment on Tuesday, fearing that underlying component suppliers - not car manufacturers - were most vulnerable without the additional $500 million of funding …

This is the funding that I have talked about in my contribution to the House. To quote him from the article:

"Suppliers have invested based on the ATS to break even. They needed this kind of subsidy and at this particular time they're in dire straits," …

He continues by saying:

"This is the reason why we're actually very focused on the supplier base because if that happens then nobody will be able to produce cars, especially for the parts that are specific to Australia."

So, again, I will make the point that there are these flow-on effects from the bill that we are debating right now and there are real jobs on the line, and this will have a complete impact on the sector.

For example, if you look at the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries, they oppose these cuts. They say:

Reducing the Automotive Transformation Scheme (ATS) will have serious consequences for the 45,000 workers directly employed, and the more than 100,000 workers indirectly employed in the automotive sector, around Australia.

They have called on the parliament to reject this bill. They say that it is:

… important the Government realised the impact any cut to the Scheme would have on the Australian automotive supply chain, who have already factored ATS funding into their long-term business plans.

They also claim:

If the Amendment Bill passes Parliament, it will reduce the Automotive Transformation Scheme by $900 million and intensify the financial pressure on the automotive supply chain, at a time when they are trying to transition their operations into new business area.
So, this government, which says it is therefore jobs, is doing everything it can to affect jobs. On that side of the chamber they have deceived the Australian public and deceived auto workers, and now they are trying to mask cowardice with courage, claiming something that they were not prepared to tell the public before the election.

Mr DREYFUS (Isaacs—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (17:47): I rise to condemn the government's Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill 2014. The Automotive Transformation Scheme is a legislative scheme that encourages investment and innovation in the Australian automotive industry. Since the Automotive Transformation Scheme Act passed through parliament in 2009 the ATS has provided co-investment to companies for the production of motor vehicles and engines, and for investment in eligible research and development and relevant equipment. The ATS was the cornerstone of Labor's New Car Plan for a Greener Future, which was announced in November 2008. This plan provided $5.4 billion of co-investment support from 2010 to 2020, with the ATS accounting for some $3 billion of that investment.

Our approach provided long-term certainty for the Australian automotive manufacturing industry. The new car plan was not a hand out; it was a co-investment program that encouraged industry to invest in Australian manufacturing. In a difficult economic environment, Labor's new car plan assured business and industry that the Australian government supported automotive manufacturing in Australia. The ATS has been a success story for industry in Australia. It has supported the automotive manufacturing industry and the associated parts industry in Australia, as well as increasing the capacity for research and development in this important sector of Australian industry.

Before the election, Labor announced A New Car Plan for the 2020s. This plan demonstrated to business and to industry that the Australian government had a plan for automotive manufacturing in this country. Labor's new car plan included an investment of $300 million per annum to support the transformation of the industry, to attract new investment and to support research and development, design and engineering from January 2016. The plan supported Australia's high-tech automotive industry and expanded opportunities for young engineers to utilise their trade in Australia. The plan was widely supported by industry and workers.

If this government gets its way, opportunities for manufacturers, assemblers and engineers in the automotive manufacturing sector will all but disappear. In just over 12 months the Abbott government has comprehensively trashed the faith in the Australian government to support automotive manufacturing in Australia. The government's bill today seeks to further tear apart automotive manufacturing in Australia and to imperil the 200,000 Australian who rely on the industry for employment.

The bill before the House would cut $500 million from the ATS over the next three years, with the effect of terminating the scheme at the end of 2017. This bill would withdraw support for components companies and would inevitably result in the closure of hundreds of manufacturers in the automotive parts industry. By ending the ATS at the end of 2017, this government through this bill is legislating to ensure the premature closure of components manufacturers and the offshoring of thousands of Australian manufacturing jobs. This government's proposal to close the ATS at the end of 2017 is nothing short of an attack on Australia's automotive manufacturing industry, an attack on the employees of Ford, Holden
and Toyota, an attack on component-manufacturing companies and an attack on the thousands of workers in my electorate who derive their income by manufacturing component parts.

I say to the Prime Minister that automotive manufacturing is not dead in Australia; it is a tough, resilient industry that supports 200,000 Australian workers. Of those 200,000 workers indirectly employed by the automotive manufacturing industry over 98,000 are employed in Victoria, including thousands in my electorate of Isaacs. In the City of Greater Dandenong, 22,800 people are employed in manufacturing industries and it is estimated that the automotive industry injected $2½ billion into the local economy. Let me say that again: in the City of Greater Dandenong, 22,800 people are employed in manufacturing industries and it is estimated that the automotive industry injected $2.5 billion into the local economy. That is a staggering number of workers who are being cast aside by this government and it is an astonishing economic contribution to the Victorian economy.

If this bill is to pass, it will be a catastrophe for the 200,000 Australian workers who rely on automotive manufacturing and associated industries for their continued employment. It would be a disaster for Australia, for Victoria and, in particular, for south-east Melbourne, where so many workers are employed in manufacturing.

There is a concerning and dangerous narrative that this government is perpetuating here. The narrative is that subsidised industries are failed industries, and this is simply untrue. Only 13 countries, which will include Australia for at least a couple more years, can make a car from start to finish. Australia, for a little while longer, will have one of the last remaining complex supply chains to exist in the world. Every one of these 13 countries subsidise their automotive industry. The per capita cost of car industry support around the world includes $90 in Germany, $264 in the United States and $334 in Sweden. The per capita cost for supporting automotive manufacturing in Australia, an industry that supports 200,000 Australians, is $17.40. I will repeat: $17.40. And yet for this contribution, Australia derives enormous benefit. Two hundred thousand Australians owe their jobs to the automotive manufacturing industry; automotive research and development contributes almost $700 million annually to the Australian economy. The cost of abandoning this industry too is staggering.

Modelling from the University of Adelaide shows that the loss of the industry will lead to a negative annual shock of $29 billion by 2017, or about two per cent of GDP. Welfare payments and lost tax revenue from an industry shutdown are projected to exceed $20 billion, and it will be more than 10 years before the economy recovers from the underlying hit to GDP. Gross regional product in Adelaide and Melbourne is projected to not recover until 2031—17 years away—and yet this government is saying, in effect, that the Australian public cannot afford to support automotive manufacturing.

What is most baffling is that while the Prime Minister can decry industry support to the Australian automotive manufacturing sector, support that ensures the employment of 200,000 Australians, the Prime Minister and the government happily continue to subsidise many other industries. The Australian government has long subsidised industries as broad as mining, banking and tourism. One of the primary roles of the Australian government is to keep Australians in work, and if that requires subsidies and if these subsidies have a net benefit to Australia, as they do with the automotive manufacturing sector, then it is the responsibility of the government to support that sector. But this government has now turned around and said
that it will no longer offer support to automotive manufacturing for one of the key industries of Australia, and in particular Victoria. This is a repudiation of well-founded economic and social principles in favour of a dangerous and extreme free market ideology.

If this bill passes and automotive manufacturing does in fact die in Australia, Australia will be worse off. We will be economically worse off and socially worse off. Regions like Melbourne's west and south-east, which already have above average unemployment, will be dramatically worse off, with thousands of workers lining up in dole queues as a result of the abandonment of their industry by this government. On 21 August 2013 the Prime Minister, when he was the then Leader of the Opposition, said in the middle of the election campaign:

I want to see car making survive in this country, not just survive but flourish.

It is clear that this is a Prime Minister who says one thing and does the other. If it was ever in doubt, this bill confirms the utter contempt that the Liberal and National parties hold for the Australia automotive industry.

In the barely 12 months since the Prime Minister's statement, this government has done everything it can to tear down the automotive manufacturing industry. It has removed industry assistance and goaded Holden to leave Australia. It is now trying to gut what is left of automotive manufacturing in Australia by trashing the ATS. There is no economic benefit in passing this bill. It will hurt thousands of Australians and deliver no long-term economic windfall. Apart from ticking a box for the Institute of Public Affairs, one must wonder why the government would pursue this at all.

Manufacturing is a key industry in my electorate. Last month I visited a manufacturing plant of TI Automotive in South Dandenong, in my electorate. TI Automotive, like so many businesses in my electorate and in south-east Melbourne, is facing a difficult future. With Toyota and Holden and Ford to cease manufacturing in Victoria in the coming years, TI Automotive is in the position where it has to compete with similar businesses for a dwindling number of local contracts. Appropriately, TI Automotive is investigating what new products their skilled workforce and modern plant can be turned to. A small amount of government assistance at this time may mean the difference for TI Automotive, and so many components manufacturers like them, between their whole workforce being dismissed and their business continuing to exist. Unlike this government, the operators of TI Automotive and other components manufacturers care about job creation in south-east Melbourne and care about Australia's ability to maintain a strong, economically viable automotive manufacturing industry.

Manufacturing is the lifeblood of south-east Melbourne. It has provided employment opportunities for generations of Victorians and I find it deplorable the government would turn its back on such a large and significant section of our community. Make no mistake: this government has abandoned automotive manufacturing in this country and small automotive parts manufacturers, their employees and the communities where those employees live, such as south-east Melbourne, are the victims of this abandonment. It would be a disaster for Australia, and particularly for my electorate of Isaacs, which has the nation's fourth-highest proportion of residents employed in manufacturing, if this bill were to pass. I say to the component parts manufacturers across Australia, and to the 200,000 Australians employed indirectly by Australia's automotive manufacturing industry: Labor stands with you.
In government, Labor's investments in automotive manufacturing ensured that Australia maintained its automotive manufacturing industry in the face of the GFC, global industry restructuring and a record high Australian dollar. We ensured continued employment for many of the 200,000 Australian workers whose jobs are derived from the automotive manufacturing industry. Labor are proud of our record on supporting industry and we will stand with workers and industry against these terrible cuts. The Abbott government's refusal to help an industry that is responsible for the livelihoods of nearly 100,000 Victorians is a prime example of this government placing its extreme free market ideology above social and economic common sense. Unlike the Abbott government, Labor believes in jobs and in the social and economic benefits that meaningful employment brings. Labor will continue to fight for Australian workers in manufacturing and we will oppose this bill.

Ms O'NEIL (Hotham) (18:00): I want to start by saying how proud I am tonight to hear some of the contributions that have been made on this very important bill, the Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill 2014 and to say to the member for Isaacs, the member for Chifley and to those who have spoken in the debate that I stand shoulder to shoulder with Labor people on this side of the House and shoulder to shoulder with the thousands of people in our respective electorates who will lose their jobs directly as a result of this, one of the most wantonly destructive acts that we have seen from this government.

I am one of the younger members of this House, but I am a pretty keen student of history and when I look back I am actually very hard pressed to find a government that has such a shockingly destructive record in their first year in office. I think Billy McMahon is probably the big competition on this one. We can look at some of the things that have happened in the last year, for example: the ham-fisted attempt to introduce a tax on sick people; the obvious and rather pathetic attempts to demonise young Australians who are without work to justify leaving them for six months without any government support; regressive changes that will see much larger numbers of Australians from lower socioeconomic families struggle to make ends meet and be able to go to university. These are some of the destructive acts that we have seen. But of all the things that have happened, forcing the car industry to leave Australia is one of the most wantonly destructive and certainly one of the ones that has the most real and immediate impact on the people that I represent in Hotham.

For those of you who have not been following this closely or perhaps may not remember the events, I sat in this chair as a new member of this House last December and watched with genuine horror and dismay when the Treasurer of this country, the economic leader of Australia, stood with all of the bluster that he brings occasionally into this parliament, pointing his finger and goading Holden to leave Australia. The government had already announced the withdrawal of some $500 million of support—this was of course after the Prime Minister said during the election that he was going to do everything he could to keep the car industry here. Despite that, there was the removal of $500 million of support. Effectively, what we saw was the Treasurer get up and say that they were withdrawing their support and that Holden needed to make up its mind whether it wanted to stay or go, and they may as well get out. That was the effect of his words.

And what did we see after the Treasurer's performance in this chamber in December? We saw that he got his way. Just a day later, I believe—or it might have been a little bit longer—a company that has provided employment for thousands of Australians over multiple
generations decided that it would leave the country. That has had a cascading effect of course. Later we saw Toyota make the decision and the announcement that they would be leaving, and on the ground in electorates like the member for Wakefield's electorate and in my electorate of Hotham there was a ricocheting effect.

I am sure that the member for Wakefield is having the same experience that I am already when we go around our communities and talk to people. We are starting to find people who have lost jobs because of this very bill before us, this bill that gives effect to the decisions that have been already made. The government has said in the wake of these appalling decisions that it will do all it can to support affected workers and local economies. They are very hollow words, I have to say, looking at the bill that is before us. Not only was that $500 million of support withdrawn by the government last year in MYEFO, but again, in this most recent budget of the Treasurer's, $400 million of industry support has gone. It just beggars belief. These companies, the component parts manufacturers that are dotted right around my electorate are struggling so much that to then have the government come in and essentially kick them while they are down is appalling. I just cannot believe it.

I will provide a bit of a picture of what it looks like in my community, because I know that a lot of people who will get to talk about this in the caucus rooms over periods of time may not see the impacts of some of these decisions. But we do out in the south-eastern corridor in Melbourne. Nearby, on one the main roads in my electorate, I have an excellent component parts manufacturer who was employing around 400 people. The factory that made the component parts was one of the slickest factories I have ever been to in my life. The efficiency in that place was absolutely astounding—best-practice management, all of the things you want to see in a first-class Australian manufacturer. What I see when I drive past now is a huge 'For lease' sign at the front. They have had to rent out vast amounts of their factory and have already had to start letting workers go. This is what we are seeing in terms of the on-the-ground effects in our electorates, which have been given effect by the bill that is before us today.

The impact of this bill and the fact that like other types of tragic economic circumstances the impacts are not spread evenly around the country, mean that parts of Australia will be much more affected by the decision that is before us. About a thousand people who live in the electorate of Hotham are employed in the car industry. Probably there is one family in every two or three streets in my electorate for whom life will be profoundly changed by this act of wanton destruction by this government. When I think about the suburbs in my electorate, there is Clayton, Mordialloc, Clarinda, Springvale, Springvale and Springvale South where a lot of migrant workers work in the industry and there are people with kids at the primary schools that I so much enjoyed visiting—Clayton South Primary School, Clarinda Primary, Springvale Rise, St Joey's—where these families live and send their children to school. So when I do go out there now and talk to the schools, one of the biggest issues they raise with me is the dire economic circumstances that are being felt by a very large number of families in the electorate who are without a job or who will be over the next couple of years.

We should not forget also the knock-on effects that this will have. We know that there are about 50,000 Australians directly employed in the car industry in one of the big companies or component parts manufacturers. But in areas like Hotham which I represent, and, again, in the member for Wakefield's electorate, there are small businesses that rely on people who are
employed in the car industry for their livelihood too. We know that there are about 200,000 people in Australia who may get their income indirectly through auto manufacturing. These are small businesses, corner stores, chemists, bakeries in my electorate that are also going to suffer because of these acts of wanton destruction.

One of the few consistencies that we see with this government is a certain coldness to economic change, which I think really separates the two parties in Australia. I really want people to understand, through the words that I speak today, that these are real people who are being affected by the changes we are seeing. The cruel reality of economic change is that, while we get some benefits, the people who lose their jobs—as we will see through those who lose their jobs through the car industry—often do not get many of the benefits that may open up as a consequence. These are the very people that the government should be trying to protect.

But what do we see from this government? Instead of the trying to protect these people, we see their industry being destroyed by an arrogant approach and act of this government—particularly the Treasurer—and we see all these other forms of social support that exist to try to make sure that everyone in Australia benefits from the economic change being stripped away. It is easy to understand why there are people out there in my electorate, and right around Australia in some of these communities, who are asking why this government has it in for them. They want to know what the government is trying to do. First, the government takes these astounding steps to take away their form of employment and then it bullies them and says that they are sitting at home munching Cheezels because they are taking unemployment benefits. These outrageously contradictory things are happening—and I am very proud to be in the Labor Party, where we are fighting so hard against them.

One of the other important points that gets lost in this debate is the fact that we are actually very good at car manufacturing in Australia. That is one of the real frustrations about the change that is being made. When we look at the different levels of industry support provided to the car manufacturing industry around the world, we see that the per capita cost of car industry support in Australia is about $17.40. That per capita amount in Germany is $90, in America it is $264 and in Sweden it is $334.

There are only about 13 countries in the world that have the capability to make a car end to end. Australia is one of them. There are huge amounts of R&D. The car industry in Australia are leading experts in R&D. What has been so unfortunate is that the governments has been trying to trash the credentials of our automotive industry and our manufacturing industry in Australia in an attempt to justify this withdrawal of support which we believe is so unjustified.

There are issues around the car industry in recognising that we were good at manufacturing cars, but I think there are other things that we need to think about as well—that is, the broader knock-on effects of not having a car manufacturing industry in Australia. We know that economies are ecosystems and when you change one thing in the economy many other things change too. When you talk to people who are experts in innovation policy, all of them will tell you that having a manufacturing industry in this country is essential for Australia to be an innovation economy. But what we see on the other side of the House is ignorance, or ignoring, of these factors.
The other thing that is important is capability. What are we going to see now? We will see a generation of people who have got quite a lot of skill in car manufacturing who, most likely, will have to retrain and learn to do something completely different—and all those skills that we have worked so hard on over so many years just lost.

I want to make a final point on a broader economic issue and about what this indicates for the workforce in Australia. I think that is one of the lesser discussed elements of this act of wanton destruction. One of the biggest issues that we face in Australia in terms of the impact of economic change is the issue of the quality of jobs for people who have low to medium levels of skill. A generation to three generations ago, young people who left school—who maybe were not particularly academic, although, some of them were very academic—and decided not to go into tertiary education went into manufacturing. In general, those young people were able to walk into a full-time well-paid job in manufacturing and spend their lives making something and doing something important and something of value. What we are seeing is that, as manufacturing declines in Australia, those jobs are not being replaced by other terrific high-quality permanent jobs. Instead, many of these people are having to take jobs that are not only lower paid and with worst conditions—so this idea of increasing casualisation of our workforce—but also in industries where they are not going to ever get to that level of wage, because the value that is being created is simply not at the same standard as we saw in manufacturing.

Although there is a prevailing narrative in Australia about economic rationalism and us not getting too involved in the economy, there are lots of reasons that manufacturing is incredibly important. We have to address the question of what we are going to do for young people in Australia now. We see very large unemployment rates for young people in certain areas of Australia. What jobs are these young people going to do? I want to leave that question hanging with the government over there—the people who are meant to be in charge of some of this deep thinking. What are the young people of the future going to do when we have the approach that we see so on the other side of the House, where the Treasurer feels that he is entitled to stand up and goad a company that has employed thousands of Australians over generations in jobs where they got to make something of value? We need to think about the future—not just right now but what the Australian economy is going to look like in a generation—and whether we are happy to live in a country which does not have a manufacturing industry. I, for one, am not.

We talked a little bit before about Billy McMahon and so I want to finish with a quick anecdote. There was a funny instance where Billy McMahon at one stage, close to the end of his term, was asked about what his view was on the future of Australia. He rummaged through a very weighty briefing document that his department had prepared for him and then ended up saying to the journalist, 'No, nothing on the future here.' Today, that is how I feel about the bill before us and how I feel when I look across the chamber at the government. And I say that Labor will not stand for this. We will fight. We will continue to fight for the people we represent to whom automotive manufacturing in this country is worth so much and is so important.

Mr BRENDAN O’CONNOR (Gorton) (18:14): I was waiting to see the member for Kennedy cheekily rising to speak. I am sure he is going to make a very fine contribution, because he, like members of the opposition, has grave concerns about this bill. If enacted, the
Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill 2014 will see the acceleration of the death of the car industry and will have a terrible impact on automotive components companies, which, of course, rely upon the car industry. We believe, firstly, that, even with the decisions made by the major car manufacturers, there is a future in this country for this sector of our economy, but that will made be all the harder if we allow what would be $900 million, but over the forward estimates $500 million, to be taken from this sector of our economy, which is the central purpose of the proposed legislation. This would see many, many companies that, I think, can do well—not only survive but thrive—suffer and, indeed, hit the wall.

The concern I have is shared by other members—the member for Wakefield, the member for Hotham, who just made a very fine contribution, the member for Isaacs, the members for Ballarat and Bendigo and others who have contributed to this debate. The concern we have is that this government has no regard for a sector that employs so many Australians. What is most galling about the government's position is the way in which the Prime Minister chose to stand before manufacturing workers all through the last parliamentary term in putting his position on carbon pricing. As we can all recall, the Prime Minister stood in these manufacturing companies, sometimes making comments about a range of public policy matters, using as a backdrop these workers, and talked about how he was going to protect their jobs. He was going to stand up for those workers and their jobs—and he made these statements on countless occasions throughout the entire previous parliamentary term, when he was Leader of the Opposition.

Yet, upon election, the Prime Minister, aided and abetted by the Treasurer of this country, turned his back on the manufacturing sector in such a stark and brutal way. Other members who have contributed to this debate have already referred to this. First, we saw the Treasurer, at the dispatch box in December, effectively goad Holden to leave Australia. If you think that such decisions are based on a variety of factors, not least of all whether the government of the nation wants you actually to be in this country, wouldn't you think that such a comment by such a senior politician as the Treasurer would weigh into the decision making of that company? We saw the Treasurer in December goad Holden to leave, and the next day Holden decided to leave our shores for good—an iconic company employing thousands of Australians and, indeed, as a result of its existence in this country, creating employment in other companies. It was an awful demonstration of arrogance and indifference towards so many workers in many parts of this country. That certainly led me to conclude that all of the comments—all of the statements by the Prime Minister when he was Leader of the Opposition visiting workplaces—were utterly hollow, disingenuous and a fraud perpetrated upon those workers. We are seeing that now writ large in legislation proposed in this House.

This legislation will remove the support required for an industry. There is nothing new in governments in other countries providing support for their manufacturing sectors, particularly developed economies. In fact, every other country that makes cars provides support for that sector of the economy. In fact, if you look at the amount of support we provide per car, it is far less than that of other countries that are prepared to stand by their workers, their industry and their companies. However, we have a government that has chosen instead to do otherwise.
It is not just the opposition who have concerns with this; it is not just the member for Kennedy; it is not just unions representing those workers that have raised concerns, though indeed they have raised some very compelling arguments against the removal of such support. The industry itself and employer bodies representing employers in the industry have attacked the government. Firstly, the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries, in a release on 24 September, said:

Reducing the Automotive Transformation Scheme (ATS) will have serious consequences for the 45,000 workers directly employed, and the more than 100,000 workers indirectly employed in the automotive sector …

I think they are conservative in those figures, but they make it very clear that they can see a decision, if determined, to allow this legislation to proceed contributing to adverse consequences for the employers they represent. They, therefore, called on the parliament to reject this bill and have quite rightly, I think, raised concerns publicly about the decision of the government.

Other employer bodies have also raised concerns about this. The Federation of Automotive Products Manufacturers, FAPM, representing Australian automotive component manufacturers:

… remain steadfastly opposed to the federal government's intention to cut $500 million of funding from the Automotive Transformation Scheme over the next three years and the proposed early closure of the scheme.

They go on to say, 'Reducing funding of the ATS by 66 percent in 2015 and by a further $150 million each year in 2016 and 2017 will have serious implications for the continued operations of many firms within the automotive supply chain.' These are statements made by employer bodies representing employers who are foreshadowing the closure of companies in this sector of our economy.

We have an unemployment rate in excess of six per cent. In fact, the Prime Minister presides over the highest unemployment rate in 12 years.

Mr Champion: Big achievement!

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR: It is a big achievement! I know he is being ironic, but the last time it was as high as this was when the Prime Minister was the minister for employment.

So it is the highest unemployment rate we have seen since this government has come to office. The labour market is softening. There are areas in our country where people are having real difficulty finding work. And yet we have a government turn its back on a sector of our economy that employs tens, if not hundreds of thousands of workers. That is the point that is most important to this debate. Will the government provide any support whatsoever for a sector that has been struggling in order to make sure that it can recover and thrive?

Think about this: the car industry and the automotive components sector of our economy have struggled through very challenging times. They have had to deal with a dollar that has been at US$1.10. It is now down to about US$0.86 and falling, and—not that we want to see it fall massively—that is a very significant fall. At around the mid or high 80s, that is providing a very stark relief for our manufacturers to make sure that they can compete when exporting. In other words, if these companies can survive when the exchange rate is 20 per cent plus higher, clearly they have a greater opportunity to survive. That has been one of the great
challenges of our manufacturing sector—and not just the manufacturing sector but also tourism and other sectors of our economy. Manufacturing certainly had major problems because they were affected by the very high dollar. I think that is something we should take into account.

I understand there are global pressures, and the opposition understand that there are decisions to be made about how you dedicate taxpayers’ dollars, but there is a situation where this exchange rate provides opportunities for this sector of our economy. And yet we have complete disregard shown by the government in relation to its support. I think that is really an awful indictment of the government's regard for jobs in this country and for manufacturing. The fact is that they chose to announce, effectively, the death of the car industry—in fact aiding and abetting the death of the car industry—and accelerated with bills such as this the closure of smaller and medium enterprises that have relied upon the car industry when in fact they should be providing support for them to innovate and adapt to new circumstances so that they can be successful.

So this bill will really hit many companies very hard. This bill if enacted will at best accelerate the closure and at worst see the end of automotive components operating effectively as a critical mass in this nation. We say to this government to rethink its position in relation to the car industry and manufacturing generally to ensure that it not only creates the opportunity for employment but works with, not against industry to provide those opportunities. I am afraid, however, that that advice will fall on deaf ears. The government does not seem to be heeding advice from the employers who have made clear that this bill will really hurt their companies. They are not listening to unions who represent workers who are going to lose their jobs as a result of the removal of this funding. They are not going to change their position, and therefore I dare say it is likely we are going to see very significant job losses as a result.

The one thing people have to understand is that we have seen the unemployment rate go up and up and up. It has a six in front of it. Whilst there have been announcements made about job losses, those job losses have yet to take effect in most instances, so you are still going to see losses in Holden and Toyota. Qantas have made an announcement of 5,000 effective full time—that is about 8,000 people, by the way. That is yet to take effect. You are going to see these very significant company announcements on job losses taking effect throughout the remainder of this year and into the next year. That is going to compound the challenges that face this nation, because what are we going to do with those workers who have been working in this sector of the economy for many years?

I do not see a training and skills agenda. I see an industry minister; I do not see an industry policy. I do not see investment in skills and training to provide opportunities for people to reskill and go into emerging areas of the labour market. I do not see a jobs plan whatsoever from this government to provide opportunities for those workers who are going to lose their jobs and for young job seekers who are trying to enter the job market. All we have seen from this government is an assault on job seekers and turning its back on the car industry and other industries in the Labor market. This bill, if it is implemented, will see half a billion dollars taken out over the next few years. As a result, firm after firm will hit the wall. I cannot see why the government would want to do that. It seems purely ideological. They should rethink their position.
Mr KATTER (Kennedy) (18:30): I am quite fascinated by the government of Australia. There is a new book out, The Rise and Fall of Australia, by Nick Bryant. He said he got very worried about this country when, on his second day in Australia, he was taken to the cliffs of Sydney. There was a big sign up next to the cliff, which is 80 feet high, saying, 'Anyone who jumps off this cliff will be fined $150.' He said, 'I had serious worries about what sort of government we had in this country that I had come to.' The book is a very interesting book.

We live in a country that will have no manufacturing base. Every report that I have seen says that when the three motor vehicle companies close 72 per cent of Australia's manufacturing base will go down with them. We have already lost most of our manufacturing but if we take another 72 per cent out we will live in a country that will have no ability to produce anything much at all.

In the agricultural sector, as I have said on many occasions in this place, within seven years this country will become a net importer of food. No-one believes me but anyone can go down and get the figures. There has been an increase in imports over the last 10 years of 125 per cent. You can pick whatever starting point you want. There has been a 125 per cent increase in imports and a 28 per cent increase in exports. Clearly the country wants to become a net importer of food.

Someone has some great idea that we are going to build all these dams in North Queensland and produce all this food. The farms that are on the dams that are there are closing down. They cannot make a quid. They are seeking subdivision in all cases. So you have no manufacturing base, a collapsing agricultural base, and the party is over for coal. Indonesia is now the biggest exporter of coal in the world. We are yet to see Mongolia come on stream; that will happen over the next two years. There will be a massive production of coal in Mongolia when the railway line is completed at the end of next year.

So where are we going to get our jobs from? Where are we going to get our income from in this country? We imported $1,000 million worth of oil 12 years ago. Now we import $25,000 million worth of petrol. Where is this money going to come from? Where is this $16,000 million you are going to need to buy your cars from overseas? Where is that money going to come from? Where is the $25,000 million going to come from to buy all your petrol from overseas?

I can tell you that it is not going to come from agriculture. That is going down. It is not going to come from mining. That is completely collapsing. It is not going to come from mining, because what you have now is what you have got. There is one more iron ore mine to come on stream, and then nothing will be happening in this country in mining. You can talk about the Galilee Basin. I represent the Galilee Basin. I can scream with frustration, but there has not been a rock moved into position to start coalmining in the Galilee Basin. In any event, it is 320 kilometres from the sea.

There are 180,000 new jobs created every year in Australia. There are 300,000 new jobseekers every year in Australia looking for those jobs. For some reason that I simply cannot understand, this government—as have successive governments—will bring 500,000 people in. Hold on! You have 300,000 jobseekers and 500,000 people coming into the country and you only have 180,000 new jobs. I hope you have a lot of money banked up in welfare payments, because you have another 100,000 coming down the line when the motor vehicle industry closes. And there is a multiplier effect of three. For every job you take out
another three will be taken out of the economy. I am rather interested to see where you are
going to get the money from.

For the first time ever I have been a Cassandra in this place. I have cried out, again and
again, 'Don't you see that your country will be left with nothing? Agriculture is collapsing,
manufacturing is vanishing.' And you may say, 'Well, what can you do about it?' I am not
going to canvass all of the issues; I am going to confine myself, as I should, to the motor
vehicle industry. I live 5,000 kilometres away from the motor vehicle industry, but I would
like to think that I am an Australian.

When the first Holdens became available for sale in Queensland—I think it was the first
100—my daddy bought one. He was determined to be one of the first owners. He would have
liked to be the first but he was only one of the first. He kept walking around the car saying,
'This is Australian. We built this car. Look at the clearance. Look at the size; see how many
people you can fit in it. It is the cheapest car on the market in Australia. This car is fabulous!'

My father was so excited. Way up there in the middle of nowhere in Cloncurry he was so
excited that his country could build a motorcar. In my book, An Incredible Race of People: A
Passionate History of Australia, over the last century, Sir Laurence Hartnett was one of the
great heroes. There were seven or eight others including Essington Lewis, who founded the
steel industry in Australia. The steel industry will close down, of course; it will go down the
chute with the car industry. It will be gone.

You may ask: what do you do about this? Where did the problem come from? I will tell
you where the problem came from. In this country 1987, 86 per cent of the motor vehicles
were Australian made. So what the hell happened here? I will tell you what the hell happened:
Mr Keating happened. He announced that he was cutting in half the tariffs on motor vehicles.
And, for reasons best known to himself, he came in and did the right thing: he allowed the
dollar to free float. It went down to 49c, and I said, 'God bless Mr Keating. He's my hero. The
dollar has come down to 49c.' For unknown reasons he then started to prop it up through the
bloody roof.

Mr Costello did exactly the same. Mr Costello came in and free floated the dollar. It went
down to 51c, where it should be, of course. If the dollar free floated to 49c under Keating and
41c under Costello, I dare say that is where it should be. But Mr Keating doubled the dollar. I
will not go into how that was done, but everyone knows that the control of the dollar really
comes from the Reserve Bank, and the government controls who is on the Reserve Bank and
what their policies will be. Any government does.

In Australia, we have gone from 86 per cent of motor vehicles being Australian made to 19
per cent. I will tell a quick story. I have only been overseas once and it was a quick ethanol
tour. Louis owned the luxury car service in Sao Paolo that the Australian government uses. I
said, 'Louis, this is an Australian car.' He said, 'I always buy Holden Caprices, but this is the
last one I would buy.' At the time I think the figure was $36,000. He said, 'I bought my fleet
for $36,000 per car.' He said, 'The General Motors Brazilian equivalent is not as good a car, in
my opinion, and it is a little bit cheaper, but I've always bought Holden because I think they
are really good cars.' But he said it was the last one he would ever buy, I asked him: 'Why, in
the year of our Lord 2006— or whatever it was—will it be the last car you buy?' He said,
'Because the dollar has doubled and it's $72,000 now and it is only $32,000 to buy the
Brazilian equivalent.' That is the profound effect of the dollar.
Then there is the issue of interest rates being 1,000 per cent higher than the rest of the world. Anyone can go to the library and ask them, but the average interest rate for the rest of the world is 0.27 per cent. The average interest rate in Australia is 2.8 per cent. That is a 1,000 per cent difference. I was in charge of the State Bank in Queensland. If there was a 50 per cent difference I would have had the CEO in and carp at him. If there was a 100 per cent difference, I would sack him. If there was a 1,000 per cent difference, I would seek the highest building in Brisbane and jump off it. But it does not worry the government that Australia is a 1,000 per cent out of step with our competitors.

The tariffs were 50 per cent in the mid-1980s when Mr Keating started and then the Liberals finished off the job—with the complete removal of tariffs. So we remain the only country without ethanol. We are the only country with interest rates 1,000 per cent higher than the rest of the world. We are the only country in the world without any subsidy support for farming. That is fine. That is a good idea; I agree with it. But, when the rest of the world's farmers are getting 40 per cent of their income from their government and our farmers are getting no income from the government, I do not hold out too much hope for our farmers.

I will climb back to the very interesting specifics on this particular case. I have got to say that I am disappointed with some of the trade unions involved here. I am a very strong supporter of trade unionism, so I regret to have to say this. There are 20,000 direct workers in this industry. If they were to put in $25 a week, that would be $1,300 a year. So that is $26 million a year. That can support a loan of $260 million. Are you going to tell me that you are not going to get one of these workshops for $260 million? What is it? It is a heap of scrap iron and some real estate that has to be cleared—though, it would cost you a bloody lot of money to clear that scrap iron off it, I can tell you. So $260 million will buy you one of these plants.

So who are you going to sell the motor vehicles to? Twenty-five per cent of motor vehicles in Australia are purchased by government. I was very surprised to find that the Catholic schools in Queensland, for example—and I presume the Anglican schools and the Lutheran schools—purchase their cars under a government contract. So 25 per cent of all motor vehicles are purchased by government. Need I say more! If you get 25 per cent of 600,000 motor vehicles that are sold every year, you are laughing all the way to the bank—and someone has got 150,000 motor vehicles that he can sell to this Australian manufacturer.

Like every other government on earth, all this government have to do is say that, if it is a government vehicle, it will be an Australian made vehicle. But they say, 'Well, that's inconvenient.' Well, yes it is. I thought Toyota vehicles were made in Australia. I thought I was buying a Kluger and that it was therefore made in Australia. I found out, to my horror, that it was not. I do not think the Ford Escort is as good a machine. Well, too bad for me—it is an Australian machine and I should be made to drive an Australian motor vehicle. So I should be made to drive the Ford Escort. All of us should be driving Australian motor vehicles and, by protocol, all of us in this parliament should be driving Australian motorcars.

So there are the answers. They are not very difficult. For these workers, it is $25 a week versus the dole. That is what they are facing. There are no jobs in Melbourne or Adelaide. There are definitely no jobs there. So where is the government going to find the money to look after these 50,000 people that are going to be thrown out of work? Where is the money going to come from? As the great exchequer who resigned from Margie Thatcher's government said: 'I just could not convince her that if you closed all of the coal mines then
you had to find welfare for 100,000 employees and their families and the cost of that was infinitely greater than the cost of running those mines at a loss. Whether she could not add up or whether she was just pig-headed, I do not know. But that is the reason that I resigned from the government. That is also the reason that the people of Great Britain slaughtered her in the subsequent election. She preserved herself by shooting a few Argentinians there for a while and showed very courageous leadership. I have to give her full marks for showing courageous leadership, but shooting a few Argentinians should not get you re-elected.

Mr Robert: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Can I just make the point to the House that, regardless of what we think in terms of combat operations, to say to a major ally that they invaded a sovereign nation to win a few electoral points is beneath us all. Member for Kennedy, you are a better member of parliament than that, sir.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Craig Kelly): There is no point of order. The member for Kennedy has the call.

Mr KATTER: People in this place do not read books. My friend, I welcome you to read any history book you choose and say that it was not driven by politics.

Mr Robert: They invaded the Falklands you bloody idiot!

Mr KATTER: I will withdraw and apologise to the member if he can produce that. I do not want to talk about that. I want to talk about saving our motor vehicle industry. As a representative of the defence industry, read all the books on the Second World War. The Great Betrayal by David Day is an excellent book, but you can read any book on the Second World War. The quotes I like best are by Jack McEwen. He said, 'I was staggered when I realised that my country could not make an artillery piece.'

Laurence Hartnett, founder of the motor-vehicle industry in Australia, had a battle to get an artillery piece. This country could not make an artillery piece—and it is too bloody late when someone suddenly decides to pick a fight with you, and you go running around trying to figure out how you can make one! We rang the Americans and they said, 'We're a bit busy; we've got a war on here.' We rang the British and they said, 'We're a bit busy; we've got a war on here.' We were left to paddle our own canoe—and we should be capable of paddling our own canoe. We have no ability to build a motor vehicle— (Time expired)

Ms BIRD (Cunningham) (18:45): I take this opportunity—as have many colleagues on this side of the House—to speak in opposition to the Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill 2014. I will look at some of the detail and explain why I am concerned enough to oppose the bill. I will also look at the context of some of the issues facing the automotive-manufacturing sector and manufacturing, more broadly, as a sector in our economy. I will focus on one of the aspects that I am most passionate about and engaged with, as the shadow minister: the skills-development issue.

The bill before us is intended to give effect to the Abbott government's $500 million cut to the Automotive Transformation Scheme over 2014-15 to 2017-18. That was announced as part of last year's MYEFO. The bill also has the effect of terminating the scheme on 1 January 2018, thereby cutting a further $400 million from the scheme, leaving no support for surviving components companies.

Labor opposes the bill. We believe that we need to fight to maintain Australian manufacturing capabilities and jobs—not pre-empt closure of this vital high-tech industry and
risk early closure of firms, before 2017, by reducing funding. The scheme provides assistance in the form of co-investment to firms for the production of motor vehicles and engines and for investment in eligible research development of plant and equipment. This decision will put at risk 50,000 Australian men and women who have jobs directly in the car industry and the 200,000 workers who rely indirectly on the automotive-manufacturing industry for employment. It will also have a major impact on their families.

I have spoken in this place before of my own experiences, in my local area, with BlueScope restructuring and the effects that had on the supply chain in the area. We are also a major coal-mining industry. I come from a long line of coalminers and have seen the impact of retrenchment on families and the instability it creates in local communities, so we should be doing everything we can to protect these jobs. The scheme needs to be maintained to enable the government to work with industry, whilst it is in this transition, to rebuild jobs and maintain capabilities. Cutting this funding risks causing the early closure of motor-vehicle producers and hundreds of firms in the automotive supply chain, sending thousands of Australian jobs offshore.

In government, Labor's investments ensured that Australia maintained its automotive industry in the face of the global financial crisis, global industry restructuring and record-high Australian dollar. Labor's approach is based on co-investment in order to provide long-term certainty. It is not a hand-out. The industry only received support when it invested alongside the government. This support was critical in keeping the industry here and attracting new investments, models and capacity.

The Abbott government has demonstrated, through many decisions—but especially through this bill—that they do not care about workers affected by this downturn in the auto industry. They are cutting $900 million from the scheme, ultimately terminating it in 2018. It is part of a broader agenda to axe funding to programs that support workers in such industries. The manufacturing sector, including automotive, is worth fighting for. There has already been work done on how investment in strategies to transition the sector into sustainable long-term avenues can be achieved. One avenue is investment in upskilling the manufacturing workforce.

Recently a report was released on exactly this issue. I draw interested members' attention to a report of the Australian Workforce Productivity Agency: Manufacturing workforce study: skills to grow competitive, high-end manufacturing. In April this year, AWPA released this report on their investigation of the skills needed by the manufacturing industry, more generally, as it goes through this significant transition period. The manufacturing industry is Australia's fourth-largest employer. It has deep links with other sectors, particularly primary production, utilities, construction and services.

The manufacturing industry is a particularly important one in terms of the integration of innovation across all sectors. It is vital to economic activity in many regional areas. Manufacturing makes a disproportionately large contribution to exports and plays a critical role in the uptake and spread of innovation in our economy. As we well know, manufacturing has been in transition for decades, impacted by situations internationally and nationally—tariff cuts, industry restructuring, changing technologies, outsourcing of tasks to lower-cost economies and, more recently, the high Australian dollar and slower productivity growth in
the economy. It is true that all these things created challenges and opportunities for our manufacturing sector. AWPA's report notes:

While transition is not new, it highlights the need for Australian manufacturing to focus on high-end innovative products where it has a competitive advantage. The future lies in us shifting from heavy industrial manufacturing to higher value added, technologically advanced production.

I would argue that the car-manufacturing industry sits perfectly within that frame.

In order for us to take advantage of these opportunities our workers will require a high level of skills, particularly the STEM skills—science, technology, engineering and maths. Improved leadership and management skills are necessary for businesses to increase productivity, innovate, adapt to changing business models and integrate into global supply chains.

AWPA made a number of recommendations. Firstly, it said, we need to focus on skills development. It indicated that the manufacturing industry's future lay in advanced and niche manufacturing. It recommended that industry work within Australian government manufacturing initiatives to identify linkages that promote industry-wide collaboration on skills and workforce development. The AWPA report recommended that continued government support be maintained for programs which assist businesses to develop and upskill their workforces, in particular, Enterprise Connect, Workplace English Language and Literacy program and the National Workforce Development Fund.

Sadly, the Abbott government totally ignored the AWPA recommendations and axed the very programs that AWPA recommended to upskill our workers to enable them to face workforce challenges in the future. The WELL program assisted businesses to train employees and to improve their English language, literacy and numeracy skills to help them improve their current and long-term future employment opportunities. The Australian Industry Group's report Getting it right: foundation skills for the workforce also highlighted the critical importance of language, literacy and numeracy. They were very supportive, I must say, of the program.

The National Workforce Development Fund program was part of the Labor government's Building Australia's Future Workforce package. This initiative was designed to link employers and industries to co-investment based funding for whole-of-workforce planning and development. In regard to the car industry I would refer members to two examples of where the National Workforce Development Fund was used very successfully in this way.

The Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce worked in conjunction with the Motor Trades Association Queensland and partnered with Kangan Institute to upskill and improve career pathways for 50 automotive technicians. VACC played an instrumental part in linking enterprises with the National Workforce Development Fund's training initiatives, and through its association with the MTAQ was able to assist with the provision of high-quality training for battery electric and hybrid electric vehicle skills.

Another example was the Nissan Aftersales Leadership Certification Program. This program, underpinned by the National Workforce Development Fund, took participants through a Certificate IV in Frontline Management. The program consisted of both on-the-job training and specifically designed modules of learning to enhance a candidate's ability to provide leadership and guidance in their particular role in the organisation. Both programs were well received by those businesses that were directly involved, by the industry
organisations that worked to create them and by the participants. If people look at the department's website they will see some direct comment from workers who participated in that.

The second thing that the report said was that we need to position the workforce for adjustment and renewal. That particularly focused on developing the foundation skills but also getting in place some good and effective recognition of prior learning and accelerated training programs to help workers formalise the recognition of the skills they had developed. Again, it emphasised the importance of adapting those strategies for mature age workers, many of whom we see being impacted in the automotive industry.

Manufacturing should be promoted as a rewarding career. The AWPA report indicated that one of the main problems was a perception of manufacturing that was outdated and that it was important to actually have a conversation through industry groups, industry skills councils and trade unions all working together to promote the growing and positive opportunities in the manufacturing sector.

Finally, the report indicated that we needed to get seriously into the business of guaranteeing a supply of capable apprentices. They recommended that many of the programs that were sadly axed in the budget, such as Australian Apprenticeships Mentoring Program, the Australian Apprenticeships Access Program, the Accelerated Australian Apprenticeships Program and Apprenticeship to Business Owner were important to that task. Sadly, they have gone, too. In summary, the AWPA report into manufacturing recommended that this sort of investment would ensure that the workforce available would be positioned for a new and innovative sector in manufacturing more broadly but also obviously in the automotive area as well.

I would like to indicate, too, that one of the things that I do think was unfortunate for some of these industries in transition was the decision by the government to abolish local employment coordinators. In my own area, because of the BlueScope restructuring and its impact, we had one of these positions working closely with the companies and the affected workers to put in place some important programs that connected them with new opportunities but also put in place some training and support for supply chain providers to enable them to find some new markets. I think that was a short-sighted decision to remove those positions. They were very valuable.

Finally, I just wanted to make the point that I think that the decisions that the government made are short sighted. I think the automotive industry had the capacity, working in partnership with government, to have a strong future. I still think that that is a possibility, but this bill will not contribute to that outcome. The Abbott government established a $155 million Growth Fund designed, in their words:

… to generate the jobs of the future for employees and supply chain businesses in Victoria and South Australia affected by the closure of local automotive manufacturing operations.

I just want to highlight to the House that that fund included a $30 million skills and training program to assist automotive employees to have their skills recognised and also to provide them with training for new jobs while they were still employed. To date, we have not seen any information about how employees can access this program, what training options are being made available to them, whether they are able to have time at work to attend any training programs and whether they will be required to pay or for that training. There is much
that needs to be clarified about the expenditure of that component of the package. It is important to provide that skilling and training opportunity to the workforce and I hope the government moves on that more quickly than they have done to date. Sadly, they seem to be doing quite the opposite. The sector more broadly, and the workers in particular, as well as the regions and communities directly affected, deserve far better from their federal government than they are seeing at the moment. This bill is a bad decision and I am sad to be standing here but pleased to say I am going to oppose it.

Mr KELVIN THOMSON (Wills) (19:00): It was not always the case that the Liberal Party was so hostile toward manufacturing in general and the car industry in particular. You did not use to get the sneering references to 'industry welfare' and 'picking winners' and so on that tend to mark the modern debate. Indeed, the founder of the Liberal Party, Sir Robert Menzies, said—and I go back to 1964 when he was opening the Chrysler manufacturing centre in Tonsley Park in South Australia, in the member for Wakefield's electorate—

Mr Champion: They made Chargers!

Mr KELVIN THOMSON: He said:

I found myself as Prime Minister greatly concerned to see whether we could establish an industry of building motor vehicles in Australia, and this was regarded by a lot of people with some horror and we had all sorts of expert advice. Expert advice is the very devil. You want to have at least a hundred experts and then conduct a Gallup Poll among them and then think out the answer for yourself. That's my firm belief.

The experts said, 'Oh, but you can't do it. Nobody could build a car in Australia … Well, it is only twenty-five years ago that that was happening. I remember it very well. There were all sorts of misconceptions, there were all sorts of expressions of anxiety and inferiority on the part of people, and today we have in Australia a state of affairs in which 400,000 new motor vehicles go on the roads every year.

That was Robert Menzies back in 1964—a giant, compared to some of the free-market pygmies we deal with now. He continued:

I don't need to be told that there are quite a number of people here, as I go around who are what we used to call New Australians, who are people who migrated here since the war. There are millions now anyhow, something well over a million in Australia and every large factory I go to contains a high percentage of people who have come in in these years. There could not have been a migration policy or programme without employment on this scale in industries of this kind. The rural industries, vital as they are to the survival of Australia, can't employ people by the scores of thousands every year, we know that they can't. It is industries of this kind which enable the migration programme to continue, and the fact that the migration programme continues, that you have this remarkable increase in the population year by year has given strength and tone and optimism to the people who run retail stores in Australia, to all sorts of other manufacturers who produce things that in demand by stores and which are bought by them because they are in demand by their ordinary customers. This is a whole interwoven structure.

That was Sir Robert Menzies saying you cannot have migration without manufacturing. This government is unravelling it—killing off manufacturing in general and the car industry in particular. Mark my words, this is not going to end well for Australia—this narrowing of our industrial and economic base.

Another Liberal Prime Minister, Harold Holt, back in November 1967 at the inauguration of the Lonsdale plant of Chrysler in South Australia said:
… this is a great moment in the history of this State, and it is a very welcome occasion in the history of the economic and industrial growth of Australia. It is, I assure you, for me a stirring experience to go around this country as your Prime Minister and see in all parts of Australia in one form or another … Australia's developmental strength and our industrial growth.

In formally declaring this Lonsdale Plant open, I convey to you on behalf of my colleagues of the Government my own personal good wishes, every wish that you will continue to prosper and that you will be a permanent element in a growing and increasingly prosperous Australian automotive industry. That was Harold Holt. We also had former Liberal Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, in 1976, saying:
The motor vehicle industry is, obviously, of great importance to Australia's national economy and particularly to South Australia.

The plans announced by Chrysler are not only important for the industry as a whole and for Australia but they are also of special importance for South Australia where motor vehicle manufacturing is obviously very significant for the industrial development of the State.

Now we come forward to today's Prime Minister who said on 7 September 2013, before he was elected:
I want to see car making survive in this country, not just survive but flourish.

Then—surprise, surprise!—in December he decided to turn his back on our auto industry. He turned his back on the car makers; he turned his back on the 50,000 Australians employed in the sector and said:
Some of them will find it difficult, but many of them will probably be liberated—

His word, 'liberated'—
to pursue new opportunities and to get on with their lives.

This Liberal Prime Minister has seen the car industry vanish on his watch and he should be ashamed he has allowed this to happen, when previous Liberal Prime Ministers were strong supporters of it. Robert Menzies got it; Harold Holt got it; and Malcolm Fraser got it.

The Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill 2014 amends the Automotive Transformation Scheme Act 2009. That act was established to encourage investment and innovation in the Australian automotive industry. This bill gives effect to the government's $500 million cut to the Automotive Transformation Scheme from 2014-15 to 2017-18, which was announced as part of the Mid Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook. It also has the effect of terminating the Automotive Transformation Scheme on 1 January 2018, cutting a further $400 million from the Automotive Transformation Scheme which was announced in the budget.

Labor strongly opposes this legislation. We think it spells disaster for the 200,000 Australian men and women who rely, either directly or indirectly, on the automotive manufacturing industry for their jobs. It is a disgrace that this government is seeking to bury the manufacturing industry as quickly as possible. And we think that this decision to withdraw support for the manufacturing sector through this bill and refuse to co-invest with Ford, Holden and Toyota in continuing to grow a high-skilled manufacturing base, when combined with the increasingly preferred option to build Australia's next generation of
submarines overseas, will damage our manufacturing industry and damage Australian companies and Australian workers.

This comes at a time when Australia has high unemployment levels. We have a national unemployment rate of 6.1 per cent and a participation rate of 65.2 per cent. In my state of Victoria, our unemployment rate is 6.8 per cent. Youth unemployment is the highest it has been for the last 15 years. We have high regional unemployment and high long-term unemployment, and yet we have a government which is abandoning manufacturing and thereby abandoning Australian job opportunities.

Following the decision last year by Ford to close, I hosted a Wills Car Industry Forum in Fawkner with the intention of providing local businesses and employees with information and assistance. The decision by the Ford Motor Company to cease manufacturing in Australia in 2016 affects all Australians, but clearly very greatly those in the electorate of the member for Corio, who is here, and also local auto component manufacturers that supply parts to Ford, to its businesses, the local employees and their families in my electorate of Wills and the neighbouring electorate of Calwell. I was very conscious at the time of the difficulties that Ford's decision would cause for some people in my electorate. The forum was an opportunity for people in Wills to share their views and concerns. Residents, employees and business people who were affected by the closure attended. They expressed their views and concerns about the closure announcement. We had speakers from a wide range of agencies and companies, including Austrade. Many of the speakers administered or managed programs that could be of assistance to the car industry and our community. One of the key aims of the forum was to ensure that all of my constituents are fully aware of the range of services that can help them through what are difficult times.

Manufacturing is a critical industry sector for Melbourne's northern region, and it is vital that we work to proactively assist and create new opportunities for local businesses and employees as soon as possible to help support the manufacturing sector, local businesses and local jobs, and maintain strong community and social fabric. This bill will hurt my community in terms of social cohesion, jobs and support for manufacturing industry, and making sure that suppliers and businesses have the time and the support that they need to transition to new markets and products.

I agree with economist Dani Rodrik, who says that:

… countries ignore the health of their manufacturing industries at their peril.

He says that:

High-tech services demand specialized skills and create few jobs, so their contribution to aggregate employment is bound to remain limited. Manufacturing, on the other hand, can absorb large numbers of workers with moderate skills, providing them with stable jobs and good benefits. For most countries, therefore, it remains a potent source of high-wage employment. Indeed, the manufacturing sector is also where the world’s middle classes take shape and grow. Without a vibrant manufacturing base, societies tend to divide between rich and poor—those who have access to steady, well-paying jobs, and those whose jobs are less secure and lives more precarious.

Dani Rodrik says that in the United States the fall of manufacturing's share of employment has been damaging to productivity because labour productivity is substantially higher in manufacturing than in the rest of the economy. The bulk of new employment in the United States:  

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... has come in 'personal and social services', which is where the economy's least productive jobs are found. This migration of jobs down the productivity ladder have shaved 0.3 percentage points off US productivity growth every year since 1990.

In Latin America, he says:
Redundant workers have ended up in worse-performing activities, such as informal services, causing economy-wide productivity to stagnate ...

I want to add my voice to the concerns being expressed about the offshoring of Australian manufacturing. I agree with economist Herman Daly, who says that:

... off-shoring production is not "trade."

He says that:

No goods are traded.

And:

It is absurd that off-shoring should be defended in the name of "free trade".

He says that offshoring increases imports, increases the trade deficit and lowers either employment or wages. The policy of free trade is based on the doctrine of comparative advantage. One of the premises on which the doctrine of comparative advantage rests is the international immobility of capital. But offshoring involves moving capital abroad. And if we were fair dinkum about free trade as a policy, we would be looking at capital mobility and offshoring.

The idea that manufacturing jobs are degrading and that everyone is going to be re-educated to become a mining engineer or an investment banker is delusional. Manufacturing jobs are worthwhile jobs, holding families together and holding communities together, and we should not let them slip away. The Nobel Laureate Professor Robert Solow's growth model showed that the only way to break the bonds of steady state stagnation is through rapid innovation and technological change that lifts the productivity of both capital and labour out of the steady state. R&D represents the seed corn of technological change and innovation.

Regrettably, since coming to office, this government has gone out of its way to trash Australia's automotive capabilities. The government claims that the age of entitlement is over, but we have here a situation that welfare payments and lost tax revenue from an industry shutdown are projected to exceed $20 billion, and it will take more than 10 years before the economy recovers from the underlying hit to GDP.

The greatest impact from the wind-down of the automotive industry will be in my home state of Victoria, where an estimated 100,000 jobs will be lost. And this is the state with the 15-year-high youth unemployment rate of around 12 per cent. Gross regional product in Adelaide and Melbourne will not recover until 2031—nearly two decades away—and employment levels are not expected to recover until the end of the 2020s. In addition to the losses estimated in Victoria, South Australia is projected to lose 24,000 jobs, and New South Wales and Queensland are expected to lose 30,000 jobs. So this is an industry which has been vital in my electorate and vital in Victoria and other parts of the country. I think it deserves better treatment than the treatment it has received from this government.

I strongly oppose the bill—I wish that the government would reconsider its attitude towards manufacturing in general and automotive manufacturing in particular. Labor will do everything we can to stop these cuts to the Automotive Transformation Scheme and we ask
Mr MARLES (Corio) (19:15): I rise this evening to speak in opposition to the Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill 2014. This is a bill which stands for a vast difference between the government and the opposition when it comes to the car industry. It is a difference which, in essence, speaks of the coalition being ultimately and consciously opposed to having a car industry in this country and Labor, who have actively and willingly sought to maintain a car industry in this country from the moment that it began.

In articulating the differences of approach to the car industry I want to say that I speak very much tonight on behalf of my electorate—an electorate which has had Ford making cars in it since 1925. They were the first manufacturer in our city, but a manufacturer which has been making cars in Geelong since that time. There are nearly a thousand people today employed by Ford in relation to the car industry and, of course, there are many more who are employed in the car components industry. It is one of the most significant private-sector economic pillars within the local economy.

And it is not just a matter of those people who are directly employed: this goes to the health of the economy within suburbs such as Norlane and Corio, where many of those people live; it goes to the ability of people to run small businesses within those suburbs, which benefit from those people who work at Ford as their customers; and it goes to the question of the very identity of Geelong. When you drive into Geelong you see the big, bold Ford sign, which speaks of a company which has had a longstanding engagement within our city. Indeed, perhaps a neat example of that is that since the 1920s Ford have been sponsoring the Geelong Football Club which, to this day, represents the longest sponsorship arrangement in world sport. Ours is a car town, and it is a town which is bereft by virtue of the decision that has been made by this government intentionally to seek an end to the car industry in this country. And so tonight I very much speak for those Ford workers and I speak for the people in Geelong in opposing this bill.

The practical difference that you can see between the two parties was played out in 2007, before the 2007 election. In July 2007 we saw, under the Howard government, Ford announce that it would close its engine assembly plant. This was intended to occur in 2010. Hundreds of people were going to lose their livelihoods as a result of that decision. Of course, at the end of that year the government changed and by the following year in November 2008—with some hope, with some investment in the people of that town and with some commitment to the car industry—we saw Ford reverse its decision and maintain a car and engine plant at the Geelong premises.

That is a difference between a state of despair under the Howard government about what was seen as a hopeless future for the car industry in this country and the sense of hope and engagement which existed under the then Rudd government. This came from a government which was committed to the car industry and committed to the companies and the people who were within it. Hundreds of jobs were saved as a result of that and, indeed, hundreds more in relation to the contractors who work with Ford. The communities that I have described were radically changed by virtue of the ability for Ford to continue.

I want to make the point that this is not just about jobs, although it is critically about that. It is also, at the end of the day, about the question of the capability of our country—the industry
capability of our country. We aspire to have a diverse, productive economy which climbs the technological ladder and which has within it businesses and enterprises which are high tech and innovative. That is, across the board, an aspiration of government in this country. But the highest-tech manufacturing that we do in this country on this day is making cars. It is why it is so profoundly important as an industry to this country.

It is also really important to understand that as an industry in existence around the world that it is an industry which is in effect a public-private partnership. Governments around the world invest in having a car industry. If you look at the 13 countries which can take a car from design stage right through to completion, in every one of them there is a significant investment by the governments of those countries in keeping those industries alive and flourishing.

Indeed, comparatively, the level of investment that existed in Australia in relation to the car industry was quite small and a key part of it was through the Automotive Transformation Scheme. The reason why countries seek to invest in the car industry and to have it in their countries is precisely because of the technological dividend that comes from having an industry of that kind within your country. This breeds highly-skilled workers, this breeds innovative people and this breeds companies who seek to invest in research and development and to improve the technological capacity of the economy as a whole. It is why it is such a fundamentally important industry for our country and, of course, why is Geelong was very proud to have—and still has—a significant part of that industry in our town today and over many decades.

In keeping the industry going, Labor in government did not stop there. We invested in new high-tech industry which would have a role in the automotive sector and other parts of manufacturing. We invested $37 million in the carbon fibre research centre at Deakin University, now known as Carbon Nexus, which in turn is a much bigger facility than simply the $37 million. It represents the high-tech manufacturing of the future. What you also saw from the then Labor government was a government that was not just about investing in high tech, that was not just about making sure that our car industry was able to keep going, but a government that was also fundamentally prepared to get in there and fight for jobs when jobs were on the line. So when in 2012 you saw Alcoa in a really difficult situation, undertaking a review of whether or not it would continue to smelt aluminium in Geelong, you saw the then Gillard government act decisively to provide the support necessary to keep Alcoa going in its darkest hour.

In 2013 we saw Ford make the very difficult decision, the devastating decision from the point of view of Geelong, that it would no longer make cars in this country. It is important to say that no government can save every job, and it was very sad for me that in that circumstance, while Labor was in power, it was not possible to keep Ford going. But there is an enormous difference between a government which has a disposition to fight for jobs and pursue jobs versus a government whose disposition seeks to goad manufacturing out of the country. That is the difference that exists today between Labor and Liberal when it comes to manufacturing in this country, and there is no better expression of it than the bill before this House today that we are talking about right now.

When Ford made the very difficult decision that they made, on the very day that they made it, the then Gillard government committed $15 million towards what is now a $30 million
fund to help Geelong transition through the economic shock associated with a decision of that magnitude. As difficult as that moment was, the Gillard government stood up on the day and made sure that it was standing with Geelong to get through a very difficult moment. When we went to the election later that year there was, in effect, a difference in the proposition that was put to the Australian people of $1 billion in support for the car industry—a $1 billion difference in the propositions being put by Labor and the coalition with regard to the car industry. We knew that despite the very sad decision that had been made by Ford, that proposition fundamentally represented a decision or a commitment about whether or not we wanted to have a car industry in this country. That $1 billion would have seen Holden and Toyota continue their production in Australia right now, but if you take that out of the system then what transpires is absolutely inevitable.

In the lead-up to the last election the now Prime Minister, when quizzed about the question of the car industry—indeed quizzed about my home town of Geelong—this was in a press conference in Brisbane—said:

I want to see car making survive in this country, not just survive but to flourish.

We now know that was an absolute and total lie. There is no other word for it. An absolute and total lie. Whether you have a car industry in this country, whether you have manufacturing in this country, is an absolute conscious decision of government, and the conscious decision of this current government has been to let manufacturing go. We thought that would play out over a matter of years; we did not expect to see it play out over a matter of months. We did not expect to see, within just a few months of this government coming to power, the Treasurer goading Holden offshore and then seeing Toyota follow suit. Of course, at the beginning of this year, in a different industry but manufacturing nonetheless, and again in Geelong, we saw the very, very difficult decision of Alcoa, who announced they would no longer smelt aluminium in Geelong from 1 August 2014.

But unlike Labor's response to a decision that involved an economic shock of that magnitude to my city, what we saw from the coalition was absolutely nothing—absolutely nothing. To this day not a single cent has been dedicated to the City of Geelong, by virtue of the decision that Alcoa made, to help us through the obvious transition that has to occur by virtue of that economic shock. We are seeing a government that today has declared war on manufacturing. But not only has it done that, it has also cut funds to research, it has turned its back on science. In this bill we are seeing the government not only give effect to the $500 million cut which was talked about during the election but, over and above this, we are also seeing a decision to end the Automotive Transformation Scheme in its entirety, which involves another $400 million cut to the car industry.

As difficult as all the decisions that Geelong has faced in the past 18 months have been, one thing that has been saved is that Ford's product development centre, which employs more than 400 people in Geelong, committed to be in Geelong beyond 2016. This is the part of Ford that is involved in the design and development of new cars made not just in Australia but also made by the Ford production chain around the world. It is a profoundly important asset in terms of the industrial capability that exists within it for our country. These are highly skilled people. This is the epitome of a high-tech economy. It is this group that would have benefited from the ongoing existence of the Automotive Transformation Scheme, and, by virtue of this
bill not just giving effect to the $500 million cut that we saw at the time of the election but also abandoning the scheme in its entirety, we are seeing those 400 jobs being placed at risk.

What we are seeing through this bill is a government that is seeking to complete the job that it started in declaring war on the City of Geelong and in declaring war on manufacturing in Geelong. This is a government that is seeking to dumb down the national economy. This is a government that has absolutely cut my home town of Geelong completely loose: cut it completely loose in the context of what it has done with the car industry; cut it completely loose in the context of providing nothing for the transformation as a result of the Alcoa decision; cut it completely loose in relation to the cuts it is making to higher education, research and development; cutting it completely loose in relation to what it is doing to the social safety net. But what will stop this happening is people in this country voting this government out of office. And as a result of this bill and everything we have seen in this budget, everything we have seen in relation to manufacturing, Geelong stands ready to do exactly that.

Debate interrupted.

ADJOURNMENT

The SPEAKER (19:30): It being 7.30 pm, I propose the question:

That the House do now adjourn.

Holt Electorate: Doveton

Mr BYRNE (Holt) (19:30): Tonight I want to talk about the comment on the pride of the suburb called Doveton. In a recent article in that most excellent paper, the Berwick News, a former Doveton resident—and author, apparently—stated that he was 'shocked by the deterioration' of Doveton. I understand that the individual will be writing a book tracing this decline in a version of the suburb that he remembered.

At a recent event in Doveton, the Doveton Show, I spoke about this assessment of Doveton and my view that this individual's view was incorrect at best and fundamentally destructive and wanton at worst. It is wanton and destructive because this individual has never been seen, other than in a photo, around the streets of Doveton. For example, he was not seen by the local community among the 20,000 people plus at the Doveton Show last month. He was not seen in the vicinity of the iconic $37.8 million Doveton College. He certainly was not seen, or has not been seen for many years, at the Power Road Christmas Lights display organised by Ruth Murray and Jenny Colvin, and he certainly has not been seen, or was not seen, engaging the amazingly diverse migrant and community groups who use the John Pandazopoulos Hall in Doveton on a daily basis, and he has not been seen at the Doveton Neighbourhood and Community Centre. He has not even been seen at the Australia Day celebrations at Autumn place or even at the Doveton Pool. When an individual advocates and puts forward positive ideas about benefitting the community, that is welcome, but simply being a critical outsider is not welcome in our community or our suburb. What we want is hard work, constructive engagement and consistent involvement in and dialogue to make our community even better, not cheap shots in a newspaper article.

The uniqueness of this proud suburb was on clear display at the 2014 Doveton Show at Myuna Farm last month. The annual Doveton Show has become the major community event for the region and the City of Casey. It is a special event because it is run by those who live in
and care about their suburb and because it is held at one of the most unique venues in Melbourne, the iconic Myuna Farm.

Myuna Farm in Doveton is a public community farm that provides a great example of farming life. It is virtually city meets country and the bush within driving distance of nearly everyone in the City of Casey. Virtually every day of the year Myuna Farm is open. It is open to allow people, school groups and community groups, normal mums and dads and kids and community groups such as Riding for the Disabled, to visit the animals, to see them and learn about them in a habitat and to experience and play with them and the baby animals at the Animal Display Centre. They can see the many types of native birds at the bird aviary or talk to resident Joey, the talking cockatoo, or walk down to the paddock to feed the farm animals, learn about some iconic Australian native animals and visit the reptile display or see the wetlands, if they can walk far enough, at the back or take the local train, the Myuna Farm train, to get there. Myuna Farm is a local treasure. Many overseas visitors drop by.

One of great success stories in Doveton over recent years has been the $36 million combined investment from state and federal governments and the $1.8 million investment by the Colman Foundation into the new Doveton College which opened in 2012. Doveton College caters for families and children, prenatal to year 9, with the eventual goal of providing education to students up to year 12 in the years ahead. It offers a tremendous range of services with state-of-the-art facilities and it also includes the Casey 50-metre pool which is next door for the students to take part in. It is a state-leading, Australia-leading facility right in the heart of Doveton. One of the best things about this college and its student population of more than 800 children is that it offers families, residents and the local community groups access to these facilities: the performing arts centre, fitness centre, internet cafe and community meeting spaces.

I could not finish this speech without acknowledging the Christmas Lights display which has been for many years run by Ruth Murray and Jenny Colvin. Unfortunately, this year will be the last year that they run this display. Ruth and Jenny have lived in Doveton since 1979 and for the past 15 years they have been running this phenomenal display which is visited by thousands of people. They really do epitomise the spirit of Doveton. It is a pity that spirit was not experienced and properly noted by that person in that article in that paper.

Solomon Electorate: Fuel Prices

Mrs GRIGGS (Solomon) (19:35): I rise tonight to point to disparities in Northern Territory fuel pricing that have been causing considerable disquiet in my electorate of Solomon and, indeed, across the whole of the Northern Territory for many years now. It has been ratcheting up in intensity over the past few weeks.

Anybody who has fuelled up at a Territory service station knows it is an extremely expensive exercise. It has always been the case that fuel in Darwin is more expensive than in other capital city but in recent weeks the disparity appears to have taken on a life of its own. For example, last week in Adelaide and the Gold Coast the price of fuel was $1.35 a litre. In Perth it was $137.9 a litre. The pump price in Melbourne was around $1.46.9 a litre and in Sydney it was a cent higher. In Darwin on average a litre of fuel at the pump was a whopping $171.7 cents a litre, and much higher in remote areas. To put it bluntly, Territory motorists have had enough.
My colleagues in this House are very well aware of my concerns about fuel pricing and the disparity in prices in the Territory and the rest of Australia because I have been raising this with them since I came to this place. Former NT Chief Minister Shane Stone QC who heads up the Prime Minister's advisory group on developing North Australia, shares my concerns about fuel prices in the Northern Territory and he has agreed to place this on their agenda. When he was Chief Minister of the Northern Territory he had some success in reducing fuel pricing in the Northern Territory and I am sure that it can be done again.

There has been a raft of reports over the years that point to a range of issues such as a lack of competition, but none of those appear either logical or convincing, particularly because fuel is imported from Singapore and yet Darwin pays far more than any other capital city even though it is closer. In an attempt to resolve some of these issues, the Giles government has convened a fuel summit to be held in Darwin on 7 October. Chief Minister Giles has issued a 'please explain' to the petrol wholesalers about why fuel is so expensive in the Top End.

Against this backdrop of action by the Northern Territory government, there has emerged the sound of a squeaky little wheel in the form of the Northern Territory's Labor senator who is weighed into the debate—which, for the previous 12 months as an incumbent senator, she appeared to have no interest in. In a typical whingey-whiney fashion, the senator tried to drag the Commonwealth into this matter, calling for an independent review into competition policy to undertake hearings in Darwin. This is despite federal Labor having the best part of seven years to rectify issues of petrol pricing in the Territory and also that the federal member for Lingiari was also in the Labor cabinet. But the senator conveniently forgot that point. I should also say that, given how little time the senator actually spends in the Territory, I would have thought that the price of fuel in Canberra would have been more of a concern to her—but I digress.

In an effort to educate the senator, I will put on the record what the Commonwealth is doing to address fuel prices in the Territory and indeed the cost of living. The independent Harper review is charged with examining whether key markets, including automotive fuel, are competitive and whether changes to the scope of the Competition and Consumer Act and related laws are necessary. Members of the Harper panel came to Darwin in May this year—a forum where Senator Peris was conspicuous by her absence. A range of issues were mentioned at the May meeting, including high fuel prices as well as regulatory impediments to competition.

While the government welcomes the Labor senator's interest in the Harper review, it is regrettable that it comes some six months into the review and four months after the panel met with Territorians. Interested members of the community—and this includes the senator, who knows full well that you do not have to attend a public meeting to contribute to a review—are able to make submissions directly to the review and are invited to respond to the draft report by 17 November 2014.

In relation to the ACCC's fuel monitoring role, the Minister for Small Business, Bruce Billson, has acknowledged that a new direction is needed for the ACCC to monitor more regularly and to empower the ACCC to do a deep dive on areas of concern for motorists. At the moment the annual reporting gives you a great insight into what has happened over the last year. This regular, new reporting will actually give consumer groups, the government, and other interested parties more time to quickly—(Time expired)
Emeritus Professor Anthony, AO

Dr LEIGH (Fraser) (19:40): Emeritus Professor Anthony J. McMichael AO passed away on 26 September 2014 at the age of 71. Tony was a world-famous Australian epidemiologist who was at the Australian National University until 2012, where he held a National Health and Medical Research Council fellowship and was a member of the Science Advisory Panel to the Australian government's Climate Change Commission. The citation for Tony McMichael when he was the ACT finalist for the Australian of the Year awards in 2010 described him as:

... the world's leading scholar and commentator on the relationship between global climate change and human health.

He graduated in medicine in 1967 from the University of Adelaide and, after a short stint in general practice, he did his doctorate in epidemiology at Monash University and post graduate work at University of North Carolina. Returning to Australia, he became Foundation Chair in Occupational and Environmental Health at the University of Adelaide. From 1994 to 2001 he was Professor of Epidemiology at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. He returned to Australia as director of the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health where he served from 2001 to 2006.

A measure of Professor McMichael's world-renown is in his over 300 peer-reviewed publications, 160 book chapters and two sole-authored books. He was a fellow at Chatham House, elected in the US National Academy of Sciences and was an Officer of the Order of Australia. Having been a member of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change from 1993 to 2006, he was a co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007. As well as all of his academic successes, Tony was an accomplished pianist.

In the best traditions of the Australian National University, Tony was not only at the cutting edge of the academic research but also deeply involved in policy debates. During his years in Adelaide, as Bob Douglas has reminded me, Tony was leading international investigations in water fluoridation, breast cancer screening and contributing as a member of the Scientific Council of the International Agency for Research on Cancer. One of his last public acts was the publication of an open letter to the Prime Minister, co-signed by a group of public health and scientific colleagues, urging the Prime Minister to make climate change a central element of the G20 talks.

Bob Douglas said, 'McMichael brought an enormous lustre to the centre and to our University. He has led a punishing international schedule since he came to the ANU in 2001.' Since his death, Colin Butler has written on his blog:

If we are to survive as an advanced, wise and compassionate species, the work of people like Tony will increasingly be realised recognised as fundamental to the shift in which we are engaged.

ACF president, Ian Lowe, wrote:

Tony was not just a giant in his field with a deserved global reputation but also a delightful colleague and a warm and empathetic human being.

Roberto Bertolini, from the WHO, said:

Thank you dear Tony. You have been an example of integrity, professionalism and commitment which I will never forget.
I worked with Tony McMichael on a forum on inequality held in Parliament House in January this year, spearheaded by Bob Douglas, and I enjoyed the exchange with him. I was going back through my emails and found that our last email exchange in January this year was him trying to persuade me of the dangers of growth—quoting Herman Daly and William Ophuls—and me trying to persuade him of the merits of it, quoting Bill Gates.

Tony McMichael is survived by his brother, Philip, an eminent sociologist; his wife, Associate Professor Judith Healy; another brother, Robert; his daughters Anna and Celia McMichael; and four grandchildren. He leaves a legacy not just in the academic but also in the policy realm. Groups such as Doctors for the Environment Australia, the Climate Institute, the Australia Institute and the Frank Fenner Foundation have acknowledged the debt that they owe him. Our earth is finer for Tony McMichael having walked upon it, having contributed his ideas to the realm of academia and having brought his passion to policy debates which will affect us and our grandchildren. I honour his memory and the work that he did during his 71 years.

Central Queensland: Employment

Ms LANDRY (Capricornia) (19:45): Last week, I told parliament that Central Queensland faces a jobs crisis on a scale not seen for 30 years. Tonight, I want to spend more time outlining this situation and explain what actions I am encouraging our government to focus on to help our struggling communities.

As global coal prices continue to dive, it is reported that up to 15,000 coal related jobs in Queensland have been lost in the past two years, most from Central Queensland. Coal prices are half of what they were three years ago, while the cost of production in Australia is far higher than for our world competitors in Indonesia, China, Africa and the United States. Last week, BMA announced a further 700 job cuts directly impacting on Central Queensland towns like Moranbah and Dysart and regional cities like Rockhampton and Mackay. But we face a double whammy. Our concern for coal jobs is coupled with a downturn in our beef sector and a severe drought in Queensland. As I indicated last week, this creates the hallmarks of a perfect economic storm.

We need to fast-track key priority infrastructure projects to help stimulate employment and business growth in Central Queensland. That is why I and my federal colleagues George Christensen and Ken O'Dowd have been working to secure meetings with key government ministers to review projects that create local jobs. In the past week, we have raised the jobs crisis in meetings attended by the Prime Minister and other senior ministers. I have been canvassing my local mayors and councils to seek their input into suitable projects that may be shovel-ready, with the ability to create jobs. I can report that this morning I, along with my fellow Central Queensland federal National Party MPs and senators, met with the Treasurer and the Deputy Prime Minister to seek support to fast-track projects that may boost job creation in our region. Fortunately, our coalition government, a government that focuses on the genuine growth of regional Australia, has already been proactive in this regard. Task forces, such as those reviewing the future development of Northern Australia and the future competitiveness of Australian agriculture, have outlined significant projects that would enhance future job and investment opportunities.

This includes water infrastructure. I want to see the Connors dam built between Sarina and Moranbah. This project is shovel-ready and is located in the Isaac shire, which is suffering
badly from the downturn in coal and the impact of the 100 per cent fly-in fly-out work policy. Towns like Moranbah and Dysart need to diversify away from their reliance on coal. The current jobs crisis in our coalfields impacts not only on workers and their families but also on small-business owners and their families who rely on coal workers and contractors to support their business.

Central Queensland is proud of its coal and beef industries—but it is so much more than 'coaldust and bulldust' and it must diversify. To do this we need secure water supplies. I am pleased to inform the House that, on 9 October, I and a strong group of National Party MPs and senators will be conducting an excursion to examine the potential for dam projects firsthand in Capricornia. I thank my colleague Senator Matthew Canavan for his assistance here. We will look at the Connors dam site and meet the Isaac shire mayor at Moranbah to discuss community input on the concept.

Other key water projects that we must progress are the Fitzroy agricultural corridor near Rockhampton and the Urannah dam near the coalmining town of Collinsville in northern Capricornia. We need to fast-track key road projects like the upgrade of Peak Downs Highway, to which the federal government has already committed $120 million. Civic projects such as a convention centre and NRL stadium in Rockhampton and redeveloping the foreshore on the coast at Yeppoon may also provide further ongoing jobs in a diverse set of industries. But we should also look at non-traditional ways to boost our economy. We need to attract more Defence jobs to Rockhampton's military precinct, because more families would generate more activity in our small-business sector.

**Serana (WA) Pty Ltd**

Ms MacTIERNAN (Perth) (19:50): On 25 March 2014, the Prime Minister, in an address to the Asia Society in Canberra, reflected positively on a Western Australian company which was exporting to Asia. He spoke about the company; he referred to:

… cell and tissue cultures manufactured by Serana, which are exported throughout Asia from the company's new production laboratory in Bunbury, Western Australia.

Little did the Prime Minister know that, at that very time, officers from the Department of Agriculture were setting about a course of action to comprehensively destroy this company and, on the basis of the evidence that I have available to me, were doing that in complicity with a large multinational company that was eager to get this small Western Australian company out of the field.

This is really quite a disgraceful saga. When the company approached me to do something, I was very concerned, so the first thing I did was to write to the Minister for Agriculture and seek his intervention. We did get a call some weeks ago saying, 'Yes, we're going to respond to it.' We have not had a response. In the meantime, this company is suffering at the hands of what I believe to be very unconscionable behaviour.

In essence, this company is a supplier of foetal bovine serum, which is used in many applications, including the application that the Prime Minister referred to, the preparation of skincare products. So this is used widely in a range of products. The company sources its material from Australia and New Zealand.

In December the department obtained a warrant to search the premises to allegedly pursue complaints that they were securing the product from a banned jurisdiction, because of
understandable concerns about foot and mouth disease; there are various countries from which importation is banned for this product. In that process the department removed many of the company's documents, including a veritable uteload of its hard documents and also all its electronic documents. They also sealed off in the freezers virtually all of the company's production. They refused to in any way deal with the company to return any of this product.

The company no longer having any records or product, they took the matter to the Federal Court. Reading the Federal Court judgement, one has great concern. One sees in that judgement a finding that the officer that had been concerned in presenting this affidavit had consistently changed his story. The basis on which he made the affidavit, his claim that he had seen this material in emails—he subsequently was basically required to deny that. He had sworn evidence that the target company had written emails in which they described selling 'junk serum'. In fact, he was subsequently forced to acknowledge that indeed this was the allegation of the competitor company, not anything that had in fact been contained within company emails. The judge in the Federal Court found that it was unsafe to allow this matter to stand. Finally, most of the material was returned—except all of the hard drives.

There is evidence that the department has been providing to Serana's competitors and to their distributors confidential information that could only have come from these files to undermine their business. There is also the evidence of one employee. She arrived at eight o'clock one morning at her home. She was—(Time expired)

Education

Mrs WICKS (Robertson) (19:55): A significant milestone for year 12 students on the Central Coast has been reached, because they are now marking their final moments in high school. Over the past several weeks graduation ceremonies have been taking place across the Central Coast, and it has been an honour to be present at many of them. For students and for their proud parents these are the important times of excitement but also reflection and consolidation before the important Higher School Certificate exams. Seeing the joy in these young people's faces as memories came flooding back and friendships were savoured made each presentation event that I attended that much more special.

One of the most significant ceremonies this year has been the first ever graduation of year 12 students from Kariong Mountains High School. This school opened in 2010 after years of campaigning from the community. The foundation cohort, who began in year 8, helped in designing the school's motto, uniform, logo and, importantly, its reputation. The 48 students who graduated last week as the first year 12 class are now well placed to pursue pathways in higher education or traineeships. Handing medallions to each of these students was a great honour, and it took me back to my own final days as a student at Gosford Christian School in Narara. Back then, that school was also new on the Central Coast, and it was a tremendous honour to be a part of the first graduating class of Gosford Christian School in 1990.

Principal Ann Vine, Deputy Principal Scott White, Founding Deputy Principal Gus Vrolyk and Year Adviser Peta Werlemann from the Kariong Mountains High School have done an outstanding job in joining with the community to build the school up to what it is today right there in the Mount Penang area. The school is known for its specialisation in biosciences and technology, but what was obvious was how hard the school works towards its values of unity, knowledge and respect.
Matilda Eder and Bradley Rodrick spoke eloquently as school captains at the graduation ceremony, and Matilda has received a Global Leadership Award to study law at Macquarie University. She also received an award for her academic rigour along with Emily Dart, Erik Tults and Koji Yijima.

At St Joseph's Catholic College at East Gosford there was also genuine pride in their academic achievements and the school's culture. The students spoke fondly about growing from being 'Joeys Girls' into 'Mackillop Women' in the spirit of Mary MacKillop, and it was also a great honour to be there. The night was superbly run by Principal Tony McCudden and Year Leader Dave Matthews, and it was hosted by Holy Spirit Church at Kincumber.

I must congratulate all the students, including Riley Evans, who won Sportswoman of the Year and who has been called into the state and national basketball teams; Dana Hawton, whose service to the community includes being a member of the Rural Fire Service despite her youth; and Jade Antcliffe, who received the University of Newcastle Award for Academic Excellence, which includes a $2,000 Vice-Chancellor's Scholarship.

I would also like to commend Narara Valley High School, whose Year 12 Graduation has also taken place recently. I commend the Principal Michael Smith, Year Adviser Britt Fowell and the impressive school captains, Shae Wright and Lachlan Head. Shae also received the Australian Defence Force Long Tan Leadership Award, and Lachlan was presented with the Senior Service award. Eddison King was Narara Valley's recipient of an excellence award from the University of Newcastle.

There were many other outstanding students on display at all three of these schools, and the fantastic news is that this government is providing all students with more choice and more opportunities. We are doing this by expanding the demand-driven Commonwealth funding system for those who go on to study higher education diplomas, advanced diplomas and associate degrees as well as for the graduates who study at non-university higher education institutions doing bachelor courses. More than 80,000 additional students each year will benefit from this by 2018. Those from a low socioeconomic background on the Coast can tap into the greatest scholarship scheme in Australia's history. This might include needs based scholarships to help meet costs of living. It could also cover fee exemptions, tutorial support, or assistance at other critical points in their study. Finally, from 2016 universities will be able to set their own tuition fees. This will mean that the conditions will be right so that regional universities will be able to successfully compete to attract more students. And, of course, students do not have to pay a cent up front and only repay their loans once they are earning a decent income.

So, as these students on the Central Coast bid farewell to year 12, I wish every single one of them in this important time in their lives all the best in their study and their future endeavours.

The SPEAKER: It being 8 pm, the debate is interrupted.

House adjourned at 20:00

NOTICES

The following notices were given:

Mr Morrison: To present a Bill for an Act to amend the law relating to freedom of information and privacy, and for other purposes.
**Mr K. J. Andrews:** to present a Bill for an Act to amend the law relating to benefits for members and former members of Parliament, and for certain other persons, and for related purposes.

**Mr K. J. Andrews:** to present a Bill for an Act to amend the law relating to social security and veterans’ entitlements, and for related purposes.

**Mr K. J. Andrews:** to present a Bill for an Act to amend the law relating to social security, family assistance, veterans’ entitlements and farm household support, and for related purposes.

**Mr K. J. Andrews:** to present a Bill for an Act to amend the law relating to social security and veterans’ entitlements, and for related purposes.

**Mr K. J. Andrews:** to present a Bill for an Act to amend the law relating to social security, family assistance, veterans’ entitlements, military rehabilitation and compensation, farm household support and the Social and Community Services Pay Equity Special Account, and for related purposes.

**Mr Matheson:** to move:

That this House:

(1) notes:

(a) the importance of complementary medicines and practices, including traditional Chinese medicines, to the international healthcare landscape;

(b) that the Australian complementary medicines industry is worth over $3.8 billion; and

(c) that Australia is the first western nation to nationally regulate Chinese medicine practitioners; and

(2) acknowledges:

(a) the National Institute of Complementary Medicine (NICM), hosted by the University of Western Sydney, as Australia’s premier research facility in complementary medicine, being the only Australian complementary medicine research centre to receive the top ranking of five in the Commonwealth Excellence in Research for Australia scheme; and

(b) the role of the NICM in fostering collaboration and engagement with Chinese hospitals, research centres and universities to provide trade, research and investment opportunities in Australia.
Wednesday, 1 October 2014

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott) took the chair at 09:30.

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Scullin Electorate: Muslim Community

Muslim Leadership Program

Mr. GILES (Scullin) (09:30): Last Friday I visited the Thomastown Mosque, in my electorate. I was prompted to do so by reports that mosques and Muslims in other parts of the country have been subject to racist attacks and religious vilification. This is of course completely unacceptable and must be condemned in the strongest possible terms by political leaders. I thought it was important to show my solidarity with and support for a group of Australians that are under intense scrutiny from the media and also their fellow Australians—and also to listen to them.

I was struck by the strong sense of community held by attendees. This mosque is a place for community building as much as it is a place of worship. The mosque is terrifically popular and has resorted to accommodating worshippers in the outside car park due to high demand. People I spoke with on Friday were all determined to condemn the atrocities being committed in Iraq and Syria by ISIL and to do all they can to ensure that alienated members of the Islamic communities in Australia are not preyed upon by extremists. They were appreciative of efforts by Bill Shorten, the Leader of the Opposition, to reach out to the Australian Muslim population, particularly his open letter to the Islamic community, co-authored with the member for Greenway.

I realise that in the face of violence and extremism some Australians may feel less inclined to support our great multicultural project. This would be a mistake and counterproductive also to tackling real issues of social isolation and marginalisation—indeed, alienation—that exist in some parts of the Muslim community. Recent events and the fact that there are Australians overseas fighting with ISIL give the cause of multiculturalism a renewed urgency and relevance. Greater engagement of all Australians with Australian Muslims is crucial in combating extremism in Muslim and non-Muslim communities alike. Indeed, attendees were keen to engage with their neighbours and the media to dispel myths about their peaceful faith. They need our help to do this.

On this front I am heartened by the efforts of the local Victoria Police in Mill Park. Senior Sergeant Stuart Morris leads a team that has already done much to engage with communities and build relationships. I understand that this is not the case everywhere. In particular I want to commend the work of Senior Constable Albert Fatileh, the multicultural liaison officer, and Ansam Sadiq, the new and emerging communities liaison officer. This work sets a good example for other institutions, including this one, to follow.

Another good example was set for me yesterday when I was privileged to attend the Muslim Leadership Program 2014. A group of impressive, articulate and confident young people challenged with tough questions and left me confident that hope will prevail over fear in Australia. They expect leadership from those of us here and are entitled to do so. I trust they will hold me to account in this regard.
I want to thank Sucettin and Remzi Unal for their accommodation of and assistance with my visit to the mosque, and Maria Vamvakinou and the La Trobe University Centre for Dialogue for organising yesterday's Muslim Leadership Program, which was so important to building my understanding of community concerns.

Wyatt, Mr Cedric

Mr Wyatt (Hasluck) (09:32): Last Thursday, 25 September, Aboriginal elder, Indigenous leader, father, grandfather and my cousin, Cedric Wyatt, passed away. He will be missed by his wife, Janine, and both his children, Ben and Kate, and their respective families. He was immensely proud of his children and spoke with great pride of their achievements.

Cedric was born in 1940 at Moore River Native Settlement at Mogumber. He was removed from his mother soon after he was born and spent his early childhood at the Moore River Native Settlement. He attended school at Sister Kate's, Castledare orphanage, Clontarf Boys' Home and Aquinas College in Perth, which shaped his future and built his resolve for change. After serving in the RAAF he moved in 1963 to PNG, where he worked as a teacher, principal and public servant until coming back to Australia in 1976. Between 1976 and 1979 he was CEO of the Western Australian Aboriginal Legal Service, later serving as acting General Manager of the Aboriginal Development Commission. Cedric went on to have a long career in Aboriginal affairs in both state and Commonwealth government and with non-government organisations, where he played a key role in influencing the reforms that Indigenous Australians enjoy today. Amongst his other roles he was the shire president for the Shire of Cue, in Western Australia's Mid West region, for a period that involved the early 2000s. He was at one stage Governor of the University of Notre Dame Australia. Cedric stood unsuccessfully as the Liberal candidate for the federal seat of Kalgoorlie at the 1996 federal election. A senior Liberal recalled that Cedric did a valiant job as the Liberal candidate for Kalgoorlie in 1996. I recall shaking hands with him on the 1996 election night at East Vic Park and how cheerful he was despite his relatively low vote.

Cedric was the first Aboriginal candidate endorsed by the WA Liberal party. Cedric's son, Ben, paid tribute to his father and I will cite his words, which are reflected in a media article.

"Today we are remembering Dad's remarkable life of advocacy and achievements ... He is from a generation of Aboriginal leaders who forged the path for so many, rising from his membership of the Stolen Generation to become a senior public figure.

"He would be chuffed to know how well his life is being celebrated by so many people across Australia."

Cedric, thanks for the times that we shared, the views we had and the advice you gave. I will miss our friendship. To me, you were a rough diamond who dared to be different while caring for others. You will be missed by the many who respected and admired you as a person, a leader and a mentor, and there are many stories I could tell about Cedric and the achievements that he made. He was one of our truly great warriors.

Coal Seam Gas

Mrs Elliot (Richmond) (09:35): Yesterday, the people of the North Coast had a huge community victory and I rise today to congratulate them. Yesterday, the New South Wales state Labor leader, John Robertson, came to Lismore on the far New South Wales North Coast to announce that, under a state Labor government, the North Coast would be declared
coal seam gas mining free and unconventional gas mining free. John Robertson was joined by Walt Secord, New South Wales shadow minister for the North Coast and shadow minister for health, and Luke Foley, the New South Wales shadow minister for the environment. They were also joined by our three outstanding state Labor candidates Ron Goodman for Tweed, Isaac Smith for Lismore, and Paul Spooner for Ballina. These three Labor candidates are standing up for our community, representing our values and fighting for the issues that are important to us. This announcement by the state Labor leader means that, under a Labor New South Wales state government, the Northern Rivers will be protected from harmful CSG and unconventional gas mining.

The policy, aptly named Labor's Plan for a CSG-Free Northern Rivers, means that Labor will not allow for any new CSG exploration licences to be established on the North Coast. Also, it means that we will reject renewals of existing licences and refuse any applications to expand existing operations. This policy formally ratifies the platform put forward by the New South Wales Labor conference in July to ban CSG and unconventional gas mining on the North Coast. If elected, this will ensure that our unique environment, our water resources and our local industries, businesses and agricultural lands are protected from this harmful industry.

This announcement is a true recognition of the massive community-based campaign to protect our region. I would like to acknowledge all of those individuals and groups that have worked so hard and fought so hard for this outcome—congratulations.

Labor’s policy is in stark contrast to the National Party, who, in fact, have abandoned the people of the North Coast. For too long the National Party have pushed their pro-CSG drilling, fracking and expansion agenda. They have ignored the community and now the community will punish them. Yesterday's announcement shows who is really listening to our community: it is the Labor Party, it is John Robertson and it is our three fantastic state candidates. At the New South Wales State election in March 2015 voters face a very clear choice between the Labor Party, who want to stop CSG mining, and the National Party, who want to expand it.

Finally, I want to sincerely thank John Robertson for delivering this policy. I want to thank him for visiting the Bentley protectors camp. I want to thank him for listening to the people of the North Coast. I want to thank him for really, really making a difference in the lives of so many. He is a true community champion to all of us in our region, and we thank him so much for delivering this fantastic plan—a plan for a CSG-free North Coast.

La Trobe Electorate: ECHO Youth and Family Services

Mr WOOD (La Trobe) (09:38): On Saturday, 5 July I went to the ECHO Youth and Family Services organisation to celebrate their 30th anniversary. I had a wonderful evening with a great group of local people. I must first pay special thanks to Pastor Peter Crawford from St Mark's Church, and Wayne Collins, the Director of ECHO. They are doing a fantastic job, as well as the entire ECHO team. Wayne and Peter came up with the vision of ECHO 30 years ago. ECHO is a Christian not-for-profit organisation set up to help youth at risk and families in crisis. It is located at St Mark's church in Emerald, in the hills region of my electorate. It provides a vital service through the Eastern Dandenong Ranges of La Trobe. ECHO has a very simple mission:

FEDERATION CHAMBER
To build community by helping families and young people navigate through the most difficult parts of their lives and to equip them to make healthy and constructive life choices.

I believe everyone agrees that this is a fantastic motto to have.

In January this year, ECHO won the Cardinia council Australia Day Award for Community Organisation of the Year, and well deserved it was for this great local organisation. ECHO has three main areas of community development. It has programs and activities for kids, youth and families. For kids it provides after-school and preschool programs along with a school chaplaincy program funded by the federal government. These programs provide opportunity for kids, along with their stay-at-home parents, to build social networks and develop other interests. For local youth, ECHO not only provides after-school activities and the chaplaincy program but also provides youth camps where they learn about working in teams and becoming leaders. Life groups are an important part of what ECHO does with local youth. Small groups of young people meet with a young adult leader to discuss and share interests, concerns and issues in an atmosphere of trust and confidentiality.

ECHO have also taken on other projects, like the pilot Emerald Community Resilience and Recovery Project. Funded by the federal government, this program is about building community resilience to cope with major disasters such as bushfires. They provide the community with a no-interest loan scheme, and they also produce a fantastic local magazine called Signpost. They have been of great service to the Emerald community. I am very proud to have worked with Wayne and Peter for so many years. ECHO, you are doing an amazing job. Keep up the fantastic work. Thank you.

**Women's Legal Centre (ACT & Region) Inc.**

**Dr LEIGH** (Fraser) (09:42): I recently received an email from a constituent of mine regarding funding cuts to community legal services. Due to issues with apprehended violence orders she asked that I not mention her name. As a single mother she works hard to provide for her children. Not rich by any stretch of the imagination, she is worried about the impact on lower income families who need those services. She had to leave her marriage because it became abusive when she was pregnant with her second child. She had to go through legal channels to ensure her safety and the safety of her children from the abuse. Without community legal assistance she and her children would have been exposed to prolonged abuse and trauma. Sadly, her story is not unique, nor is it uncommon.

I warned the House back in May of the danger posed by the Abbott government's cuts. The Women's Legal Centre will have $100,000 cut from its funding in the 2015-16 and 2016-17 financial years. It will have to cut its front-line services to accommodate this. It will mean the loss of its part-time solicitor, who this financial year undertook 535 advice activities. The centre provided approximately 600 hours of casework across 30 cases.

I visited the centre in May with the member for Isaacs. We met with Heidi Yates, Genevieve Bolton and some of the staff, and they told us how the funding cuts to community legal centres will disproportionately affect women. Half the women assisted by the Women's Legal Centre have been directly affected by domestic violence. A former client told *The Canberra Times*:

It was a bad enough experience as it was, and to have financials on top of that as well would just be the death of people …
… they kept me going … I just wanted to run and hide to be honest.

In December last year the government announced a $43 million cut to legal assistance services. Not content with their original $20 million cut to the community legal centre sector, the budget contained a further cut of $6 million in 2017-18. On top of that the government also announced restrictions to community legal centre advocacy and law reform work.

Family lawyer Juliette Ford argues that the funding cuts represent a false economy. She points out that cutting funding on the presumption that people can self-represent will only cause further delays in our court system. Heidi Yates, of the Women's Legal Centre, warned in a recent ABC interview that 'access to justice in Canberra is under threat in the current climate'.

I want to thank Ms Yates, Ms Bolton and the team at the Women's Legal Centre for the great work they do. My constituent wrote in her email: I firmly believe in protecting our right to live safely, to protect our most vulnerable, is absolutely what we as Australians should be doing … don't take away a mother's right to protect her children.

We on this side of the House agree.

School Chaplains

Mr BROADBENT (McMillan) (09:45): Some considerable time ago I spoke of a special door in a school, with a special name on it. As life throws up its difficulties for children in schools, I spoke about that door having a sign on it that says 'Chaplain'. That door had 'Chaplain' written on it. Sometimes the child has nowhere else to turn when the teacher has not got an answer for that child and knows the child is in difficulty and cannot speak about it for reasons as outlined by members that have spoken on difficulties for legal aid et cetera.

I spoke then under the Howard government of the day, who had introduced a chaplaincy program at a cost of some millions of dollars for the benefit of Australian students. The program was a howling success. My electorate goes from Wilsons Promontory all the way to Mount Baw Baw, from Pakenham all the way to Moe-Newborough. Every school that I go to that has a chaplain tells me what a marvellous asset to the school it is. And then someone came along and said, 'We can't have chaplains in schools because they are proselytising and we don't want that to happen,' and the High Court agreed with them. So it was going to end. This was a tragedy for many schools. What is more, a lot of my Catholic schools were not getting a chaplain because, yes, they can get a welfare officer through this program but they were not getting it because the priest was the chaplain and you could not have two chaplains.

So under this program, now that it has changed, what has happened is that the federal government has gone to the states and said: 'We're not allowed to administer this. Here's the money, states; you administer it.' And now every school in the electorate of every member in this place can apply for funding for a chaplain. You can describe it as a welfare worker; you can give it another name if you like. It can be secondary chaplain; I do not mind what it is. But I know that children's futures will be changed by the fact there is a door in a school and on that door it has 'Chaplain'. It is for those young girls and boys that we care so much about and put our energy into because they are our future. They are everything we work for. They are what this nation is all about. They are what this parliament cares about. We fund education, but now we are going to fund through the states. Every school in my electorate will
be able to apply for this funding for the benefit of a chaplain in their school—even my tiny Catholic schools who have missed out and need all the help that they can get.

**Lalor Electorate: Little River Primary School**

Ms RYAN (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (09:48): I am pleased to follow the member because I am going to speak about one of my very small schools, Little River Primary School. I spoke about the reclassification that this school has seen, which will see a $16,000 cut in its out-of-school-hours care funding, which risks this school actually losing its out-of-school-hours program. Last week I wrote to Minister Ley about this issue and I have not yet received a response. But past and present families of students from the school have contacted me over the last week. I wanted to share with the House some of their thoughts about the importance of this small school.

I heard from Travis Lines, who wrote:

> As an alumnus of the Little River primary school and a born-and-bred Little Riveran I would like to extend my thanks to you for the speech you gave in parliament this week … It is of tantamount importance that Little River Primary School is protected. Indeed, in your speech you note its centrality to the community and the special role it plays in the lives of the residents of Little River.

I studied at Little River Primary School from 2000-2006. Unfortunately, I moved on to secondary school before the Bracks government presided over the total redevelopment of the school. I was, however, at the school during the planning phase and I can assure you that, whilst roasting inside our portable buildings during the summer months, the excitement about the potential for a new school was palpable.'

And this is a really critical point. Millions was spent on this school, which has 114 students. If the out-of-school-hours care funding cut occurs, the school risks losing the out-of-hours school program, which in turn will see students move to other schools to get before- and after-school care. This will reduce the numbers at Little River Primary School and see a waste of a redevelopment of the school and a threat to this small community, for which the school is the central hub.

This young man says:

My time at Little River also helped fuel my passion for science, which I believe has played an enormous role in my current enrolment in Biomedicine at the University of Melbourne.

It was a fabulous letter that I received from this young man, echoing the things that I had said in the parliament last week about the importance of this small piece of funding and the importance for Minister Ley to relook at this, to talk to the department and to reverse this decision about the classification.

I also heard from Tash Jennings, who has begun an online petition to petition the federal government to review the decision. She says:

This is such an incredible injustice to our little community. If this decision is not reconsidered many parents will have to remove their children and relocate to other schools. The consequences will then be even further reaching.

I would like to stress that point. The impact of this measly $16,000 could see this very small community have very detrimental impacts. *(Time expired)*
Royal Australian Navy

Ms GAMBARO (Brisbane) (09:51): I rise to speak today in recognition of the tireless and often thankless service undertaken by the men and women of the Royal Australian Navy. No one can be in any doubt that the world has become dangerously uncertain, perhaps more so than at any time in our political history. It is at times like this that we really should take the time to appreciate the peaceful freedoms that we all enjoy here in Australia. Those freedoms should never be taken for granted. They do not come cheap. They have been paid for in blood. From the earliest days in our nation's history, the Anzacs, through their service, gave us a legacy that continues today. Nowhere is that Anzac spirit much more ably demonstrated than by the vigilance of the Royal Australian Navy.

While our thoughts and prayers are with the RAAF pilots and the crew who have been predeployed to the United Arab Emirates, and the SAS team already in Iraq advising the Iraqi military in the fight against ISIL, I want all Australians to remember that the Royal Australian Navy is always at sea. Our Navy is always on the watch, keeping us safe domestically and internationally. When we are at home with our families—when we are watching the footy, as many of us do at this time of the year—somewhere in the world a Royal Australian Navy ship is on the high seas in defence of our country and of what we believe in.

The fight against terrorism is not a nine-to-five job. You cannot clock on and you cannot clock off. Through Operation Resolute, the Royal Australian Navy is contributing to the whole-of-government effort protecting our borders and offshore maritime interests. In demystifying the military jargon associated with this operation, I might point out that Operation Resolute covers an operational area approximately one-tenth of the world's surface.

It is not just in our own territorial waters that our Navy is keeping us safe; they are doing so in international waters as well. In this regard, I want to highlight the exemplary service of the crews of HMAS Darwin and HMAS Toowoomba. On 6 August, HMAS Darwin and her 232-person crew docked at Sydney after seven months of successful maritime operations in the Middle East region. In their time at sea, the crew was responsible for intercepting and destroying more than $2.1 billion of narcotics. The service of the crews of HMAS Darwin and HMAS Toowoomba in disrupting the drug-smuggling supply chains—the profits of which are known to fund terrorist organisations—is just another way our Navy keeps us safe.

The men and women of the Royal Australian Navy serve Australia with pride and I salute them.

Shortland Electorate: Northern Lights Family Fun Day

Ms HALL (Shortland—Opposition Whip) (09:54): On Monday of this week we held the second annual Northern Lights festival at San Remo on the Central Coast. It was an outstanding success, as was the one last year. The community came together for a fun day for the children and the families of San Remo and Blue Haven. There were a number of community stalls. There was a sausage sizzle, a kindy farm, face painting, a jumping castle, tug of war, three-legged races and egg-and-spoon races. It was a really big community event within San Remo.

I would like to put on record my thanks to the San Remo Neighbourhood Centre for coordinating the day, to the Northlakes Public School for allowing the event to be held within the school grounds, to Gorokan Lions Club for providing the barbecue on the day and to all
those community groups who came along. Centrelink was there as was Wyong Shire Council and a number of groups that provide support to families in that area. It is an area that sometimes struggles, and an event like this provides a really good feeling in that community.

One of the issues that came up during the day was the fact that the Abbott government has cut funding to childcare and early learning programs. I had a petition on my stall and families were lining up to sign that petition. There was extreme concern about the fact that there were cuts. I spent time talking to one woman and she told me that she had taken her child out of family day care because she could not afford it. She had had another baby and she said, from her perspective, it was not worth putting her child in child care or family day care because you had to wait such a long time to find a place for your child.

The cuts that have happened really make it unaffordable for families, the woman I was talking to and the other women who were lining up. It is putting enormous pressure on OOSH care, and I acknowledge the contribution that was made by the previous speaker from this side. Educators' wages have also been cut. But congratulations to all those who were involved with the Northern Lights festival. I implore the Abbott government to move away from its cruel cuts to child care.

Petition: Asylum Seekers

Mr BROAD (Mallee) (09:57): I rise to present a petition to the Australian parliament. One of my roles is to serve and to represent, and that is to re-present. Whilst I might not always agree with every detail in every petition, I am always proud to present petitions to the Australian parliament on behalf of the people I represent. This petition is about asylum seekers within Australia's jurisdiction. It asks the House to immediately appoint a parliamentary committee to examine and investigate the current situation and in doing so invite submissions by asylum seekers, refugee organisations and other welfare services, as they consider:

- Unfettering and expedient processing of asylum seekers on the mainland of Australia Closing offshore Detention Centres
- Restoring protection visas regardless of the method of travel
- Moving Asylum Seekers into communities and enabling them to support themselves including the establishment of work rights
- Ensuring women and children are protected and not incarcerated in detention.
- Ensuring their appeals are considered compassionately and quickly
- Hastening implementation of the committee's findings

The petition's principal was Rohullah Hussaini. Let me outline the process. This petition has gone through the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Petitions and has now been tabled in the House. It will go to the Minister for Immigration and Border Security and will be placed on the committee's website. The petition's principal will be informed of the petition's progress.

This came out of a ride by the deputy mayor of the rural city of Swan Hill and Rohullah Hussaini, who rode over 700 kilometres from Swan Hill to Mildura to raise their concerns about our immigration and asylum seeker policy. I have a strong belief that we do need to have a strong border protection policy. People should not be allowed to profit out of other people's desperation. We do need to have a very strong border protection policy.
However, I also commend Scott Morrison's movement towards safe haven economic visas. That encourages regional councils to wrap their arms around communities. It gives an opportunity for people to work 3½ years minimum out of five, and then they have a chance to apply for other visas onshore. I have always been a strong believer that the best thing you can give a person is an opportunity. This gives a person an opportunity to work. We find that when people work it actually breaks down barriers. It also gives rural communities a chance to participate in being part of the solution instead of standing on the outside and throwing stones at government.

I commend this petition to the House. I am always happy to represent the people of Mallee and to present anything that they choose to hand to the parliament.

The petition read as follows—

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

This petition of concerned citizens who have a heart and compassion for displaced people, draws to the attention of the House the PLIGHT OF ASYLUM SEEKERS WITHIN AUSTRALIA’S JURISDICTION

Our petition concerns the need for;

- humane and expedient treatment and processing of asylum seekers in Australia recognising that those seeking asylum are not illegal entrants no matter what method of transport they use to get here, they are genuinely seeking protection,
- those seeking asylum to be processed quickly and efficiently, giving them future, hope, purpose and direction, rather than adding to their current trauma which in turn creates lasting trauma within the community,
- the ceasing of Inhumane and discriminatory treatment of Asylum Seekers which creates extreme anxiety and hardship for those most vulnerable and marginalised in our world, particularly women and Children for whom detention is inappropriate and oppressive.

We therefore ask the House to;

- immediately appoint a Parliamentary Committee to examine and investigate the current situation and in doing so invite submissions by asylum seekers, refugee organisations and other welfare services, as they consider:
  - Unfettering and expedient processing of asylum seekers on the mainland of Australia Closing offshore Detention Centres
  - Restoring protection visas regardless of the method of travel
  - Moving Asylum Seekers into communities and enabling them to support themselves including the establishment of work rights
  - Ensuring women and children are protected and not incarcerated in detention.
  - Ensuring their appeals are considered compassionately and quickly
  - Hastening implementation of the committee's findings

from 476 citizens

Petition received.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Andrews): In accordance with standing order 193 the time for members' constituency statements has concluded.
Ms SCOTT (Lindsay) (10:00): I rise today to associate myself and the people of Lindsay, whom I represent, with the remarks of the Prime Minister on 22 September in the House of Representatives. Our nation, our local community, our beliefs and our government have been challenged by a number of abhorrent international events. From the shooting down of Malaysian flight MH17 to the rise of the militant group Islamic State, all of a sudden our world seems very, very small. Although we may be geographically on the other side of the world, these events have been felt ever so strongly here in Australia. Australians have lost family and friends in the shooting down of MH17. People who were returning home from their holidays or who were coming to Australia for community events and for business lost their lives so tragically on that day. There have been evil images of beheadings at the hands of extremists and, sadly, and most scarily and frighteningly, by some people who have at some time even called Australia home.

These events test the international communities and the resolve of our allies. The Prime Minister is correct in saying that protecting our people is the first duty of government. I believe this too. I rise in support of the Prime Minister's words. Further, I commend the Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister for Defence, the Minister for Justice and the Attorney-General for the way they have met these challenges and the steps they have taken to ensure the safety of our local communities. I also wish to thank the opposition for their cooperation and support in this time.

Australia is a great nation, and together the entire parliament must strive to protect and support our local communities for a better future and a better life. Further, our communities have been united by the events that continue to haunt our nightly news programs. The brutality and the confronting imagery internationally and, in the past few weeks, on our own doorstep remind us of our own fragility but also of what it means to make Australia a great nation.

I believe this is a great nation, and in these times of adversity it is important that we band together. Terrorists can only succeed when they can strike to the hearts and minds of innocent people. The evil that is ISIL must not succeed. We must stay strong to the Australian life that we all love and cherish. Once again I quote the Prime Minister in his words that 'hope is stronger than fear' and 'decency can prevail over brute force'. Australia should remain a country where people trust each other, welcome newcomers and are justifiably confident that in most respects our future will be even better than our past. Our country must remain a beacon of hope and optimism that shines around the world. We should remain a country where people trust each other and where welcome newcomers are justifiably confident that our future will be even better than our past. We will fight to protect these values. Over the past two weeks, I have had an outpouring of support from my local community about the actions of the Prime Minister and the government in regard to international and local terrorism threats. I recently sent a survey to members of our local community. One of the questions I asked was, 'If you could raise an issue in federal parliament, what would that be?' Overwhelmingly, the main response was to secure our borders and to fight this international threat of terrorism. James Collins of South Penrith said:
I applaud the Government for securing Australia's borders and introducing legislation giving the Police, National security and ASIO additional powers to cope with the current terrorist situation in Australia.

Tania Cook, of Orchard Hills said:
Why allow anyone who goes overseas to fight with IS back into Australia, why not let them stay there and live in a place that has no safety or peace?

Barry Suffling of Penrith said:
People proposing to immigrate to Australia must swear to … never bring their home country's tribal conflicts or wars to this country.

Wendy Johnson of Emu Plains said:
Keeping Australia secure and safe for us, our children and future generations.

Graham Freeman in South Penrith answered:
Stronger Visa control on people coming back to Australia.

Mr and Mrs Richard Last of Oxley Park said simply:
Stop the terrorists.

There were so many more. That was merely a glimpse as to what has come into my office in the last few weeks.

But I can draw on this demonstration to show that people really do want to see action to protect Australia, our citizens and our way of life. The raids across Australia and in Sydney and Brisbane a few weeks ago and the unfortunate disturbing events in Melbourne in the past week proved that the local threat is real but also proved that the public should feel confident that the police, security services and government are taking every possible step to ensure the safety of the community. The government is doing whatever is possible to support our police and agencies in keeping people safe. Australia can and should always live normally.

But, even in these disturbing times, I take the opportunity to remind local communities that these security measures both at home and abroad should be against terrorism, not against religion. This threat comes from a minority group of extremists. Mostly, Australian Muslims are peace-loving people. Australian Muslims believe that ISIL is committing 'crimes against community and sins against God.' Nothing can justify the beheadings, crucifixions, mass executions, ethnic cleansing, rape and sexual slavery that have taken place and been captured in the towns and the cities. But we cannot blame an entire ethnicity or religious group for the actions of such a small minority—what is a death cult. The foundations of our communities, particularly in Western Sydney, are built on multiculturalism. We should all stand together, united in our outrage and disgust at this minority group, but not turn against each other due to generalisations about religious beliefs. Together, we should hope to protect Australia's way of life and to outlaw this extremist behaviour.

There will always be hope. As Alexander Pope said in his famous poem *An Essay on Man*:
Hope springs eternal in the human breast:
Man never is, but always to be blest:
The soul, uneasy and confined from home,
Rests and expatiates in a life to come.

**Dr CHALMERS** (Rankin) (10:08): When it comes to national security and when it comes to the key responsibility of government to keep our citizens safe, we in this place often speak
with one voice and we often come to the same conclusions about these very important issues, but we do so bringing here many different perspectives. And our perspectives are formed and forged by our own experiences, by our reading and our understanding of history, and by the values and principles that we bring to this place. My own perspective in some of these discussions comes from my own multicultural community based around the northern end of Logan City and the southern suburbs of Brisbane. I acknowledge my colleague the member for Forde, who represents another big portion of Logan City. I consider myself blessed to represent such a multicultural community. I consider myself blessed to have people from so many different backgrounds and so many different faiths residing in the area that I grew up in, and the area that I now represent.

I know, from almost four decades of living in a place like mine, that the overwhelming majority of people from different faiths and different backgrounds want to live there in peace. They want to do the right thing. They make a tremendously positive contribution to my community. Local families just want to see that their kids have opportunities and they want to see that their kids are safe. They want for their kids what families across all of the faiths want for their kids: they want to see people's aspirations rewarded and they want to see people getting along with each other in a spirit of harmony.

It is certainly true to say that today, because of a combination of what is happening overseas and what is happening at home, my community is edgy. That edginess is based on, as I said, what is happening in northern Iraq, in Syria and in other parts of the world, and also on what is happening in activities in my own community, my own local community. Members might be aware that some of the AFP raids, for example, that have been undertaken in the last month or so—not the majority of those raids, but some of them—have taken place in some of the suburbs of my electorate, and I did want to take the opportunity to pay tribute to the Australian Federal Police for the professionalism that they show when they conduct these sorts of activities. I was very pleased to be able to receive a briefing quite recently from the AFP about some of these activities. I want to acknowledge and put on the record my thanks to Minister Keenan for facilitating those briefings that enabled me to get a better understanding of some of the actions that have taken place in my own community in the last little while. I also want to pay tribute to the AFP, not just for the way that they conduct some of those sorts of events but for the way that they do try to engage with the various communities of all faiths in my electorate of Rankin.

Of course, it is not just people who are doing the wrong thing who are shaken by all of this—they should be shaken by all of this—but also a lot of people who are doing the right thing. We have unfortunately seen an increase in incidents in my area against people of different faiths—of the Muslim faith. It is important that we condemn any of that sort of activity. We have had incidents at the local mosque, for example, and we need to make sure that we condemn that sort of activity, just as we condemn in the strongest possible terms some of the harsh language that comes from the other extreme in this national conversation that we are having right now.

I was pleased to join Muslim friends at the mosque open day a couple of Fridays ago. We do need to be putting that sort of effort into educating people about the different faiths. I congratulate not just the people from the mosques but also the people from the local community who went along to discuss some of these issues in a spirit of understanding and a
spirit of openness. It was a very successful day, and we should see more of those sorts of efforts made to understand each other.

The link between what is happening here in our own community and what is happening overseas in northern Iraq and in Syria are the so-called foreign fighters. It is very difficult for us to understand what would take hold of somebody, who, having lived in Australia and called it home, would want to pack up and go overseas to participate in this awful conflict on the side of the thugs who are conducting this genocidal activity in the Middle East. It is hard for us to understand what would make a young Australian person want to follow the directions of these cowards that we see on YouTube videos and elsewhere. It is hard to imagine what took hold of the young 18-year-old man in Melbourne, for example, who was arrested for the incident in the last fortnight or so. I want to repeat the words of my leader, Bill Shorten, who I think spoke very eloquently about this topic. He said, and I quote:

Whatever problems you may perceive that you have, violence is not the solution. Whatever you think is wrong with the world, extremism and fanaticism will never make it right. We do need to discourage and disrupt extreme behaviour, fanatic behaviour, at all levels. We need to make sure that we take a broad approach to that; not just in terms of crime prevention or the activities of our intelligence and law enforcement agencies, but a much broader approach that looks at things like marginalisation, and that makes sure that we are attacking disadvantage where it exists.

In that context, I was very pleased to have a discussion with Muslim leaders yesterday in this place. They were here as part of the Centre for Dialogue's Muslim Leadership Program at La Trobe University. We did discuss some of these issues, including marginalisation of young people.

On the other side of the world, the situation in Iraq is heartbreaking for people like us and people around the country who have arguably spent the best part of a decade debating that country, Iraq, and the various missteps that were part of the US-led activity there that began in 2003. For a previous generation—the baby-boomer generation—the Vietnam war was the defining foreign policy event. For my generation, I think it is fair to say, that the defining foreign policy debacle was really the Iraq war. My leaders—Bill Shorten and Tanya Plibersek—have gone through why they think that the 2003 intervention is different to the humanitarian intervention we are making now. I will not repeat those arguments, but it is fair to say that this is a very different situation now.

We support this deployment. We anticipate another announcement very soon after the deliberations of the National Security Committee of cabinet and we will play a constructive role in all of those conversations. Our positive contribution is to put boundaries around the sort of support that we are prepared to provide. Again, Bill Shorten has outlined those in detail. We can also make a contribution as individual politicians to improve the understanding of all of these issues and not diminish the understanding of these issues. It is worth noting that Senator Lambie and Senator Bernardi's comments are particularly unhelpful in this context. They are divisive. I do not think that they are well motivated. It is incumbent on all of us—I do not tar all of the government with that brush—to try and improve the understanding in our community and not diminish it.

These are really serious times. We approach these challenges calmly and with purpose. The same goes for how we approach the National Security Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2014 that is currently before the House. How we approach that task really centres on what the
Prime Minister has described as 'the delicate balance' between security and freedom. Evaluating this balance has been a question confronting political philosophers for centuries. It is a question that thinkers as diverse as Locke, Hobbes, de Tocqueville and Benjamin Franklin have all weighed in on and disagreed on in the usual way. It is hard for us to strike that perfect balance between security and liberty or even to accept that that simplistic view that those two things are unnecessarily at odds. It is not necessarily true that there is a direct trade-off between security and civil liberties. The reality is that liberty and security is not a zero-sum game. After all, personal security is—as Hobbes would have argued—itself a critically important liberty to be defended. Human security depends on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms to be upheld. When we analyse the legislation that is before the House, and the other pieces of legislation that will come before us in the coming months, we need to keep these fundamental principles in mind. When we agree to legislation which restricts certain civil liberties, we must do so with confidence that the resulting gain in security and related freedoms is sufficiently large to make it worthwhile.

Legislation is just one aspect of the government's approach, and of course there are other jobs for us to do. I was thinking, when I was preparing my remarks for today, that our job is really, as Bobby Kennedy said all those years ago when he quoted the Greeks, 'to tame the savageness of man and make gentle the life of this world'.

Mr BALDWIN (Paterson—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Industry) (10:18): Today I rise to offer my support for our nation's involvement in helping to stop the barbaric genocide taking place in Iraq. I offer my unreserved support for Australia's efforts as part of an international coalition determined to stamp out the ISIL movement around the world. And I offer my unconditional support to the new security measures being put into place to prevent terrorist attacks on our own home soil.

Australia has a long and proud tradition of doing what we can to help at home and abroad to make a safer Australia and a safer world. ISIL is a barbaric terrorist force the world has never seen before in its history. It is well financed, well armed, committed and ideologically driven. ISIL is prepared to employ barbaric, brutal tactics to show its total disregard for human life. ISIL have beheaded innocent people. I ask: 'What sort of warrior hides behind a mask and beheads innocent people who have had their hands tied behind their back and been forced onto their knees?' That is not the action of a warrior in battle but the efforts of a coward. James Foley, Steven Sotloff, David Haines and Herve Gourdel were all beheaded and their executions paraded over the internet—executions by cowards in masks who were not even brave enough to be known for what they have done.

ISIL are corrupting our young with their extremist views and their unjust, inhumane ways. In just the past two weeks we have seen a Melbourne teenager lose his life after attacking antiterrorism officers in the name of these cowards' cause, and another man, not much older, allegedly planning to behead an innocent bystander at Martin Place, one of Sydney's busiest public areas. He now faces the prospect of being behind bars for the rest of his life and, I say, deservedly so. This barbarism is not happening just here. It is global. We have recently learned that an innocent mother who spoke out against the group on Facebook has reportedly been beheaded for rejecting the Islamic faith. ISIL want to force their way of life on everyone.

We are beefing up Australia's security. This government is equipping our security agencies and border protection agencies with the resources and powers they need to detect terrorist
activities at home and prevent radicalised foreign fighters from returning to Australia. More than $630 million has been provided to boost the counter-terrorism capacity of the Australian Federal Police, ASIO, ASIS, Customs and Border Protection and other agencies.

We are updating counter-terrorism legislation to strengthen agencies' capabilities to prevent and disrupt domestic security threats. Just last week we also saw the Senate beef up legislation to ensure our ASIO officers have the tools to take down any ISIL cells. The National Security Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2014 makes it easier for security agencies to access personal computers and identify Australians' overseas data, which aids terrorists' actions. The penalty for disclosing secret information was increased from a year to up to 10 years imprisonment, and those who expose an ASIO or ASIS officer may receive up to 10 years jail as well. We will systematically update counter-terrorism legislation to strengthen our agencies' capabilities to arrest, prosecute and jail returning foreign fighters, and prevent and disrupt domestic security threats.

We are working on reforms in the second of our three tranches of legislation to address gaps in our counter-terrorism legislative framework. This second tranche has been referred to a parliamentary committee for review and will be back before the parliament in the next sitting in October. On the third tranche of legislation, the government is continuing data retention discussions with telecommunications companies and internet service providers.

I support these additions to the laws as well. I am proud to provide total support to our men and women serving in this mission, and I extend that support to their families as well. I am proud to support our involvement in coalition efforts to stop the genocide ISIL is trying to carry out in Iraq. I am proud to support our involvement in the coalition efforts to stop the barbaric atrocities being carried out against innocent women and children.

A coalition of Western nations, now backed by three Islamic nations in the Middle East, is coming together to ensure that ISIL cannot continue to expand and hurt Australia and the rest of the world. We are now part of a world coalition effort to get rid of ISIL. Forty nations have now pledged their support to rid Iraq and the world of this terrorist organisation. The sooner these cowards are held to account, the better.

I was recently honoured to be at RAAF Base Williamtown with the Prime Minister, the Minister for Defence and the Leader of the Opposition to farewell the Hunter pilots and crew of No. 2 Squadron leaving for the Middle East. Australia has specifically said we would be prepared to support operations in Iraq with the consent of and at the invitation of the Iraqi government in a US led coalition intervention. We are prepared to provide a range of aircraft and prepared to provide special forces. We have now predeployed to the United Arab Emirates in the event that such a mission goes ahead. My colleague Julie Bishop recently stressed that our participation was at the invitation, and with the consent, of the Iraqi government battling ISIL. It is right for Australia to do what it can to support international efforts to prevent the spread of ISIL, to roll back its gains and to alleviate the suffering in the Middle East. Australians are fighting to get rid of ISIL.

As the Prime Minister detailed to the United Nations in New York, combating the threat of foreign fighters is an urgent, vital national security issue for Australia. Security and intelligence agencies are concerned about the increasing number of Australians working with, connected to or inspired by terrorist groups such as ISIL. The threat they pose has been increasing for more than a year. There are about 60 identified Australian citizens who, we
believe, are fighting with ISIL in the Middle East, and at least 100 more back in Australia supporting this murderous, barbaric organisation. About 80 countries are believed to have foreign fighters leaving their shores to work with ISIL and to support ISIL. These radicals are not Australian. They do not represent who we are as a nation and what we believe in. They are but cowards. We can reassure Australians that their government is vigilant—vigilant at home, vigilant abroad—because the safety of the community is our highest priority.

We ask Australians how we can support this. It warmed my heart to hear the stories on talkback of Islamic religious leaders in Australia condemning the actions of ISIL, urging young Muslims not to fall for the propaganda and denouncing its evil ways. I ask ISIL supporters and sympathisers in Australia to look at themselves in the mirror and ask whether anything ISIL has done is making our world a better place. If they are Australian, they will condemn this movement for what it is—an evil one with world domination and power as its only motivations. The sooner these terrorists are held to account, the better this world be. I look forward to the Prime Minister and world leaders announcing the success of dismantling this evil force so that the world can again live in peace.

Mr Stephen Jones (Throsby) (10:27): This morning Australians woke to the terrible news that ISIS forces have besieged the town of Kobani on Iraq's northern border with Turkey. Its proximity to the border with Turkey means that artillery that was intended to destroy the town of Kobani has overshot its targets and is now landing inside Turkish territory. Unsurprisingly, Turkish forces have moved to the border. There are tanks and artillery now positioned on the border, and the world waits with bated breath to see whether this conflict is going to expand across another border.

Meanwhile, the fighting continues in Syria. The slaughter of Shiahs, of Kurds, of Christians and of all those who do not agree with the ISIS sect's view of the world continues throughout Iraq. It is a terrible time and everybody looks upon it with a mixture of horror, disgust and concern for what it means for the world that we live in and what it means for us back home.

In September, I gave a statement in this House and I made four key points about why I believed it was important for us to support action against the ISIS forces. The first point I made was that it is for governments to decide, in this country, when and where we deploy our troops. I pointed out the fact that governments have at their disposal the facts and the information, and necessarily the chain of command and the resources, that are necessary to deploy our troops, so it is absolutely reasonable that governments are in the best position to make those decisions. That does not mean the parliament has no role; it does. In a Westminster system and with responsible government it is the role of parliament to hold the executive to account, and we should do that through vigorous debate. This debate is today is one such instance of that.

I also made the case for why Centre Left parties should be supporting actions against ISIS. I said that it is consistent with our values, that if you are on the left of politics you believe in the fundamental importance of dignity, the equality of all humankind and the need to protect individuals from the threats to life and limb and to attacks upon their liberty and upon their safety—particularly when those attacks are made on the basis of their religion. That is consistent with the values of the left and I also made the point it is consistent with the history of the left within Australia. I made special note of the role that John Curtin, probably
Australia's greatest wartime Prime Minister, had in securing the national defences of Australia during the threatened attack by the Japanese Imperial Army—but also the journey that John Curtin had made from pacifist activist and anti-conscription activist in World War I, to leading our troops into war and national service in the Pacific in World War II.

The third point I made was about the importance and the responsibility that Australia has having been involved in the disastrous campaign in Iraq of 2003. It was an unmitigated disaster and the mess that we are witnessing in Iraq today is a direct result of that botched campaign, that botched intervention, that botched war of 2003. We were there, we messed it up, we have an obligation to do something to fix it up. The fourth point that I made, and I stand by it, is that we should—and parliament has an important role in ensuring that we do—not overreach either in our engagement in the Middle East or here at home. We should be on guard against mission creep. The Leader of the Opposition and the shadow foreign minister have been quite particular in saying we support the government's actions, based on the fact that they are upon the invitation of the Iraqi government for us to be engaged in defensive operations within Iraq. They do not extend to other engagements within that particular theatre.

The other area that we need to be on guard against is unnecessary overreach and unnecessary legislative responses here at home. I stand by each of those four observations that I made in early September. I wholeheartedly support our action and involvement in Iraq. I think it is important that left of centre parties support that. I think it is consistent with our values and our histories, but that is not an unlimited licence for the government to do whatever it believes it thinks it should be doing in the name of national security.

I met this week with representatives of the Illawarra Islamic association and they expressed to me their absolute outrage at things that were being done in the name of Islam in the Middle East. They made it quite clear to me that they did not believe those who fly under the flag of ISIS are Islamic; in fact, they besmirch the name of Muslims throughout the world. They expressed to me their concerns about rising tensions throughout the community and the importance of community leaders not inflaming those tensions. We planned a number of activities throughout the Illawarra over the coming weeks, so that I can add my voice to those who are calling for calm and understanding not fear and loathing.

Yesterday, I joined with a number of my parliamentary colleagues in meeting with students from La Trobe University's Muslim Leadership Program. It was a very important dialogue. The students from La Trobe University expressed similar concerns, expressing the importance of the dialogue and seeking a better understanding of what parliament was intending and the legislation that is currently before the parliament.

Against all of this background I have to express deep concern about some of the statements that have been made by parliamentarians over the last couple of weeks. In the time that I have been in parliament I have heard many fine and impassioned speeches against the so-called nanny state, about the erosion of freedom and liberty under the dead hand of creeping government.

So you have to imagine my surprise when I see people who have given those very same speeches quoted on the front page of The Sydney Morning Herald today seriously suggesting that this parliament should enter into the business of being the fashion police—that is, seriously entering into the business of passing laws which determine what people can and
cannot wear in public. This is clearly inconsistent with all of these other statements they have made in the past. To dress this up as an issue of national security is nothing short of offensive.

They talk about the importance of security in Parliament House, a concern that I share. But let us be serious about this. When somebody comes into Parliament House they should have to identify themselves, or be able to be identified. Secondly, they go through a metal scanner. They have restricted access to areas of the building and there are other metal detectors in other areas of the building where there may be concerns about what people might be carrying. To seriously propose that you would have to ban a certain form of clothing in the building because it is a national security issue is nothing short of ludicrous. To the suggestion that certain forms of clothing pose a greater threat, I say that we already have laws against carrying concealed weapons. It is the concealing of the weapon that is the criminal offence, not the clothing or the garment that you are wearing, and that is as it should be.

For those who think this is a good idea, I seriously ask them to think again. Do these ‘veil vanquishers’ seriously think we can turn our minds to laws that are going to have the objective that they believe we need? Do we say that wedding veils are okay but that the niqab, for instance, is prohibited? Do we allow nuns to get around in habits and wimples but say that the burka is wrong? And what about hoodies—are they going to fall short of the veil ban as well? It is ridiculous. (Time expired)

Mr VAN MANEN (Forde) (10:37): I appreciate this opportunity to rise and speak on the Prime Minister's statement on national security. Whilst I agree with many of the sentiments of the member for Throsby's comments, I would also like to associate myself with some of the comments from the member for Rankin, who spoke earlier and is my electoral neighbour. Both of us represent a community that has some 215 different cultures.

I would like to reflect a little more broadly on this debate and in my opening remarks address some comments made by the Canadian academic, Salim Mansur, who recently wrote about the issues that we are talking about today and, more broadly, about what is going on in the world. In an article on the Gatestone Institute website, dated 29 September, Mr Mansur states:

Broadly speaking, the struggle within Islam is between Muslims who embrace the values of the modern world in terms of freedom, individual rights, gender equality and democracy on the one side, and Muslims opposing these values and insisting on a Sharia-based legal system on the other. Any Muslim who even questions this version of Islam they refer to as a heretic or, worse, an apostate to be killed. For Muslims who embrace modernity, Islam is a matter of personal belief, not a political system. A reformed Islam -- greatly desired and sought after by swelling numbers of Muslims -- cannot succeed without the support of non-Muslims.

In speaking on the Prime Minister's statement, I would like to thank the constituents who have contacted my office to raise their concerns about this particular issue. I have certainly had many discussions with constituents to rightly say to them that we need to be calm and measured in our approach to this. But they also rightly share their concerns about what is happening with the Islamic State in Iraq. As previous speakers have mentioned, we know that there are at least 60 Australians fighting within terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq and at least 100 Australians who are supporting them. Furthermore, some 20 fighters have already returned to Australia.
I would like to thank our police and security agencies for the wonderful job that they have done over the past several weeks, in difficult and trying circumstances, with a focus on ensuring that we keep our communities safe for everyone in those communities. We have seen the raids in Sydney and Brisbane a couple of weeks ago and in Melbourne yesterday. Also, in my electorate of Forde, Boronia Heights was the location of one of the men arrested in the raids in Brisbane. I pay due credit to my community for the way that they have handled this news and equally for the way that the Australian Federal Police and the Queensland Police Service have handled this. As was reported in The Courier-Mail on 24 September, there was an active plan by this gentleman, or an alleged plan by this gentleman, to seek to behead a government official. The man has, ultimately, been charged with preparations for incursions into foreign states with the intention of engaging in hostile activities and with recruiting persons to join organisations engaged in hostile activities.

A division having been called in the House of Representatives—

Sitting suspended from 10:42 to 10:51

Mr VAN MANEN: As I mentioned earlier, our police and security agencies are striving to stay at least one step ahead of those threatening us with harm. In the case of their recent activities over the past several weeks, the police and security agencies have been very successful. It is important that we stay calm and let the security agencies and police do their job. September 11 is a very salient reminder of what can happen if we are not vigilant and diligent, and that is why we have our security agencies and police actively prosecuting these people for breaking Australian laws.

As a preventative measure, the government will invest an additional $630 million in a counter-terrorism package. This includes $13.4 million to strengthen community engagement programs in Australia with an emphasis on preventing young Australians from becoming involved with extremist groups; some $6.2 million to establish a new Australian Federal Police community diversion and monitoring team for returning foreign fighters and those who support them; $32.7 million for a multiagency national disruption group to investigate, prosecute and disrupt foreign fighters and their supporters; and some $11.8 million for the Australian Federal Police to bolster its ability to respond to the threat of foreign fighters at home and abroad, including local and regional liaison officers and two new investigative teams to help reduce the threat of extremists leaving Australia.

In consultation with the community, packages will be developed to address the particular requirements of young Australians at risk and may include youth diversion activities, health care, mentoring, employment, educational pathways support and counselling. There will also be referral and support processes for individuals at risk to help them disengage from their activities. That will combat online radicalisation with education programs and by working with communities, industry and overseas partners.

As a result of the rise in the warning system from medium to high, there has been a rollout of high-security protocols, which will most likely be around for some time. As I said before, we need to remain calm in the face of what is happening overseas and ensure, as I said at the outset, that we assist those in the Muslim community who want to achieve something quite different in respect of the opportunities they now have here in Australia.
Roger Scruton, in his opening comments in the book *The Closing of the Muslim Mind: How Intellectual Suicide Created the Modern Islamist*, makes an important point. It reflects what I started with at the outset, and that is that the outcome of the struggle within Islam today will have consequences for all of us. We need to understand this struggle and we need to work with those in our Muslim communities and help support them in achieving a better outcome, not only for themselves but also for the broader Australian community.

I would like to use these final few minutes to thank our armed services personnel who have gone to the Middle East and who are part of the multinational force that is seeking to degrade and, ultimately, entirely disrupt the activities of ISIS. I would also like to thank our local police and security agencies for the work that they are doing and recognise their families for supporting these people who often risk their own safety for the safety of fellow Australians, as we have seen with the recent events in Victoria.

In conclusion, I would like to quote three key passages from the Prime Minister's statement:

… first, the government will do whatever is possible to keep people safe; second, our security measures at home and abroad are directed against terrorism, not religion; and third, Australians should always live normally because the terrorists' goal is to scare us out of being ourselves.

We live in a wonderful country that has succeeded where many others have failed in integrating many different cultures into our diverse community. We should, rightly, be very proud of that and continue to work hard with all of those from various cultures to ensure that that continues to be the way we move this great country forward.

**Mr WATTS** (Gellibrand) (10:56): I rise to speak on this ministerial statement on national security in order to address some of the fears on national security that are currently being felt in communities around the country. Unfortunately, the recent consideration of national security issues by this parliament has occurred in the context of a national fever dream of fear and paranoia about our Islamic community. In recent times we have seen sections of the media, both mainstream and social media, caught up in a hysteria about our Islamic community. We have also seen comments from members of parliament, almost universally representing areas with very small Islamic communities, attacking the choice of some women in the Islamic community to wear the burqa, the niqab or the hijab. The public statements of politicians and media reports relating to our Islamic community have real-world consequences.

I recently visited members of my Islamic community for Friday prayers and heard firsthand of the increase in harassment being experienced by members of this Australian community on public transport, in public places and, most depressingly of all, in our schools. As a member representing an electorate with a large Islamic community I want to send a very clear message on this issue: no-one in Australia has anything to fear from our Islamic community. There are almost 500,000 Muslims in Australia. In contrast, there are about a handful of perverted fanatics in this country who would seek to hijack this religion and commit criminal acts in its name. The recent legislative actions of this parliament and the recent activities of our intelligence and law enforcement agencies are not targeted at the Islamic community in our country. They are targeted at a vanishingly small minority of individuals whose actions demonstrate that they are planning or supporting terrorist actions.
My electorate is home to a diverse range of Islamic communities from a range of ethnic backgrounds. However, whilst these communities may be diverse, every one of them shares the same hopes and dreams for their future and the future of this country as other Australians. I am proud of the mark that Muslims have made in our community in Melbourne's west.

I want to take this opportunity to highlight some of these contributions. One of our favourite Islamic sons has made his mark literally on the Australian Rules Football field. As a product of the Spotsford Football Club and the Western Jets, Richmond Tiger star Bachar Houli is a symbol to the rest of the nation of the success of multiculturalism in Melbourne's west and the enormous contribution that our Islamic community makes to it. He has been breaking down the barriers of ignorance between Muslims and the broader community for his entire career. As Martin Flanagan recently wrote in *The Age*:

When Bachar was 16, he captained the Vic Metro team at the national championships. His roommate liked loud music and had the TV on all the time. In the end, Bachar told his teammate that he was a Muslim and had to pray—could the television go down a little? His teammate was so impressed he got Bachar to talk to the whole team about being a Muslim. That, says Bachar Houli, was “the turning point”.

Since this turning point, Bachar has worked hard to make footy, one of our great Australian institutions, more accessible to Australians from all walks of life. He founded the Bachar Houli Academy, for junior players of Islamic background with high potential, to inspire and assist the new generation of Muslim leaders to live their dream of playing in the AFL.

Sport is the great leveller in our society. It is one of those places where people from all backgrounds can leave the everyday traffic lanes of their ethnic, religious and class backgrounds and engage on an equal basis with people from backgrounds they would not ordinarily be exposed to. In this way, institutions like footy are some of the most important places to promote an increased understanding between the diverse groups in our community and Bachar's efforts in this respect cannot be underestimated.

Bachar's family are still active in the Newport Islamic Society, as are business and community leaders from the surrounding suburbs in my electorate. The Newport Islamic Society is currently working to expand its presence in our community through the construction of a new mosque designed by internationally acclaimed Australian architect Glenn Murcutt. When completed it will be one of the most striking pieces of architecture in Melbourne's west and something the whole community will be able to take pride in. A centre for prayer, learning and community activities, the mosque's design is dominated by two soaring wings leading to its entrance. This design is intended to symbolise the mosque's 'open arms to all members of our Australian society'. In a building with such spiritual significance to my local Islamic community, the symbolic message of its design cannot be missed. Near the mosque, in Altona North, is the home of Oussama Abou-Zeid, who was this year elected as premier of the Victorian youth parliament. Advocating in that youth parliament for 24-hour public transport in Melbourne's west, Oussama is intelligent, articulate and passionate about the community he lives in. He is proud of his religious faith, just as he is proud of Australia. He recently told ABC Breakfast News: 'I love my country. My parents are from the Middle East but I come from Australia. We are very multicultural. We are very welcoming. In my school there are more than 60 nationalities and it shows the diversity of our state.' I know Osama personally. He has a very promising future in front of him.
If you travel a little further north it is hard to miss the distinctive Sunshine Mosque on the skyline of Melbourne's west. It is home to the Turkish Cypriot community of Sunshine, acting as a community hub as well as a place of worship. It is at places like Sunshine Mosque that we see some of the most altruistic charity work in Melbourne's west. The community spirit of members in this mosque is clear from the wide range of charitable works that are discussed at the mosque's iftars every year.

The Australian Light Foundation, in Tottenham, is another Islamic group in my electorate that the community can take pride in. As well as being a centre for worship, it has recently coordinated aid programs in South Sudan, Ethiopia and Iraq. Locally, it has helped newly arrived asylum seekers get settled into the community by providing resourcing and support. It aims to provide a positive image of Islamic culture to the wider community of Melbourne's west.

These organisations are just some of the Islamic communities throughout Melbourne's west that contribute to making our society a better place every day. They are examples of the richness of culture and spirit found in the Islamic communities of Australia and I am proud to have them in my electorate. As their representative in this place it pains me that members of these communities feel that in recent times they have been treated by other members of the community as objects of suspicion. In situations, both subtly and overtly, their patriotism has been questioned. It is in this atmosphere that the recent reforms to our national security legislation have been debated. It is important, however, to note that the bill that was debated in the House today was not developed in response to recent events in Iraq or Syria. It was not a response to the heightened security environment and terror raids we have seen in recent weeks. These reforms are the result of a longstanding committee of inquiry into Australia's national security laws initiated by the previous Labor government. This was initiated in May 2012 under the then Attorney-General Nicola Roxon—my predecessor in Gellibrand and a staunch advocate of the rights of the Islamic community in groups in Melbourne's west.

The committee's inquiry into the architecture of Australia's national security legislation was extensive, with 236 submitters invited to appear at an inquiry that took a year to complete. The committee released recommendations for reform of these laws in June 2013 and it is these recommendations that were originally introduced into the Senate by the Abbott government in July this year. These recommendations, however, required further consideration before they were to become law. It is important to ensure that our national security agencies have the powers available to them to keep Australia safe. But equally these powers must be subject to thorough oversight and accountability mechanisms to ensure that they are being used appropriately, and they must be properly balanced against the importance of protecting the human rights of all members of our community. So Labor, through the committee process, initiated a review into the impact of the proposed changes to the national security laws. In writing its report the committee strongly recommended 18 amendments to this bill. Many of these amendments ensure that intelligence operations and any related criminal sanctions are subjected to additional constraints and balances. Labor, through the committee process, advocated strongly for these amendments.

Last week we saw the introduction of these amendments into the Senate with the support of both the government and the opposition. Let me be clear: the bipartisan support for the bill that was debated in the parliament today is the result of a detailed and thorough policy process...
during which different views clashed and Labor's concerns about aspects of the reforms were frequently put. It is unfortunate that this lengthy process has been conflated in the public debate with recent security events. The average man or woman on the street sees the beheading of James Foley on the other side of the world, armed guards walking around Parliament House and the changes in the powers of our intelligence agencies contained in the national security reforms debated today and assumes they are part of the same equation. It is critical that we bring clarity to this confusion, that we separate the elements out of the equation and allay the fears of the groups in our community.

Creating and continuing lines of communication are essential to stop the communities in our society from being isolated and to stop our Islamic communities from feeling alienated. Initiatives like the one occurring next door to us, where the Muslim Leadership Program, a part of the Centre for Dialogue at La Trobe University, and the Islamic Associate of Australia have brought a series of young leaders to Parliament House to hear from their representatives and make their views clear to them are important in this respect. It is a problem both for our community and for our law enforcement agencies if our Islamic community feels targeted as a group by our response to the threat of terrorism.

As leaders in our community, the members of this parliament must work together to counter this confusion in the Australian community. We must ensure that, on the one hand, every domestic terror threat is treated by our law enforcement agencies with the seriousness that it deserves, but also that every Muslim walking the streets of my electorate who is subject to violence or intimidation is also protected by our legal system. I am proud to represent the communities that produced Bachar Houli and Oussama Abou-Zeid as well as many others who work within our community to make Melbourne's west such a diverse and wonderful place to live. It pains me greatly that these communities feel targeted as a result of these laws. All of us in this place must work together to ensure that our Islamic community and the Muslim members of our society are treated with the respect and tolerance that they deserve while we fight this important security threat.

Mr SIMPKINS (Cowan) (11:06): There is a very real threat to our nation and that threat exists here on our shores. It is real and it is dangerous, but it can be stopped. As I have said before, there are traitors in our midst. They are those who have had an allegiance to causes and organisations apart from this country. They place Islam, or their interpretation of Islam, above this nation. They place Islam, or their interpretation of Islam, above this nation. They must be found and dealt with strongly.

The threat is real, and an example was the attack on two police officers in Melbourne last Tuesday—clearly a planned attack. Fortunately, tragedy was avoided, and the situation was resolved with the appropriate shooting of a terrorist by a police officer. The police officers offered good faith and the benefit of the doubt, but instead were met by treachery. This event makes a mockery of the view advanced by those on the biased Q&A program last week, where it was suggested that the government was manipulating events and agencies for a political gain. Those that suggest that are apologists for terrorism. They undermine the security of this country and the safety of Australians.

It is known that foreign fighters in the Iraq and Syria area have come from 80 nations and all those nations harbour the same concerns. I am proud to be part of a government that is acting in a responsible and reasonable manner in taking the action necessary to protect the people of this country from the terrorist threat of traitors. Those in this parliament, in the
media and in certain communities who try to blame the rise of IS, also known as Daesh, or extremist groups on this Australian government or on the invasion of Iraq in 2003 completely ignore the reality of what happened then and in more recent years. It is convenient for them to now talk up the virtues of Saddam Hussein and the absence of weapons of mass destruction, despite everyone believing that the weapons existed at the time. The fact is however that IS, the latest incarnation of violent Wahhabism, began in Syria and not in Iraq.

I support RAAF air strikes on IS in Iraq and also other air strikes on IS and other such terrorist groups. We should be involved and the more that can be dealt with in this way the better. I also fully support the cancellation of passports and the new laws to deal with those who have fought with terrorist and extremist groups, those that wish to go and those that support them. I also encourage the Prime Minister and the cabinet to revoke the citizenship of those dual citizens that betray our nation by joining and supporting such causes.

Our approach to dealing with the threat of such extremists must be multifaceted. As I have said already, it is increasingly being recognised that those extremists are coming out of many countries around the world. Australia has already recognised our responsibility to stop Australians from going to these places and to deal with them here. While there is criticism of Turkey for allowing many to cross the border and join terrorist groups such as IS, the reality is that a long, mountainous border is difficult to close. All nations must take action in this regard, as we have done, to stop their citizens from joining terrorist groups by cancelling passports and making it an offence to go to such places.

I find it absolutely bizarre that in the light of the barbarism that we have seen on social and mainstream media, there are some people who want to find excuses for those who choose to go and join such causes, and for those who can only be described as home-grown terrorists. They try to blame the government, or to blame society, or say they are misunderstood or they are led astray by others.

Excuse after excuse is always offered, but in the end there must actually be personal responsibility and accountability. These people make a personal decision to betray their country and follow the black flag of Shahada and the Islamic State. They make the decision to forsake the opportunities to legitimately succeed in this country and instead try to tear down this country and change it to resemble the countries that they or their families abandoned in the past. It is not society's fault and it is not the government's fault. Those who are in the middle of such hatred should stop trying to avoid responsibility and instead admit that the fault is not in the external factors but in their own attitudes and decisions.

I say that those who take up the causes of betrayal and barbarism are responsible for their own actions, and there are no excuses. Those who make excuses for them and take no action when aware of that traitorous action are also culpable. An example of what I mean is when the Islamic Council of Victoria implied that the government is at fault for the attack on the two police officers, when they should have instead condemned extremism, condemned IS and others and urged loyalty to this nation. That way we would know that they are on the right side with us and not on the wrong side.

I suspect that there is sympathy and support for the actions of IS and Islamists in this country. It may be tacit, but now is the time for the Islamic community organisations to all be as clear as Mamdouh Elomar and those who initiated the proud Australian barbecue in Lakemba in their opposition to extremism and IS. Now is the time for all Australians to know
that there is a clear message of loyalty that should be embraced and would resolve the unity issues that are challenging this nation right now.

Every Islamic peak body, every mosque and every organisation should make a clear demonstration of their opposition to extremists and make that opposition public. I do not think that there have been enough media interviews, and where are the clear anti-extremist messages prominently displayed on all their websites? Given the ages of those who have been revealed as being involved, all the relevant secondary schools should also be clear on this subject in school assemblies and school newsletters. The message of anti-extremism, anti-violence and anti-terrorism is a message that must be clear in speeches, in digital media and in print media. At this point I do not think that it is clear, and in some cases it is completely absent. I looked at the Islamic Council of WA's website this morning: not one statement against extremism. My main point, however, is that at as many levels as possible the message must be consistent and clear and public, thereby giving all Australians no reason to doubt the loyalty of any group in our society.

I know that some people have approached me and said things about the Muslim community as a whole. It is not right to make outrageous generalisations. The vast majority of Muslim people are not involved in extremism and in fact just want to get on with their lives and make sure that their children have better opportunities than they had and that they will be successful in their chosen fields.

I pay tribute to my friend Zuhair Ebrahim and the Iraqi community in Perth for their clear anti-extremist and anti-terrorism statements and actions. I also thank Nasraddin Silwanagh and the Kurdish community in Perth for their clear message against extremists. I think that the principle behind the anti-extremist view is that people speak of their nation first and foremost, then of their homeland but not their religion. Zuhair speaks of being Australian, and then religion is after that. Nasraddin speaks of being Australian and his Kurdish ethnicity, and it is a loyalty above and beyond religion.

Herein is the success of immigration and the unity of a nation. It is a message that more people should be clear on. Every Australian should know that we all stand together against extremists, against traitors and against barbarism. Clear statements by communities will identify who the enemy is—because it is extremists. It is not the majority of the Islamic community, because they are almost entirely with us.

It is at times like this that we should have no doubt that the reason why so many people wanted to come to this country is that where they came from was not working and did not provide them with the opportunities to succeed. No-one should forget that, if it was bad enough to leave, it is not good enough to try to replicate here. What draws people to Australia is the opportunities, and they are the direct result of the great Western democratic principles that have defined this country and underpinned its success. Opportunities for us as Australians derive from the principles of a strong democracy, the equality of the genders, the secular nature of our laws, and the rights and, above all, the obligations of citizenship. We should all, in fact, assert the primacy of these great traditions and our achievements, which, while in some ways they may be imperfect, are in any case superior to those of any other nation.

In the last week I have been fortunate to have hosted several Western Australian schools here at the parliament. I know that it has been a cause for concern for some parents that their children would be visiting parliament and that there has been a terrorist threat to this
parliament. I look around the security arrangements here and I think that there is no safer place in this country. The Australian Federal Police and the security team have things well under control here, so I thank the police and our highly professional parliamentary security team for their professionalism and their diligence.

Beyond this building I would say that in all honesty there is a threat. I say that ASIO, the AFP and the state police forces are all up to the task, with the strong and unequivocal support of every community in this country. I urge all Australians to reject the conspiracy theory and not be distracted from their vigilance by partisan political viewpoints advanced on the ABC's *Q&A* program. Australians should keep their eyes open and listen to what is going on, but we should not change the way we live our lives. We are in charge of this country, not terrorists and not extremists. We should not let their traitorous and violent intent impact upon what we do here. There is no excuse for executing and beheading prisoners or hostages or anyone. There is no excuse for trying to kill innocent Australians. There is no excuse for plotting to destroy infrastructure or property in this country or to terrorise Australians. Those that believe there is an excuse or a reason or any form of justification, along with those that support such traitors, are all therefore against us and they must be prosecuted and dealt with.

To conclude, I say simply that we should be proud of our nation and the causes that we are prepared to defend. We should not apologise for our actions or the great traditions of Australia. We should always be prepared to fight for the good in this world and be ready to destroy the evil.

**Mr Pitt** (Hinkler) (11:16): I rise to speak on the national security statement made by the Prime Minister in this place and to inform the people of Hinkler about the actions of their government. I applaud the Prime Minister for his unambiguous stand on this issue. I note his three very clear messages and they are this: the government will do whatever is possible to keep people safe; the security measures legislated by the government and indeed this parliament are directed against terrorism, not religion; and he encouraged Australians to live normally because the terrorists' goal is to scare us out of being our normal selves.

The first point I would like to make to the people in my electorate is this: the increase in the nation's alert level to high was recommended by ASIO, which is an independent statutory authority. The changed alert level will result in some inconvenience and perhaps even a level of uneasiness among some members of the public. These decisions are not made lightly and are based on intelligence gathered by highly qualified and capable people.

The first priority of any federal government, regardless of party politics, is the security of the nation. It is important to recognise that in times of flux the individuals elected to represent their communities work together in the best interests of the nation. No-one in this place wants to see an Australian injured or killed. No-one wants to see the atrocities that have been committed overseas occur here. This is Australia. It is a nation of tolerance, a nation built on immigration, a nation built on the idea of a fair go for all. I believe we as a country have always struck the right balance between upholding the rights of the individual and keeping our community safe from harm. Our way of life is an envy for many. We have free speech, a free press, freedom of religion and democratic elections, and our civil liberties are being protected. We are well served by our state and federal police, but unfortunately at this time in our history that balance must shift.
The legislative changes this place is enacting have come about because of the rise of ISIL and the group's ability to infiltrate Australia through social media. All that these ISIL extremists have needed to terrorise ordinary people is a victim, a knife and a camera phone. The exponential increase in the use of mobile devices has caused a quantum shift in the way in which we communicate as businesses, groups and individuals. With its mass communications capabilities it has already seen drastic reductions in the utilisation of traditional advertising—and it is a serious concern for parents regarding the online safety of their children. Unfortunately, modern communications have also made it easier for terrorists to prey on and recruit vulnerable and amenable young men. Criminals no longer need to meet and the days of the secret handshake have gone. All they need now is a call to action via Twitter, Facebook or email or on a website. Everything they need to enact evil is readily available. The online threat to this nation cannot continue unchecked. In order to give our security and intelligence agencies every possible opportunity to prevent an attack, we need to operate within a framework that is responsive and modern and addresses the difficulties of modern communications. It is about ensuring that the threat of home-grown terrorism can be nullified, if possible, and access to terror networks can be achieved and with the necessary haste. It is not about monitoring the entire internet; it is about providing the tools necessary to give our agencies the best chance of success. As a member of parliament and as an ordinary Australian citizen, I want to ensure our agencies have the opportunity to address threats before an attack becomes a reality. I would much rather have this debate now than be in this place 12 months from now explaining how it came about that Australian citizens were harmed.

Like everyone here, I do not want to see another Bali bombing, a Twin Towers attack or assaults on our police. Our police have been acting in our best interests for decades and we must trust them to continue to do the job, but that role needs to be enacted in an informed manner, with the best possible intelligence available. Special intelligence operations under the amended legislation effectively mirror the existing Crimes Act, so this is not new to Australian law and existing whistleblower laws will continue to apply and are not effected. All Australians should be aware that it is illegal to associate with a terrorist organisation. You will be caught and charged to the fullest extent of the law.

Very few policy or legislative decisions are black and white; however, this one is. We must provide the tools our security agencies request. Our service personnel would rather face and fight a threat anywhere other than in this country. These ISIL extremists want Australians to live in fear, oppressed and without freedom. I cannot express my disappointment at having to explain to my three children at parliament this week why it was necessary to have armed AFP officers at Parliament House. I will tell Hinkler constituents the same thing I told my children: we should be vigilant but not alarmed; go about your daily lives, but of course be cautious. If we do not continue as normal, the terrorists will have got what they want—

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

_Sitting suspended from 11:22 to 11:31_

Mr PITT: I applaud the Prime Minister for his refusal to call a terrorist movement an Islamic state on the grounds that it demeans Islam. Early media reports called the terrorist group ISIS, which caused grief for many people in my electorate. The Isis is a beautiful district in the Hinkler electorate. The ABC even discussed changing the name of one of the
teams participating in the grand final to avoid confusion with the terrorist group. The Isis Devils almost became the Childers Devils, because ABC *Grandstand*, which was broadcasting the game, was concerned about events overseas. Talk about political correctness gone mad!

People with the name Isis have also been unfairly targeted. A survivor of the Childers backpacker hostel fire named his child Isis earlier this year. Many people do not realise that the name Isis comes from the ancient Egyptian goddess. We have the Isis Highway, the Isis Club, and a range of other Isis businesses. In fact, an online petition imploring the media to stop using the acronym 'ISIS' has now reached more than 30,000 supporters. It was started by a US woman, Isis Martinez.

I reiterate the Prime Minister's comments. Actions taken by the government are not about religion; they are about criminality. According to the latest census, there are about 450 residents of the Islamic faith in the electorate of Hinkler. That is, around 0.5 per cent of the adult population. There are two mosques, one in each major centre. They are valued members of our community.

Racial vilification of any kind is deplorable and will not be tolerated. We cannot and must not let the likes of ISIL win, because, if they do, this nation will be changed forever, and that is unacceptable to me. A nation dominated by the actions of terrorists is not the Australia I want my children to inherit. We will act, because we must.

**Mr NIKOLIC** (Bass) (11:33): I would like to acknowledge the Gray family visiting from my home town of Launceston. It always lifts my spirits when I have people from northern Tasmania visit the parliament. Thank you for coming along.

I would also like to acknowledge that excellent contribution from the member for Hinkler, who quite presciently said that the first priority of any government is the safety and security of its people. This objective is at the heart of the government's response in recent months to the ruthless and brutal threat posed by transnational terrorism. As we have seen, it is a threat that transcends borders.

I would also like to say how fortunate we are to have the Labor Party, in a bipartisan way, standing shoulder to shoulder with us in confronting that threat. I thank the Labor Party. I have seen that bipartisanship in particular in the parliament's Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, of which I am a member.

Recent commentary about Australians carrying out suicide bombings in the Middle East, terrorism arrests in Sydney and Brisbane, planned executions in our streets and police being attacked is chilling. What that demonstrates is that the threat is both international and domestic.

I submit that there is virtue in the outcomes that we seek from the Prime Minister's recently announced prepositioning of military forces in the Middle East. The Prime Minister has announced FA18 combat aircraft, an E7-A Wedgetail early warning and control aircraft, a KC30A refuelling tanker, a special forces task group to assist and advise, and Australian personnel integrated in US headquarters to make sure that we are coordinated with our ally and other partners.

Importantly, military forces always need prudent planning time in order to pre-position themselves. The prudent planning, warning and pre-positioning of our troops means that we
are now well placed to contribute to an international coalition to counter some of the barbaric activities that we see on our television screens all too regularly.

Subject to the Prime Minister's decision to commit forces to specified and agreed missions in Iraq, if we distil what we are trying to achieve, we can break it down into two key areas. The first is the humanitarian objective of containing the terrorists' barbaric savagery in Iraq, and the second is to ensure that the terrorists do not gain a foothold—that they cannot actually preside over ungoverned spaces from which they can then decentralise the mayhem.

By working with Iraqi and Kurdish forces, we assist their control of the security situation. By degrading the terrorists' capabilities, we protect Iraqi citizens from potential genocide and our own people from a murderous death cult with global ambitions. I repeat that no nation is immune.

It is undoubtable that the threat to Australia is clear, present and pressing. At least 60 Australians that we know of have put their allegiance to brutal murderers ahead of their duty and obligation to Australia and its people, and 100 or more Australians are actively supporting them from home. We know that some have received instructions to carry out acts of barbaric savagery on our own streets, random murders in our own streets of Australia.

A division having been called in the House of Representatives—

Sitting suspended from 11:37 to 11:45

Mr NIKOLIC: I note that the foreign minister has cancelled more than 60 Australian passports on national security grounds. But the savagery of the terrorists has also given rise to a growing international unity, a realisation that doing nothing is the greatest danger. Doing nothing emboldens the terrorists, creates ungoverned spaces, ignores potential genocide and reinforces the inevitability that ISIL's brutality will be exported. The Bali and Jakarta bombings proved that, as did the counterterrorism arrests in recent weeks. I mention the Bali-Jakarta bombings in the context of the broader regional threat. I speak here of the risk posed by South-East Asian fighters who go to Syria or Iraq, and then return to regional transnational organisations like Jemaah Islamiyah and the Abu Sayyaf group.

Given the relative weakness of institutional structures in some regional nations, the freedom of action that those committed and upskilled fighters enjoy is reason for additional concern. In Australia's case, that is because of the enormous number of Australians and other Westerners who transit and/or holiday in our region each year. So far, informed estimates suggest that there are potentially hundreds of Indonesian fighters in Syria. Almost certainly that figure is growing, perhaps fast. Professional recruitment videos call on Indonesia's youth to answer the siren song of transnationalism and they are likely to stimulate further interest within disaffected communities in Indonesia and elsewhere in our region. The threat of regional separatists is an inter-regional dilemma, with known terrorists finding their motivation, inspiration and training in the Middle East before returning to apply their skills at home. Such individuals can lie dormant within their home countries but still possess the heightened potential and confidence to strike at soft civilian targets, including Western visitors and tourists.

It is fair to say that Australia has been fortunate to date in being able to confront and successfully check would-be terrorist combatants on distant foreign soil, and to do so with relatively few casualties. Regrettably, neither a distant battlefield nor a low casualty toll may
always be possible in what we must remember is the longest war—the all too conveniently forgotten global war on terror. I am pleased to see in the aftermath of the important Indonesian national election that both our nations have worked together to understand and cooperate more closely and consistently towards the goal of a safe and stable region.

I am appalled that in response to some of the realities I have highlighted that the Greens party and their fellow travellers engage in ideological hand-wringing and calls for historical reflection. Greens Senator Peter Whish-Wilson, based in my home city of Launceston, has said, 'I think we need to find better words than "terrorist" and "terrorism" because, to me, this implies a very one-sided view of the world.' He went on to say, 'Often our forces could be seen by Iraqi civilians as being terrorists.' The Senator was quite rightly lambasted for these views. The Greens' do-nothing approach in relation to events in Iraq, ignores the self-evident truth that action is required not further talk by politicians. No amount of talking to terrorists under the Miranda tree in my home state of Tasmania will avert IS from their strategic aspirations. In my view, Greens leader Christine Milne has, once again, dealt her party out of the rational policy debate.

The Greens also demand endless parliamentary debate and a parliamentary vote to deploy troops. We already have parliamentary debate on these issues. And in relation to a vote, neither the Constitution nor defence legislation supports the Greens position. The use of the military dimension of national power has always been a prerogative of executive government, which in turn answers to the parliament. As is customary, the opposition has been briefed by national security experts and, as I said in my introduction, stand shoulder to shoulder with the government in supporting the necessity for the action we are taking.

Only the Greens choose sideline sloganeering in place of responsible leadership, yet on every occasion they fail to tell the Australian people what their alternative is, and a do-nothing approach is the worst option on this occasion. This is the same Green party that regularly demands military action to protect whales in the Southern Ocean but illogically refuses to accept the need for military force to protect thousands of people at risk of genocide or to degrade the IS capability so it does not land on our doorstep in the future. Moreover, the suggestion by the Greens that our military commitment makes us more vulnerable ignores history and the advice of experts like former ASIO head, David Irvine, who reject their claim.

Australia was a target of terrorist groups well before these military deployments. Indeed, the first intercepts relating to threats against Australia, which resulted in the recent arrests, were first detected last May, well before any thought of military action. History has proven that appeasement does not work, particularly when you are confronting illogical, irrational actors like the ones in Iraq, who demand subservience to their perverse ideological ends.

The government is taking strong action in responding to this threat. At home we are equipping our security and border protection agencies and we are moving legislation through the parliament to ensure they have the means at their disposal to act and respond appropriately. Australia is aware of the heightened threat level at the moment, with security carefully considered at places like airports, prominent buildings and events. Our recently announced military commitment is legal, just and consistent with our national interests. In company with a growing international coalition, we are responding in a measured and proportionate way to an aggregated terrorist threat that seeks to establish a Middle Eastern caliphate and then to decentralise the mayhem. Doing nothing is not an option.
Mr HUTCHINSON (Lyons) (11:52): I would also like to acknowledge the contribution that my colleague the member for Bass has made in defence of our nation over many, many years. Indeed, protecting and keeping Australians safe is the first and fundamental role of government. The bipartisan approach, the support that we have received in this from the Labor Party and those opposite, is indeed welcome. It is not an attack on religion. It is not an attack on any religion. It is, indeed, an attack on terrorism: criminals and people who wish to do us harm because of who we are and what we believe in. The very best way to respond to this is to go about our business with the knowledge that the security and intelligence forces, and the agencies, are doing their job. The government is doing everything it can to keep Australia safe, and we should go about our business as normal.

The armchair experts, the keyboard warriors, and the anonymity that social media provides concern me most—uninformed opinion suggesting that this is motivated from a political perspective. It is not. It is dangerous; it is ill-informed and it is simply baseless in fact. The decisions government make are based on information that is received by our security and intelligence divisions—the Federal Police, ASIO or ASIS. Social media is being used as a weapon by ISIS to inspire and attract support from marginalised youths, in the main, from around the world. It is believed that up to 12,000, maybe even more—15,000 was mentioned the other day—foreigners are fighting under the flag of the death cult that is ISIS in Syria and Iraq. Unlike Afghanistan, this part of the world is far more accessible, and this is exacerbating the propensity of young people to travel to this part of the world. The role and responsibility that the media play in reporting and commentating on this is also significant. Speculating does nothing and this is, in my humble opinion, fundamentally dangerous.

It is a role of government and a responsibility of government—and it is what is expected of government—to keep Australians safe. Indeed, that is what this government is doing, led ably by the Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, and Foreign Minister Bishop, and the security and intelligence personnel that are informing the decisions that the government is making.

I also call on the members of the Greens to refrain from the political posturing and the very dangerous speculation in which they have been engaging. They represent, in fact, less than 10 per cent of Australians, and once again they appear to be completely out of touch with mainstream Australian views. I trust and believe that Tasmania is perhaps one of the safest places on earth to be. One would hope it is the safest place, indeed, in our country. However, the potential for the attack on any Australian is an attack on every Australian, no matter where they live. It is an attack on our values and our way of life because of who we are and how we live.

More than 20 fighters have returned from Syria and Iraq, and we are aware of more than 60 currently fighting overseas with ISIS. More than 100 people are supporting their activities here in Australia, and many others have had their passports confiscated for fear—and information that would suggest—that they would also like to leave Australia to fight in the Middle East. We are also aware that there were two-thirds of those, albeit much smaller, numbers that returned from Afghanistan, who were involved—and ultimately charged—with crimes relating to terrorism. The threat is real and the actions that the government are taking in relation to security are indeed vital.

The tragic events in Melbourne last week raise the question as to why a young man would be motivated to attack public officers. For many Australians it is completely unimaginable,
and indeed chilling, that we have such thoughts and such deeds occurring amongst us. I feel for his family. My thoughts also are with the officers that, in their line of duty, were injured and their families, that must have suffered also.

I remind you that this is indeed different to 2003. This conflict is reaching out to us and we must respond. We will indeed be judged very harshly if we do not. Leadership is being shown on the global stage. President Obama, leaders of Middle Eastern countries, and Muslim and other religious leaders from around the world understand the threat and, rightly, are condemning the actions of a group that do not act in the name of any religion. This is a barbaric and evil death cult. Leadership is being shown locally by community and religious leaders. I commend them for their work in condemning terrorism and their support for the government’s work.

Finally, I repeat the words of the Prime Minister:

First, the government will do whatever is possible to keep people safe; second, our security measures at home and abroad are directed against terrorism, not religion; and third, Australians should always live normally because the terrorists’ goal is to scare us out of being ourselves.

IS is neither Islamic—they act not in the name of Islam—nor a state. It is an evil death cult and I support the government wholeheartedly in their actions at this time.

**Dr HENDY** (Eden-Monaro) (11:58): I have really wanted to contribute to this debate on national security and the government's pending commitment to send troops to the conflict in Iraq, so I am thankful that I have had the opportunity to rise today.

As a former chief of staff of the Minister for Defence, I have in the past been directly involved in these types of operations. In addition, during the last term of parliament I was the member for Curtin’s principal adviser on foreign affairs and trade when she was Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs. Back in 2001, when I was the chief of staff for the Minister for Defence, it was not Iraq that we were going to war in, but actually Afghanistan. It directly followed the dreadful attacks on 9/11. Indeed, I was relaxing at home watching television at the very time that the terrorist event occurred. In fact, I was watching the US television drama, *The West Wing*; what else would you expect a political staffer to be watching?

Soon after the first plane hit the first tower at the World Trade Centre in New York, the television show was interrupted and went to a live coverage from the Twin Towers. It was after 9 pm at night, and I recall it so vividly. I was actually watching live via satellite when the second plane slammed into the second tower. It was at that wrenching moment that we all knew that this was not just an aviation accident but something much more sinister and evil. It was soon after that I got a call from the chief of staff of the then Acting Prime Minister, John Anderson, requiring me to find the Minister for Defence, Peter Reith. In essence, all hell broke loose. We had Prime Minister John Howard in Washington, and we needed to be concerned about his safety and of course the safety of all Australians that were in the US at the time. A National Security Committee of Cabinet meeting was hastily arranged. When that occurred, the next morning we were already discussing the invoking of the ANZUS Treaty with the United States for the first time.

I do not have to go through all of the other events of the next few days. Terrorism had hit our country and many other countries. Since then we have been living with the terrorist threat. I remind the House that these attacks on 9/11, which saw 2,977 innocent people die, including 11 Australians, were before the US or Australia ever went into either Afghanistan or Iraq. It
was only after that event that these other actions occurred. Indeed, before the 2003 operation in Iraq, Australians were also subject to a further attack by Jemaah Islamiyah. A total of 88 Australians died in the 2002 Bali bombings.

This issue has been brought home to us because of the actions of extremists. We now face a continuing threat. As the Prime Minister had said:

For more than two years, the civil war in Syria, followed by the conquest of much of northern Iraq, has been sucking in misguided and alienated Australians. There are at least 60 Australians that we know who are currently fighting with terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq, and at least 100 Australians who are supporting them. More than 20 of these foreign fighters have already returned to Australia. As a peaceful and pluralist democracy, we naturally shrink from getting involved in conflicts on the other side of the world, but sometimes these conflicts reach out to us, regardless of anything we might do now or have done in the past.

We are now facing an enemy that grandiosely calls itself the Islamic State, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, and the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham. It is a travesty that it should call itself by these titles. As the Prime Minister says, 'It is neither Islamic nor a state, but a death cult.'

We are working in partnership with some 40 other countries, led by the United States, in confronting this appalling enemy that is ISIL, which has been involved in attempted genocide, mass killings, beheadings and crucifixions. It is a cult more suited to the Middle Ages than the modern world. But unfortunately it is here and now.

The government has announced the prepositioning of RAAF and SAS forces in the United Arab Emirates. As the chairman of the Parliamentary Friends of the UAE, I am very glad to see that our Emirati friends are assisting with this important struggle. However, it is a pity that we have not got the full backing from the United Nations Security Council on this issue. No formal resolution has been put to the United Nations Security Council. It is a failure on its behalf. I understand that this is because Russia has a veto and they are fully expected to use that veto. It is also possible that the Chinese, who also have a veto, would abstain from a yes vote. That is not as bad as a possible veto, but it would not be a good look.

So I understand that the western nations are not pushing the issue. It simply illustrates the extent of the United Nations Security Council's effectiveness. Sometimes it is good and sometimes it is bad. It must be galling to all those people who invest the United Nations Security Council with so much legalistic authority but who also believe that there is an implied necessity in international law for the world community to exercise the doctrine of the Responsibility to Protect.

On our side of politics we are not so much concerned about dithering around on these legalistic and philosophical debates. Instead we prefer to initiate action before too many more people get killed. We simply cannot ignore statements of ISIL when for example its spokesman, al-Adnani, recently stated: 'If you can kill an American or European infidel, especially the spiteful and filthy French, or an Australian, or a Canadian, or any other disbeliever from the infidel fighters, then rely upon God and kill them in any way possible.' This is what we are up against.

The events in Sydney and Brisbane two weeks ago to stop a potential gruesome beheading in Martin Place in Sydney under the direct orders of ISIL are a case in point. To think that the Australian Greens, particularly Senator Whish-Wilson, were seriously arguing the other day
that we should not be calling these people terrorists. They are atrocious barbarians. We cannot ignore that. We have to deal with the issues. But let me equally say that we need to be very careful about rabblerousing statements like those of Senator Lambie. It does her no credit.

I have lived and worked in the middle east in the Gulf state of Bahrain. I was there with my wife, daughter and son. The Bahrainis are warm and hospitable people. I always felt safe and it was a very positive experience. I am proud of the fact that Bahrain has joined the coalition to help fight ISIL. People should be very careful about how they express themselves so as not to create unnecessary divisions when we need to all pull together in facing the current challenges. We need to talk in calm terms and we need to examine our security legislation and ensure it adequately protects the Australian people.

The government is working with the opposition to do this and the Attorney-General is proceeding with three pieces of legislation to deal with the threats. I welcome the fact that the Leader of the Opposition has supported the government position. Unfortunately, it is not clear that he has the full support of his caucus, however all power to the Leader of the Opposition on this issue, if on no other. Let me add that the member for Denison's outrageous personal attacks on former Prime Minister John Howard are beneath contempt.

I was recently asked on an ABC radio interview: 'Why can we no longer afford to spend all this money on military action in the Middle East, given the government has also been arguing that there was a serious budget problem? Indeed, I understand that the operations will cost as much as $500 million in annual terms.' The answer is simple: part of the reason we need to repair the budget as soon as possible is because more than $25 billion was ripped out of Defence in the course of the last six years. The share of GDP spent on defence in the 2013-14 budget was just 1.59 per cent—the lowest level since 1938. The first duty of a national government is to protect the Australian people and that is what we are endeavouring to do to the best of our ability.

In conclusion, there may be very dark days ahead. In recent combat situations, particularly Afghanistan, there have been many deaths and many wounded. Let us hope this conflict is not protracted. Unfortunately, I think it very well could be. Some military people have said it could take 15 years to resolve the issues. That may be so—that is the daunting prospect. However, from what we can see now and for the short future over the horizon we need to stay the course and commit our best effort to this ugly necessity.

Mr WHITELEY (Braddon) (12:07): I welcome the opportunity to address this chamber, with ever more concern for many in the community here in our own country, on the security situation in Iraq and Syria. Firstly, I will speak directly to the Prime Minister. Prime Minister, throughout these early stages of the renewed threat of terrorism here in Australia, and in response to acts of gross terror, genocide and atrocities in Iraq and Syria, you have shown to the nation a level of leadership that has been scarce in our political discourse in recent memory. You have not been quick to war but you have demonstrated courage in confronting the threat of terrorism in Australia and courage in defending the vulnerable in Iraq. Definitive leadership at this time will mark your prime ministership and will more importantly ensure that this nation does not spend decades in a brutal war, as foreshadowed by former Chief of Army, Professor Peter Leahy.

A division having been called in the House of Representatives—

Sitting suspended from 12:09 to 12:16
Mr WHITELEY: Secondly, I address the men and women of the Australian Defence Force who have been operating in Iraq in recent weeks, providing humanitarian support to the people of that country. On behalf of my electorate and the people of Tasmania, I thank you for the commitment that you have shown to the national interest by undertaking dangerous humanitarian missions in Iraq.

Since the Prime Minister delivered his statement on security to the parliament, outlining numerous humanitarian missions undertaken by Australian forces, there have been additional missions including airlifts of supplies to the Kurdish regional government in Erbil. Furthermore, the Iraqi government and the United States government have made formal requests to the Australian government for military support. I believe a response by cabinet to Iraqi and US government requests is imminent. Requests for military action are treated with extreme caution and consideration. I have every confidence that the Prime Minister and the foreign minister, together with the cabinet, will make the right decision according to our national interest and our ability to support the Defence Force in their action but also according to the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people.

If the cabinet decides to commence combat operations in Iraq, Australia will join an ever-growing group of nations committed to facing the threat of ISIS head-on. In addition to Iraq and the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Denmark, Canada, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Albania, Estonia and Hungary have entered the conflict. Furthermore, Jordan, Qatar and Bahrain have joined the fight in Syria against the ISIS. It is also possible that Russia and Turkey will provide assistance in the coming days.

Within just a few short weeks of the United States's commitment to combating ISIS, a significant coalition of nations has been formed. While the United States are often the first nation to take criticism for their level of military action throughout the world, they were the first country outside of the region to act in support of the Iraqi people and they have been the most determined to build the coalition. The United States, it is my belief, are again demonstrating international leadership in this conflict, and I thank them.

Such an alliance underlines the seriousness of this challenge. It underlines the historic response to an evil culture that knows no bounds. Only a fool would suggest that such a culture does not mean the risk of barbaric acts being witnessed in our own peaceful national backyard. Accusations both in this place and from the wider community, including the media, that in some way current security responses are over the top only go to prove that, sadly, for some, their politics will always rule over the greater good and the pursuit of peace and safety.

Importantly, to the Braddon community I echo the Prime Minister's words and urge all of us to be aware but reassured. Be aware of the difficulties we face as a nation in combating the scourge of militant Islam, aware of our surrounds and aware of the need to be mindful of the need of security services as we go about our daily lives but also be reassured that this government, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, the foreign minister, the defence minister and others, and of course with the support of the opposition, is taking every necessary step to protect this country from attack, every necessary step to support the Federal Police, ASIO and ASIS in their work and every necessary step to support our troops in operations overseas.
I know that many of my constituents are concerned that Australia is considering involvement in another conflict in a region of the world few of us understand. I say to those people that I too am apprehensive about possible military action, as I believe we all should be. Any decision to undertake military action is weighty, and often the consequences of those decisions cannot be foreseen, but I say to you that this conflict will be played out in many countries throughout the world and that not undertaking decisive action now has the very grave potential to increase the risk that this conflict will reach out to us with devastating consequences. Indeed it already has, with Australians partaking in the conflict and returning to Australia and the concerning incident recently in Melbourne.

As noted by the Prime Minister in his statement to the parliament last week, over 60 Australians have taken up arms in Iraq and Syria in support of ISIS, with 20 of those returning to Australia. Just as concerning is that approximately 100 Australians are actively supporting those fighters and foreign fighters through the provision of finances. This is a great betrayal of Australia and her people, a betrayal that cuts deep because the people we see on our television screen in the evening who have decided to betray us appear to us to be everyday Australians. Some, by all accounts, are those that we have opened the door to, welcoming them to a new life full of hope and prosperity. They watch the cricket and they play football, yet somehow they have been sucked into a death cult that has no respect for the dignity or sanctity of human life.

For the record, let me repeat comments that I recently made to local Tasmanian media, and they are that no law other than Australian law should rule or guide our lives. If people have a deep desire to live by any other law, they have a serious decision to make about where they live. Our allegiances are either to Australia or against it. I believe the law should apply indiscriminately to all. Surely this long-held principle in law is not being challenged by the politically correct brigade.

Just as the Prime Minister and cabinet are giving due consideration to the question of military action, so too are they giving due consideration to the question of a legal response here in Australia. Clearly, new laws are required to tighten legal loopholes that may allow foreign fighters to betray Australia, but it is important to protect the freedoms that we enjoy in this nation, and I believe that the Prime Minister and the Attorney-General are wisely walking that fine line with due consideration.

There will no doubt be many more opportunities for each of us to speak to the international challenges that we face. For now, let me conclude by humbly thanking those who are at the front line of conflict or, equally, at the front line of strategic planning. We are Team Australia, and we should not underestimate the need for us to be realistic about the challenges the world faces and the need to be appropriately measured in our response. As I conclude, let me quote the words of Albert Einstein. He said: 'The world is a dangerous place to live, not because of the people who are evil but because of the people who don't do anything about it.'

Mr McCormack (Riverina—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance) (12:24): We live in troubled times. The deeply disturbing images and terrorist taunts coming out of the Middle East are a chilling daily reminder that the price of freedom is eternal vigilance. More than ever before we need to stay strong and be united in the face of evil that is IS, ISIL or ISIS. These Islamic militants—madmen—want to be called a state. This is not a state. A state protects its people and builds things on behalf of its people. It does not
systematically slaughter innocents. It does not engage in ethnic cleansing. It does not commit genocide.

ISIS tears down, destroys, murders, and practises barbarism and brutality; it hates. When events such as those callously unfolding at present in Iraq and Syria occur, Australia faces tough choices. We can, if we choose, simply sit back and say: 'That is happening more than 10,000 kilometres from us. It has been going on for centuries and it is someone else's problem.' In one sense, that is a valid argument. You hear this sentiment expressed often: 'Why should we worry? Why should we even care?' We have an obligation to do something. The Commander of the Australian Joint Task Force in the Middle East, Major General Craig Orme AM, CSC, often says about the continuity of our presence in the Middle East, 'To have a friend, be a friend.' In other words, we cannot, as the Greens would have us do, pack up and quit—cut and run—especially now. We have to stay the course, as difficult as it might prove, and help put that region and its people back on a peaceful footing.

Much of our commerce, energy and trade lines—particularly by sea—and those of our major trading partners emanate from that region, albeit a part of the world in great turmoil. It is a key economic region for so many reasons; besides, having an ongoing base in the Middle East is both principled and warranted. To do nothing is to allow ISIS to grow and its hideous actions to multiply. We must act and play our part. We also need to honour the sacrifice of those who have fallen in recent times. We have lost 41 of our best and bravest in Afghanistan since October 2007. Sombre ramp ceremonies with flag draped coffins are not the way the Australian Defence Force wants its heroes to return. It is certainly not how deceased soldiers' families want their beloved boys to come home. Sadly, sometimes that is the awful cost of war, defending an ideal, protecting those who need our military support, restoring peace and doing what is just and right.

There are those who question our involvement in Afghanistan. Being there in early August to see the progress made was indeed an eye-opener. More than 100,000 university students, and tens of thousands more children, mostly girls, are attending school. Higher life expectancy and increased gross domestic product—Afghanistan is improving in all the key areas. Things that those in western countries largely take for granted since the war on terror began. This would have not been possible without western intervention and the ADF's help. We can stand proud as a nation for what we have achieved on behalf of those Afghans who want what we want: health, wealth and freedom. We can stand proud for what our wonderful men and women who so stoically wear the ADF uniform have accomplished in driving the Taliban out of so many areas and into hiding.

We can stand proud for having the courage and the decency to not stand back and say: 'That is happening more than 10,000 kilometres from us. It has been going on for centuries and is someone else's problem.' It is easy to be passive, turn our backs and pretend as though we do not see the pain and suffering being endured—admittedly half a world away—by others who desperately need our help. Sure, we do not know the names of those who are hurting; we never will. Those trapped on Mount Sinjar and others too. In August 2014, as many as 50,000 Yazidis fled to the mountains following attacks by ISIS forces on the city of Sinjar, which fell on the third day of that month.

The Yazidi refugees faced what a relief worker called a genocide. He saw what looked like hundreds of dead bodies from his Iraqi Air Force helicopter evacuating the trapped refugees.
'You can imagine what it is like when you land amongst 5,000 people and can only take 10 or 20, and everyone tries to get on the helicopter,' Mirza Dinnay told the British Broadcasting Corporation. Stranded without water, food, shade or medical supplies, the Yazidis had to rely on airdropped supplies of water and food. I attended the 12 August meeting at Camp Baird, the Australian domestic compound at Al Minhad Air Base, south of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, in which the first airdrop was arranged. The mood in that room that afternoon was tense yet determined. They knew of the desperate plight of those in northern Iraq. They knew what had to be done and how to do it. They were also well aware of just how dangerous the mission would be. Flying large military aircraft low enough to drop off supplies, whilst avoiding surface-to-air missiles, takes skill, pluck and luck.

But our ADF personnel are the best trained in the world. American Army generals hold us in the highest respect for our capability, professionalism and spirit. It is ingrained in our uniformed men and women. It is the Anzac way, forged at Gallipoli, honed at Kokoda. A week after the capture of Sinjar, Kurdish Peshmerga and officials had saved some 30,000 of the refugees by opening a corridor from the mountains into nearby Syria and from there into Iraqi Kurdistan—with the help of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party, commonly referred to by its Kurdish acronym, PKK. Yet, as Major General Orme, an inspirational leader, was chairing the meeting to organise the food and supplies airlift, thousands of helpless and hungry men, women and children remained stranded on Mount Sinjar. Three hundred Yazidi women were taken as slaves and more than 500 men, women and children were killed—some beheaded or buried alive in the foothills—as part of an effort by the Islamists to instil terror generally and specifically to desecrate the mountain the Yazidis consider sacred. A witness reported that Yazidi girls raped by ISIS fighters committed suicide by jumping to their deaths from Mount Sinjar. Missions to airdrop food and supplies including medicine were successful. Thank God for that. Our planes returned to base safely. Thank God for that. How good are our people doing these mercy runs? How good are they?

Recent videos showing the executions of United States journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff and British aid worker David Haines, wearing orange garb and kneeling beside their black-masked ISIS killer, are simply outrageous, atrocious. Australian Attorney-General Senator George Brandis said the latest killings show why Australia is engaged in the international fight against ISIL. Senator Brandis told ABC television:

It just serves to demonstrate—not that it's really necessary for there to be more evidence—how barbaric and evil these people are. This is a problem for the world and that is why we in Australia are engaged. We need to be engaged … this terrorist entity, ISIL, is a fundamental threat to the Western world in particular. Immigration Minister Scott Morrison said Australia would not be intimidated by the killing, and we will not. We need to be alert but not so fearful that we change the way we go about living our daily lives.

I must say I despair when I hear the Greens, locally in my electorate of the Riverina and here in Canberra, questioning the position our nation is taking in response to the escalating Middle East crisis. To the Greens I say this: start putting Australia first instead of knocking and mocking all the time. To suggest the government is doing anything other than what is in the nation's best national security and long-held global partner interests is, I would argue, beyond the pale. Strong words I appreciate, but consider the narrative the Greens have been
running in recent weeks. Greens Tasmanian Senator Peter Whish-Wilson was way off the mark when he said:

I think we need to find better words than 'terrorist' and 'terrorism' because, to me, this implies a very one-sided view of the world.'

And this:

We use that word because it is a very simple word to use and it demonises people.

No, Senator, we use that word because that is what they are: terrorists, heartless killers, butchers, people who have no regard for human life—not their own and certainly not others'. You would think, given the sensitivity of the situation at present and Senator Whish-Wilson's unwise words, that his leader, Senator Christine Milne, would distance herself and the party from such a statement—but no, alas, quite the opposite. The Greens' only member in the lower house—one too many, I might add—the member for Melbourne, did not do himself any credit after the 23 September Narre Warren shooting of a terror suspect by uttering:

We have to ask the serious question what is it that makes someone, a teenager, so disaffected with their own country that they want to kill people.

I mean, seriously? The Australian public should feel safe and secure in the knowledge our police, security services and governments are taking every possible step to ensure the safety of the community. What we do not need now is the Greens and their empty, un-Australian rhetoric, which does not represent the view of the majority.

The media also has a role and a responsibility to play, and headlines such as that online at The Sydney Morning Herald of 14 September, 'Fools rush in: Tony Abbott joins a war without definition', when cabinet committed 600 Australian military personnel and more aircraft to the Middle East conflict as tensions escalated, are not helpful or patriotic. Throughout the course of Australian history, from the Boer War to Baghdad, our involvement in international conflict has been a test of the national character and our true mettle, and it will be so again.

Mr ENTSCH (Leichhardt) (12:34): I rise here today to express my very strong support for what Australia is doing to help combat the desperate circumstances that we are seeing with ISIL in Iraq and in Syria. This is certainly a humanitarian endeavour. It is certainly not an act of war. When we see scenes of genocide, families fleeing violence, men being slaughtered, and mothers and children desperate for assistance, we must make a stand. When we hear abhorrent stories of women and children being sold into sexual slavery, we must make a stand.

We are part of an international community. We have an obligation, especially when we see the significant number of individuals coming from Australia to fight in this conflict. And it is not just fighting but returning to Australia and bringing their hatred and their violence with them. As a community, we have to stand up and say that this is absolutely unacceptable. We just cannot sit back and pretend it is not happening and that it will never affect us.

The raids in Brisbane and Sydney two weeks ago and in Melbourne earlier this week have brought very close to home the threat of violence against Australians on home soil, carried out by a very small number of extremists. Also last week, in Melbourne, there was the stabbing of two police officers by an armed terror suspect who had had his passport suspended and was unable to travel to fight overseas. This was an unprovoked attack while our Australian police officers were just doing their job. I certainly condemn that attack, but it is important to
recognise that this was very much an individual act. The police are our front line against people who wish to do us harm. It is exactly this type of bravery and dedication, shown by these officers, that will continue to keep our community safe and secure. People should not feel unsafe going about their everyday lives. The core definition of terrorism is the state of fear and submission produced by acts of terrorism or terrorisation. Succumbing to terror is not how Australians live their lives. The best way to counter fear and submission is to continue to go about our normal everyday activities while being alert but certainly not alarmed.

It is important that we recognise that those who are motivated to act in these ways are a very, very tiny minority of our Muslim community. We cannot fall into the trap of viewing all of those in this community with suspicion fuelling discrimination, hatred and more violence. As a community, as a country, we are certainly far better than that. If we carry out violence on our home soil, we are no better than those fighters overseas. I note that in Britain a social media campaign has sprung up where young Muslims make it clear that ISIS does not act in their name.

Our local Islamic community faces the same challenges, and I certainly call on the leaders to take a strong stance and condemn these actions. Unfortunately, there have already been a couple of incidents in Far North Queensland. In Cairns, the word 'ISIS' was sprayed on a vacant building and toilet block. It was an apparent response to the word 'evil' being painted on a Mareeba mosque the previous weekend. It is pleasing to see that the non-Muslim community leaders in both cases have been very quick to condemn the incidents as entirely unacceptable. In both cases, police are calling on anybody who has information to come forward. It follows an incident back in November when another radical attack was launched on a Cairns mosque, where vandals called for worshippers to integrate or return to their homelands.

This graffiti in particular illustrated the nature of intolerance and ignorance in our community. I had known the imam of the Cairns Mosque, Abdul Aziz, for many years. He was actually born and reared in Cairns, spent years on various Cairns Show, Rotary and farming committees, represented the Cairns junior soccer team when he played as a youngster in 1948, and speaks with very much a broad Australian twang. So, when vandals used bright red paint to suggest he integrate, the 81-year-old Far North Queensland Islamic leader was rather appalled and, of course, confused—'How can we integrate more than I have done?' he asked; 'I would like to know what these people have done for their community.'

I have to say that both Mareeba and Cairns are very proud of their multiculturalism. Mareeba has residents from 64 countries, including many outstanding families of the Muslim faith who came to this region 80 or 90 years ago and who have made a major contribution to Far North Queensland industries and our community. Cairns also celebrated its diversity last month when the Cairns and Region Multicultural Association hosted a very successful Tropical Wave Festival. Around 1,000 people enjoyed art, craft, music, storytelling and food from more than 40 cultural communities. These incidents of vandalism certainly do not reflect the attitude of the wider community and again I urge tolerance.

From the government's perspective, we have three key messages on security: the government will do whatever it can to keep people safe; our security measures at home and abroad are directed against terrorism, not religion, nor any particular sector of the community; and Australians can and should always live normally. Of course, we do not embrace the need
to get involved in conflicts on the other side of the world, but nothing can justify the actions of this ISIL death cult, like beheadings, crucifixions, mass executions and ethnic cleansing.

There are at least 60 Australians that we know of who are currently fighting with terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq and at least 100 Australians that are supporting them. More than 20 of these foreign fighters have already returned to Australia. It is in Australia's best interest that we stand ready with the world to help the new Iraqi government to break down the ISIL cult and regain control over their own country.

These are hard decisions to make but we have to do it. We have to step up as part of the world community. I note that the Australian Defence Force has been authorised to prepare and deploy for operations with the international force in support of the government of Iraq. The Prime Minister, as we know, has just returned from the United Nations discussions in New York, including discussions with the new Iraqi prime minister. To date the Australian Defence Force has not been authorised to conduct strike operations in Iraq or Syria. Our forces are deployed to the Middle East to engage in exercises, but any final decision to engage in Iraq will be made in due course. It is important to recognise that it is good to get a little lead time moving into these very hostile areas, to give our pilots and our ground crews an opportunity to get accustomed to the environment in which they are working. It is absolutely critical that they have this lead time. Once the decision is made, we know that they will be absolutely and fully prepared to carry out the tasks to which they have been called on from our nation. At the appropriate time, the National Security Committee and cabinet will discuss action against ISIL in Iraq as part of the US-led international coalition of nations. The Australian Defence Force Air Task Group, as I say, has already arrived and is carrying out work there at the moment.

At home, our security agents have all the resources and authority that they will reasonably need. The Australian government has committed an extra $630 million, additional personnel are to be recruited, biometric screening will be introduced to our international airports within 12 months, and there will be more people on the ground at airports. Before Christmas the government will respond to the current review of national security apparatus. We are systematically updating counterterrorism legislation to strengthen our agencies' capability to arrest, prosecution and jail returning foreign fighters and prevent and disrupt domestic security threats.

Last week, our first tranche of legislation to give our agencies stronger power to fight terrorism passed in the Senate with the support of Labor, and this week it will be finalised in the House of Representatives. Further reform will address the most pressing gaps in our counterterrorism legislation framework, and the government is continuing data retention discussions with telecommunication companies and internet service providers.

Our security measures at home and abroad are directed against terrorism—not religion and not any sector of the community. It is not about what people wear; it is about fighting crime. I certainly commend our position on national security.

Mr SUKKAR (Deakin) (12:44): I rise today, like so many other speakers, to address the grave situation facing our national and global security. As we all know, and as the Prime Minister has said on many occasions, protection of our people and the defence of our nation is the first duty of government. To reiterate our Prime Minister's statement on national security to which I reply, I want to emphasise three key messages to my electorate of Deakin. First, the
government will do whatever is possible to keep you and all Australians safe. Second, our security measures at home and abroad are solely directed against terrorism, not religion or any community. Third, Australians should always live normally, because the terrorist's goal is ultimately to scare us out of being ourselves.

For some months now the militant organisation which calls itself the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant—of which many speakers have mentioned—has managed, in some places of Iraq and Syria, to fill the void resulting from the ongoing power struggle between the Sunni and Shia populations in those conflict zones. Their influence has subsequently spilled over the Syrian border into the northern parts of Iraq, and the territory under their control has grown rapidly.

Like so many other Australians, I have monitored the growth of this movement in these parts of the Middle East with growing concern and despair for the local populations in those respective areas. We all know that the politics and stability of the Middle East has always been far from secure. However, the developments of the past few months reveal a new and far more deadly chapter, particularly for the rights of persecuted minorities in this part of the world.

Most strikingly for my community in Deakin, and what is raised with me on a regular basis, has been the manner in which ISIL has viciously targeted the minority Christian communities in Iraq and other places in the region. Some of these Christian communities are as old as Christianity itself and, gravely, many face extinction at the hands of ISIL. But it is not just minority Christian communities that are now being targeted by ISIL. ISIL has shown itself to indiscriminately target and murder countless numbers of Muslims who simply do not adhere to or follow their very narrow and medieval understanding of the Islamic faith. These groups include the local Shia, Kurdish, Alawite and countless other groups who are just unfortunate enough to be living in a part of Iraq or Syria that now falls under the control of ISIL.

We further know that ISIL and its followers do not recognise any borders between Iraq and Syria. They are aiming to create, in their own words, a caliphate in the area and are also claiming political authority across the broader Islamic world. The ruthless advance of ISIL in those regions has ultimately provided a haven for those from all parts of the world attracted to this ideology, and I regret to say these include some radicalised and traitorous Australians.

So far we know that there are at least 60 Australians currently fighting in this part of the world and many more from other Western nations, such as France, the United States and the United Kingdom. The danger here is that those who return to Australia, or to other Western countries, will come back even further radicalised. They will also be brutalised and determined to spread the evil ideology of ISIL on our own shores. We also know that ISIL operatives in Australia have been instructed by their commanders in Syria to prepare attacks against Australian targets, including attacks against our own parliament.

As we so tragically saw last week in my home state of Victoria, one Australian Federal Police officer and one Victorian police officer were subjected to an unprovoked attack from an 18-year-old terrorist with a knife. The attacker was a person of interest to our law enforcement and intelligence agencies. While the two officers were wounded in the attack—one seriously—thankfully these two honest, decent and brave men will both be able to return home to their families. This is further to events from the previous week where a terrorist
operative here in Australia instructed his followers to perform demonstration executions, beheadings, similar to those that have taken place against individuals in the Middle East. Then, just yesterday—again in my home state of Victoria—we saw the Victorian police and the AFP working cooperatively to conduct raids that resulted in the arrest of a man who was subsequently charged with funding a US citizen to fight in Syria. His arrest and the six charges laid against him come after what is reported to have been eight months of surveillance. So our intelligence agencies are doing an incredible job of dealing with what is a significantly enhanced threat to our country, and for this I want to sincerely thank them.

It is this increased threat, coupled with the important humanitarian aspects, that makes it clear that it is in Australia's national interest to do what we can to combat ISIL and to continue to participate in an international coalition with the aim of strengthening the Iraqi government. This will mean weakening and removing a dangerous death cult that provides a haven and leadership for those seeking to carry out attacks against us in Australia and to ultimately threaten our way of life. Indeed, as a nation that values liberal democracy and the protection of the rights of minorities, we cannot stand by and watch the plight of the persecuted people in Iraq and Syria. We just cannot watch genocide taking place on our television screens every night. Equally, we cannot allow ISIL to use the territory it has overrun to become a base for future attacks to be launched on Australia and other democratic nations.

That is why I am proud of Australia's commitment to support a broad-based coalition of nations taking the fight to ISIL. It is also encouraging to see numerous states in the Middle East with large Islamic majorities joining the push against ISIL. These include Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Jordan. Back here in Australia I also welcome the commitment by the government to ensure the security and safety of our own people. While there is a delicate balance between freedom and security, one which has been debated by political philosophers for many centuries now, there is no simpler way to see this than the reality that the most basic freedom of all is the freedom to walk the streets unharmed and to sleep safely in our beds at night.

For these reasons, I welcome the additional funding provided to our security agencies in the budget this year and welcome legislation which will create new terrorist offences, seek to curtail returning foreign fighters and extend powers to monitor or detain terror suspects. In my view, any Australian who leaves our shores to fight with the bloodthirsty cult ISIL should be barred from returning to Australia. However, I reluctantly accept that this may not be possible in all cases. So we must send a clear message to those Australians who return home from fighting with ISIL, often with a view of carrying on the fight here in Australia, or to their terrorist supporters here in Australia, that they will be arrested, prosecuted and jailed for a long time. Our new counter-terrorism laws will assist in this task. Ultimately, in my view, by supporting and fighting with ISIL, such people just do not deserve the freedoms and prosperity that Australia provides.

In closing, I would like to again emphasise that I strongly believe that the ongoing crisis and instability that is engulfing the Middle East due to the actions of ISIL and its supporters must be dealt with in a decisive and swift manner not only by the international community but by all members of our society. I therefore, in response to the Prime Minister's statement, welcome his commitment and the commitment of the government of which I am a part to
ensure that Australia will lend our strength to ensure that ISIL is destroyed and hopefully becomes just an unfortunate footnote in the history of barbarism.

Mr TEHAN (Wannon) (12:54): It is a pleasure to rise today to support the comments of the member for Deakin and others who have spoken on this statement that the Prime Minister made in the parliament, a very important statement. It was a statement which dealt with the issue that we have before us today of a heightened security risk in our nation.

The first thing that I think the Prime Minister made very clear was that this is a real threat. It is a threat which exists and it is a threat which the government is taking incredibly seriously. As a matter of fact, the Prime Minister has reassured Australians that the No. 1 priority of this government is to keep Australians safe. As the member for Deakin put it so succinctly, that freedom to be able to walk down the street and to sleep in your bed at night is a fundamental freedom that the government wants to protect. That is why the security of Australians is, rightly, our No. 1 priority.

What is the threat that we are facing? I think that in the statement he made to the House and in other public statements that he has made, the Prime Minister has articulated it extremely well. We have 60 Australians fighting in Iraq and Syria at the moment and we have 100 Australian supporting them in one way or another, whether that be through financing, helping with travelling arrangements or other types of activities. Concerningly, more than 20 of these foreign fighters have returned home to Australia. We have to assume that many of those 20 will be radicalised and, I think, capable of undertaking brutal and abhorrent acts as a result of what they have been doing over in Iraq and Syria.

The evidence points to the fact that fighters who have been over to these areas and who do come back do, sadly, have on their minds carrying out terrorist attacks in this country. We only have to look at Afghanistan; history shows that what occurred there demonstrates that the threat we have now is extremely real. There are about 30 Australian foreign fighters who went to Afghanistan to fight with al-Qaeda. We know that 20 of those came back to Australia. The figure is roughly about 18 who were suspected of potentially having an interest in carrying out a terrorist attack, and eight of the 30 were convicted. That should be a worrying sign for what we now face; that was 30 in Afghanistan and we are now looking at over 100 Australians in Syria and Iraq. And we know that 20 of those have returned to Australia already.

This is why the government is taking this threat so realistically. It is absolutely paramount that we put in place the measures to be able to deal with this, and that is what the government is doing. Three tranches of legislation are going to come before the House. Already we have one tranche that will pass the House today. There will be another tranche, which has been introduced in the Senate and which will come before this parliament once the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence and Security has dealt with it. That committee will report to the House on that particular bill on 17 October and, as the Attorney-General and the Prime Minister have indicated, there will be a third tranche of legislation, most likely to be introduced by the end of the year, dealing with the retention of data so that our intelligence agencies can once again keep our nation safe.

These three pieces of legislation equip our intelligence agencies and our police force to keep Australia safe. That is what they are designed to do. But they also have within them safeguards to make sure that those freedoms that Australians enjoy can also continue to the
maximum extent possible—and the government is concerned about ensuring that it gets the balance right. I would say to those—especially in the media—who have recently been raising concerns about the first tranche of legislation, which has passed through the Senate and which hopefully will pass through the House today, that we are taking the right to freedom of the press seriously.

You only have to look at the recommendations of the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence and Security to see that. Recommendations 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 deal specifically with special intelligence operations and ensuring that the proper scrutiny is there and where there are some freedoms that are impinged upon, especially when it comes to the freedom of reporting, that these are valid. I would say to all journalists who have raised concerns in this area, 'Please look at those recommendations because you will see that the government has accepted every one of those as a result of the concerns which were raised.'

We know the threat is there. We know that the government has acted and put in place legislation to ensure that we can deal with this threat. The government has also put its money where its mouth is. Six hundred and thirty million dollars has been provided collectively to the AFP, to Customs, to ASIO, to ASIS and the ONA to deal with this threat. This money was necessary. It is all very well us talking about the threat, but we have to make sure that our agencies are financed to deal with it as well. That is why the government has acted rightly in this regard.

I would like at this stage to point to one issue which I think also needs to be looked at. This is an issue which, once again, the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence and Security has raised, this time in its review of administration and expenditure of Australia's intelligence agencies. Recommendation 2 of our most recent report says:

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government review the continued application of the efficiency dividend and other savings measures to the agencies comprising the Australian Intelligence Community. Particular consideration should be given to the cumulative impact of these measures on operational capacity, including maintaining optimal staffing levels, and the ongoing ability of agencies to protect Australia’s national security.

It is correct that we give additional resources to our intelligence agencies, but we also must be cognisant of the fact that efficiency dividends seek to take money away from these agencies. At a time when we have a heightened threat, at a time when we are looking to thoroughly resource our intelligence agencies, we do need to consider whether the efficiency dividend should continue to apply to those agencies that are on the front line of dealing with this threat. I am sure this is something which the government will be considering; but this is a bipartisan recommendation made by the committee and I think it is something that the government needs to take seriously and needs to look at. I commend the $630 million that has been provided, but I do think that the efficiency dividend, as it applies to our agencies, is something that we also need to keep in the back of our minds.

I commend the Prime Minister for his statement to the House. I commend him for the leadership that he has shown on this issue, not only here in Australia but internationally as well. The way he has responded in a purposeful, respectful but determined manner has meant that the Australian people feel like they have a government that is doing all it can to keep the nation safe. That is absolutely vital at a time like this. I also commend the government for
ensuring that those agencies that have to fight this heightened security threat have the resources to be able to do this through providing the additional $630 million.

Federation Chamber adjourned at 13:04
QUESTIONS IN WRITING

Speech and Media Training

(Question No. 305)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 1 September 2014:

In respect of speech and/or media training since 7 September 2013,
(a) what total sum has the Minister's department spent, and
(b) what is the breakdown for such training for the
   (i) Minister,
   (ii) Minister's staff, and where applicable, each
   (iii) junior Minister (including Assistant Ministers),
   (iv) junior (and Assistant) Minister's staff,
   (v) Parliamentary Secretary, and (vi) Parliamentary Secretary's staff, and
(c) what services were provided, and by whom.

Ms Julie Bishop: The Minister for Defence has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

(a) The total sum spent on media training services for the period 7 September 2013 to 7 September 2014 was $285,132.72 GST exclusive.
(b) Nil. No speech or media training has been provided to the Ministers, the Parliamentary Secretary or ministerial staff.
(c) Media Awareness and Skills course and VIP Media Preparation sessions by Media Manoeuvres.

Defence Procurement

(Question No. 328)

Mr Zappia asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 3 September 2014:

Further to the Minister's answer to question in writing No. 250 (House Hansard, 26 August 2014, page 108), (a) has the 'Steele Blue' factory in Indonesia previously supplied defence products; if so, what products; (b) have Australian Government representatives inspected the factory where the boots will be made; and (c) do work conditions at the factory meet International Labour Organization standards.

Ms Julie Bishop: The Minister for Defence has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

(a) Yes. Defence purchased approximately 5,900 pairs of safety boots from the 'Steele Blue' Indonesian factory through the Australian company, J Blackwood & Son Pty Ltd.
(b) Defence officials have not inspected the factory.
(c) Annex C of the tender requires companies to identify if they are manufacturing off shore and if so they are required to state that the companies' overseas subcontractors are accredited with local national scheme similar to the Australian Homeworkers' Code of Practice".

Within the Conditions of Tender it states that "the Commonwealth will exclude a tender from further consideration if the Commonwealth considers that the tenderer has not fully complied with a judgment against it from any Court or Tribunal (including overseas jurisdictions but excluding judgments under
appeal or instances where the period for appeal or payment/settlement has not expired) relating to a breach of workplace relations law, occupational health and safety law or workers' compensation law."

**Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development**

(Question No. 330)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development, in writing, on 3 September 2014:

Since 7 September 2013, has the Minister’s Department paid for or stocked the ‘drinks cabinet’ for (a) the Minister, and where applicable, each (b) junior Minister (including Assistant Ministers), and (c) Parliamentary Secretary; if so, at what cost.

Mr Truss: The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(a) Nil.
(b) Nil.
(c) N/A.

**Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development: Secondments**

(Question No. 366)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development, in writing, on 3 September 2014:

Since 7 September 2013, (a) how many departmental officials have been seconded to the (i) Minister’s office, and where applicable, each (ii) junior Minister’s office (including Assistant Ministers), and (iii) Parliamentary Secretary’s office, (b) for how long, and (c) at what level.

Mr Truss: the answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(a) Nil.
(b) N/A.
(c) N/A.

**Media Monitoring and Clipping Services**

(Question No. 387)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, in writing, on Wednesday, 3 September 2014:

In respect of media monitoring and clipping services in the financial periods since 7 September 2013: (a) what sum has been spent on such services engaged by: (i) the Minister's office, and where applicable, each (ii) junior Minister (including Assistant Ministers), and (iii) Parliamentary Secretary, and (b) what was the (i) name, and (ii) postal address, of each media monitoring company engaged by each of these offices.

Ms Julie Bishop: The Minister for Defence has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

(a) and (b) Nil.