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SITTING DAYS—2015

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

House of Representatives Office holders
Speaker—Hon. Anthony David Hawthorn Smith
Deputy Speaker—Hon. Bruce Craig Scott MP
Second Deputy Speaker—Mr Robert George Mitchell MP
Members of the Speaker’s Panel—Mr Russell Evan Broadbent MP,
Ms Anna Elizabeth Burke MP, Ms Sharon Catherine Claydon MP,
Mr Patrick Martin Conroy MP, Mr Alexander George Hawke MP,
Mr Ian Reginald Goodenough MP, Mrs Natasha Louise Griggs MP,
Ms Sarah Moya Henderson MP, Mr Stephen James Irons MP, Mr Ewen Thomas Jones MP,
Mr Craig Kelly MP, Ms Michelle Leanne Landry, Ms Clare Ellen O’Neil, MP,
Mrs Jane Prentice MP, Mr Ross Xavier, Dr Andrew Southcott MP, John Vasta MP,
Mr Brett David Whiteley MP, Mrs Lucy Elizabeth Wicks 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. Malcolm Bligh Turnbull MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Julie Isabel Bishop MP
Chief Government Whip—Mr Scott Buchholz MP
Government Whips—Mr Andrew Alexander Nikolic, AM, CSC and
Ms Nola Bethwyn Marino MP Southcott

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

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<td>Denison, TAS</td>
<td>IND</td>
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<tr>
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<th>Division</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Williams, Mr Matthew</td>
<td>Hindmarsh, SA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilson, Mr Richard James</td>
<td>O'Connor, WA</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood, Mr Jason Peter</td>
<td>La Trobe, VIC</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**


**Heads of Parliamentary Departments**

- Clerk of the Senate—R Laing
- Clerk of the House of Representatives—D Elder
- Acting Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—D Heriot
- Parliamentary Budget Officer—P Bowen
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<td><strong>Minister for Indigenous Affairs</strong></td>
<td>Senator Hon. Nigel Scullion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Eric Abetz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Counter-Terrorism</td>
<td>Hon Michael Keenan MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Michaelia Cash</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister</td>
<td>Hon. Christian Porter MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister</td>
<td>Hon. Alan Tudge MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(Deputy Prime Minister)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development</td>
<td>Hon. Jamie Briggs MP</td>
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<td>Hon. Andrew Robb AO MP</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>(Leader of the Government in the Senate)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Employment</td>
<td>Hon. Luke Hartsuyker MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Deputy Leader of the House)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Attorney-General</strong></td>
<td>Senator Hon. George Brandis QC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for the Arts</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(Vice-President of the Executive Council)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Hon. Michael Keenan MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Senator the Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Treasurer</strong></td>
<td>Hon. Joe Hockey MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Small Business</strong></td>
<td>Hon. Bruce Billson MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Treasurer</td>
<td>Hon. Joshua Frydenberg MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer</td>
<td>Hon. Kelly O'Dwyer</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Agriculture</strong></td>
<td>Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP</td>
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<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Richard Colbeck</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Education and Training</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(Leader of the House)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Senator Hon. Marise Payne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Social Services</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Hon. Ian Macfarlane MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Industry and Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Defence</strong></td>
<td>Hon. Kevin Andrews MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Senator Hon. Michael Ronaldson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC</strong></td>
<td>Senator Hon. Michael Ronaldson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Defence</td>
<td>Hon. Stuart Robert MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Communications</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Communications</strong></td>
<td>Hon. Paul Fletcher MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Immigration and Border Protection</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Immigration and Border Protection</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for the Environment</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Minister for Finance</strong></td>
<td>Senator Hon. Mathias Cormann</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Minister of State</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Michael Ronaldson</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance</strong></td>
<td>Hon. Michael McCormack MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Health</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Sport</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Health</td>
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Each box represents a portfolio. **Cabinet Ministers are shown in bold type.** As a general rule, there is one department in each portfolio. However, there 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>Hon. Bill Shorten MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister Assisting the Leader for Science</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Kim Carr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Hon. Bernie Ripoll MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business</td>
<td>Julie Owens MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Cabinet Secretary</td>
<td>Senator 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>
<td>Deputy Leader of the Opposition</td>
<td>Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Women</td>
<td>Senator Claire Moore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manager of Opposition Business (Senate)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC</td>
<td>Hon. David Feeney MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>Hon. Matt Thistlethwaite MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate</td>
<td>Senator 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>
<td>Hon. David Feeney MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Infrastructure and Transport</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Hon. Richard Marles MP</td>
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The SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Smith) took the chair at 12:00, made an acknowledgement of country and read prayers.

MOTIONS
Coalition Government

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (12:01): I seek leave to move the following motion, which was last moved on 26 June 2013:

That this House calls on the Government to end its internal arguments and actually govern the country and if it can't, to restore the selection of the Prime Minister to the people in an election, where it should be.

Leave not granted.

Mr BURKE: I move:

That so much of the standing and sessional orders be suspended as would prevent the Member for Watson from moving the following motion forthwith—

That this House calls on the Government to end its internal arguments and actually govern the country and if it can't, to restore the selection of the Prime Minister to the people in an election, where it should be.

I do not know whether we have got two prime ministers or none at the moment, but I do know that every election commitment is now gone.

Mr KEENAN (Stirling—Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Counter-Terrorism) (12:02): I move:

That the speaker be no longer heard.

Opposition members interjecting—

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

The SPEAKER: The question is that the member for Watson be no longer heard.

Mr Burke: Mr Speaker, the question that the Minister for Justice moved was not the question that you just put to the House. If he wants to re-move it, we will give him leave.

The SPEAKER: No.

Mr Burke: He has moved a motion that you be no longer heard. That is what he moved. I am against it. We are voting with you on this. We are with you.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: It is hard to respond to the member for Watson when those behind him are interrupting him. I thank the member for Watson for his kind words, but I think everyone knows the interpretation.

Mr Burke interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Watson will desist. The question is that the member be no longer heard.
The House divided. [12:06]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes ................. 79
Noes .................. 50
Majority............. 29

AYES

Alexander, JG
Andrews, KL
Billson, BF
Briggs, JE
Broadbent, RE
Buchholz, S
Ciobo, SM
Coleman, DB
Dutton, PC
Fletcher, PW
Gambaro, T
Griggs, NL
Hawke, AG
Hendy, PW
Howarth, LR
Hutchinson, ER
Jensen, DG
Keenan, M
Laming, A
Laundy, C
Macfarlane, IE
Markus, LE
McCormack, MF
Morrison, SJ
O’Dowd, KD
Pasin, A
Porter, CC
Pyne, CM
Robb, AJ
Roy, WB
Scott, BC
Simpkins, LXL
Stone, SN
Sukkar, MS
Tehan, DT
Van Manen, AJ
Vasta, RX
Wicks, LE
Wilson, RJ
Wyatt, KG

NOES

Bandt, AP
Bowen, CE
Butler, MC
Byrne, AM

Bird, SL
Burke, AS
Butler, TM
Chalmers, JE
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NOES

Champion, ND  Chesters, LM
Clare, JD  Claydon, SC
Collins, JM  Conroy, PM
Dreyfias, MA  Elliot, MJ
Ellis, KM  Ferguson, LDT
Fitzgibbon, JA  Giles, AJ
Gray, G  Hall, JG (teller)
Hayes, CP  Husic, EN
Jones, SP  King, CF
Leigh, AK  Macklin, JL
MacTiernan, AJGC  Marles, RD
McGowan, C  Mitchell, RG
Neumann, SK  O’Connor, BPJ
O’Neil, CE  Owens, J
Parke, M  Plibersek, TJ
Ripoll, BF  Rishworth, AL
Rowland, MA  Ryan, JC (teller)
Snowdon, WE  Swan, WM
Thistlethwaite, MJ  Thomson, KJ
Vamvakinou, M  Watts, TG
Wilkie, AD  Zappia, A

Question agreed to.

The SPEAKER (12:13): Is the motion seconded? I call the member for Blaxland.

Mr Keenan: Mr Speaker—

Mr CLARE (Blaxland) (12:13): I second the motion. This new Prime Minister has blood on his hands.

Mr KEENAN (Stirling—Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Counter-Terrorism) (12:13): I move:

That the member be no longer heard.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the member be no longer heard.

The House divided. [12:14]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes ...................... 79
Noes ...................... 50
Majority ................. 29

AYES

Alexander, JG  Andrews, KJ
Andrews, KL  Baldwin, RC
Billson, BF  Bishop, BK
Briggs, JE  Broad, AJ
Broadbent, RE  Brough, MT
Buchholz, S  Christensen, GR
Ciobo, SM  Cobb, JK
Coleman, DB  Coulton, M (teller)
AYES

Dutton, PC
Fletcher, PW
Gambaro, T
Griggs, NL
Hawke, AG
Hendy, PW
Howarth, LR
Hutchinson, ER
Jensen, DG
Keenan, M
Laming, A
Laundy, C
Macfarlane, IE
Markus, LE
McCormack, MF
Morrison, SJ
O'Dowd, KD
Pasin, A
Porter, CC
Pyne, CM
Robb, AJ
Roy, WB
Scott, BC
Simpkins, LXL
Stone, SN
Sukkar, MS
Tehan, DT
Van Manen, AJ
Vasta, RX
Wicks, LE
Wilson, RJ
Wyatt, KG

Entsch, WG
Frydenberg, JA
Goodenough, IR
Hartley, L
Henderson, SM
Hogan, KJ
Hunt, GA
Irons, SJ
Jones, ET
Kelly, C
Landry, ML
Ley, SP
Marino, NB
Matheson, RG
McNamara, KJ
Nikolic, AA (teller)
O'Dwyer, KM
Pitt, KJ
Prentice, J
Ramsey, RE
Robert, SR
Ruddock, PM
Scott, FM
Southcott, AJ
Sudmalis, AE
Taylor, AJ
Tudge, AE
Varvaris, N
Whiteley, BD
Williams, MP
Wood, JP

NOES

Bandt, AP
Bowen, CE
Butler, MC
Byrne, AM
Champion, ND
Clare, JD
Collins, JM
Dreyfus, MA
Ellis, KM
Fitzgibbon, JA
Gray, G
Hayes, CP
Jones, SP
Leigh, AK
MacTiernan, AJGC
McGowan, C
Neumann, SK
O’Neill, CE

Bird, SL
Burke, AS
Butler, TM
Chalmers, JE
Chesters, LM
Claydon, SC
Controy, PM
Elliott, MJ
Ferguson, LDT
Giles, AJ
Hall, JG (teller)
Husic, EN
King, CF
Macklin, JL
Marles, RD
Mitchell, RG
O’Connor, BPJ
Owens, J
Question agreed to.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that the motion be agreed to. The member for Jagajaga.

**Ms MACKLIN** (Jagajaga) (12:16): Who is the Prime Minister? Let's see when he is going to come into the parliament. Which one is it?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Jagajaga will resume her seat. The minister has the call.

**Mr KEENAN** (Stirling—Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Counter-Terrorism) (12:16): I move:

That the question be now put.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that the question be now put.

The House divided. [12:17]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

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Question agreed to.

The Speaker: The question now is that the motion moved by the member for Watson be agreed to. In accordance with standing order 133(c), the division is deferred until the conclusion of the discussion of the matter of public importance.

Debate adjourned.
BILLS

Civil Law and Justice (Omnibus Amendments) Bill 2015

Second Reading

Mr KEENAN (Stirling—Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Counter-Terrorism) (12:19): I present the explanatory memorandum to this bill and move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Civil Law and Justice (Omnibus Amendments) Bill 2015 is an omnibus bill which will primarily amend the Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act 1975, the Bankruptcy Act 1966, the Evidence Act 1995, the Federal Circuit Court of Australia Act 1999, the Federal Court of Australia Act 1976 and the International Arbitration Act 1974.

The bill will make minor and technical amendments to provide more clarity to the legislation, correct legislative oversights and amend obsolete provisions. The bill will also make a number of consequential amendments. The combined effect of these amendments will improve the efficiency and operation of the justice system administered by the Attorney-General's portfolio.

The government aims to make all Commonwealth legislation coherent, readable and accessible to the widest possible audience. To this end, the Evidence Act will be amended to move the journalists’ privilege provisions from Division 1A of Part 3.10 to new Division 1C of Part 3.10. This will provide consistency with the numbering of the New South Wales, ACT and Victorian Evidence Acts and is consistent with the Parliamentary Counsel's Committee Protocol on Drafting National Uniform Legislation, which provides that the numbering of uniform legislation should be consistent, something that I think we can all get behind.

To provide clarity to legislation, the Federal Circuit Court of Australia Act will be amended to ensure that all police officers and court sheriffs who are authorised by the act, or a warrant issued under the act or the rules of court, have the power to use such force as is reasonable and necessary in the circumstances to enter premises to execute an arrest warrant. Currently, there is uncertainty about whether reasonable force can be used to enter premises to execute an arrest warrant. This means that circumstances may arise where an arrest warrant is unable to be executed because an arrestee is inside premises. This can delay the court process and burden the justice system.

Other amendments to the Federal Circuit Court of Australia Act will repeal an obsolete reference to improve the accuracy of the act.

The bill will also streamline and enhance the jury empanelment process under the Federal Court of Australia Act so that a person summoned for jury duty would not be summoned for a particular trial. Instead, they would be summoned to form part of a panel of potential jurors for a three-month period. This will save the court significant time and resources and ultimately lead to the more efficient resolution of disputes.

Other amendments to the Federal Court of Australia Act will ensure fairness in the pre-trial process and will improve the clarity of the act.

The bill will also make minor and technical changes to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act, further supporting amalgamation of four key Commonwealth merits review tribunals. The amendments will ensure all persons who are parties to a review receive notice

CHAMBER
that an application for review has been made. The bill will clarify that the tribunal may make orders that certain information is not to be disclosed to the parties. It will enable the president to authorise any member of the tribunal to exercise existing powers to dismiss applications and ensure that in matters with more than one non-government party, other than the applicant, they may seek to have the application reinstated. The bill will provide flexibility to the tribunal to set out the manner for lodging or giving documents to the tribunal, or to a person, in a regulation, in a practice direction, or both.

Amendments to the Bankruptcy Act will remove unnecessary requirements to notify the Official Receiver of certain decisions and will streamline some application-for-review processes in bankruptcies. The amendments also insert a 60-day time limit for applications to the court to review certain decisions. This will avoid undue delay in challenging such decisions and is consistent with other provisions of the Bankruptcy Act. Additionally, the amendments will clarify how confidentiality requirements in bankruptcies interact with statutory requirements for disclosure. The amendments will also remove a reference to a repealed provision.

The amendments to the International Arbitration Act will simplify provisions governing the enforcement of foreign arbitral awards in Australia and improve compliance with the 1958 New York Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards. It will also apply confidentiality provisions to arbitral proceedings seated in Australia on an opt-out rather than opt-in basis. Finally, the amendments will make minor amendments in the interests of clearer laws.

In conclusion, the intention of this bill is to make minor and technical amendments to a number of acts in order to increase access to justice for all Australians by removing ambiguity in legislation and streamlining legal processes. The bill will increase the currency, clarity and consistency of legislation administered by the Attorney-General's portfolio. Significantly, the amendments contained within the bill will improve the justice system by making it easier for individuals to understand and comply with the law.

Mr DREYFUS (Isaacs—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (12:25): I rise to speak in favour of the Civil Law and Justice (Omnibus Amendments) Bill 2015. This is an omnibus bill containing a large number of largely minor technical changes to a range of Commonwealth acts within the Attorney-General's portfolio. It deals primarily with the federal courts, the newly amalgamated Administrative Appeals Tribunal, bankruptcy and international arbitration legislation.

The measures in this bill are uncontroversial. The bill clarifies provisions which are presently capable of ambiguity. It updates or repeals obsolete provisions in a range of Commonwealth statutes. The bill makes various drafting and stylistic changes, including renumbering of provisions to enhance the readability of the Commonwealth statute book. The bill also makes small changes to the procedures which apply in the rare instances in which criminal proceedings are brought in the Federal Court and to the way in which juries are to be managed by that court. It also makes small tweaks to the procedures which apply in bankruptcies and in international arbitrations. Labor is happy to support this bill, and I commend it to the House.

Ms O'DWYER (Higgins—Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer) (12:27): The purpose of the Civil Law and Justice (Omnibus Amendments) Bill 2015 is to make minor
technical and uncontroversial amendments to civil justice legislation in order to improve its operation and clarity. This bill further supports the amalgamation of four key Commonwealth merits review tribunals by amending the Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act to assist the administration of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. The amendments to the Bankruptcy Act will reduce red tape, streamline certain review applications and clarify confidentiality requirements.

Amendments to the Evidence Act will provide conformity with national uniform legislation. Amendments to the Federal Circuit Court Act will clarify the powers that an authorised arrester may use to execute an arrest warrant. Amendments to the Federal Court Act will streamline the jury empanelment process, enhance the pre-trial process for indictable offences and improve the accuracy of the act.

Amendments to the International Arbitration Act will simplify provisions for enforcement of foreign arbitral awards, improve compliance with the New York Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards and apply confidentiality provisions to arbitral proceedings on an opt-out rather than opt-in basis.

In conclusion, this bill will make minor and technical amendments to improve the efficiency and operation of the civil justice system and provide individuals with greater access to justice.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Ms O’DWYER (Higgins—Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer) (12:28): by leave—I move:
That this bill be now read a third time.
Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Aged Care Amendment (Independent Complaints Arrangements) Bill 2015

Second Reading

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Minister for Social Services) (12:29): I present the explanatory memorandum to this bill and move:
That this bill be now read a second time.
This bill introduces a measure announced in the 2015 budget, which increases the independence of aged-care complaints handling from 1 January 2016.

This is achieved through the transfer of aged-care complaints handling powers, from the Secretary of the Department of Social Services to the Aged Care Commissioner, to be renamed the Aged Care Complaints Commissioner.

In making these changes the government has recognised the recommendations of the 2009 review of the former Aged Care Complaints Investigation Scheme by Associate Professor Merrilyn Walton and the Productivity Commission’s 2011 report Caring for Older Australians.
The commissioner is an independent statutory office holder who currently examines complaints about the decisions and processes of the Aged Care Complaints Scheme and the processes of the Australian Aged Care Quality Agency.

When the commissioner takes responsibility for the complaints arrangements, review of decisions will be integrated within those arrangements. Concerns regarding the processes of the commissioner and the Australian Aged Care Quality Agency can be raised with the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

Existing legislated complaints management functions consistent with the Complaints Principles 2014 will be maintained and will continue to cover Australian government residential and home based aged care.

Aged care regulatory policy, compliance and enforcement will remain the responsibility of the Department of Social Services.

The Australian Aged Care Quality Agency will remain responsible for the accreditation and quality review of aged-care services.

The change will result in a separation of complaints management from the funder and regulator, which reflects best practice in complaints handling.

**Mr NEUMANN (Blair) (12:31):** Labor supports this particular legislation. We want better, fairer, more sustainable and nationally consistent aged care in this country. We want to make sure that aged care is affordable. We want to make sure that people have choice. We want to put consumers in control of their lives with respect to aged care. We want to encourage businesses to invest and to grow. We want diverse, rewarding career options for those people who work in this sector. That is why, when we were in power, we put forward a 10-year strategy known as Living Longer Living Better. We made sure that we had a strategy to roll forward into the future.

I am pleased the current government has, in large part, supported that, but we are concerned as to where the savings will come from in relation to this particular measure that is before the chamber. The bill and the explanatory memorandum talk about $2.8 million of savings over four years. We are assured by the government that the 130 full-time equivalent DSS staff will see no loss of jobs and that there will be no reduction in staffing in that particular area. As the minister said, this comes from a recommendation of Professor Merrilyn Walton in her review into the aged-care sector. She is a professor of medical education at the University of Sydney. As a result of that review, there was a call for a more independent statutory authority. Professor Walton's review found that a separate body from the department that primarily funded and regulated aged care was necessary to remove concerns about the impartiality of decisions in circumstances where aged-care complaints were made to the department secretary.

The situation is that complaints in relation to consumers and providers will not really vary. The government says these are efficiencies. We are concerned about that aspect. It is unclear how appeals and reviews will be undertaken, by whom and to what place. We think it is imperative that there be independence in relation to the commissioner, and we have some concern about the co-location of staff in DSS offices. I note that the transition is due to take place on 1 January next year.
In circumstances where the federal government is both the major funder—providing 76 per cent of residential aged-care costs—and the regulator of aged care, it is important that there be integrity in the system. The Aged Care Complaints Scheme provides some of that protection. We support the legislation, and so do Catholic Health Australia. They note that it has long been recognised that good governance in public administration requires the separation of the regulatory arms of government from policy and funding arms.

There is concern, as I have said. The seniors lobby, the Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association of NSW, queried whether the commissioner would have sufficient staff to handle the 4,000 complaints which are received every year. So we call on the government to make sure there is adequate staffing in the department for the commissioner to do this job.

It is important that the government handles not just the complaints mechanism but also the access to the aged-care system that is so crucial to the integrity of the aged-care system. I note there has been much criticism at the front end of the aged-care sector. In fact, the government has admitted its new online aged-care referral system—myagedcare.gov—has had problems and has been criticised by doctors and aged-care providers. So I call on the government in this speech to look at that aspect of the aged-care sector. The feedback I have received after my speech at the national conference of ACSA in Perth recently and afterwards as I have done roundtables around the country, be it in Brisbane, Bendigo or anywhere, in relation to the aged-care sector shows concern not just about the complaints mechanism but also about access to aged care for those people who, as they get older, need home care, those people who need the Commonwealth Home Support Program provided to them and also those people—and the average age is about 85 years—who need residential aged care.

The government really needs to have a look at that aspect. It is not just about these reforms that are currently before the chamber which are receiving bipartisan support from the opposition; the government needs to have a look at a whole range of areas where it has taken its eyes off the ball. The government has adopted the recommendations here, and we commend the government for that. But I do not think slashing $20 million from innovative care projects, slashing $40 million from Aged Care Workforce Fund, the cuts abandoning the Younger Onset Dementia Key Worker Program from 2016 or discarding the world’s first dementia risk reduction program, Your Brain Matters, is really in the best interests of aged care in this country.

The government are doing a few good things, and we have offered them support in relation to the deregulatory scheme. In fact, we offered them support when they provided some legislation in relation to building certification as part of their red tape repeal day. But our job as the opposition is to hold them to account, and so I do call on the assistant minister to produce the stocktake of government funded dementia programs. They have now got a conversation starter, provided by KPMG.

We still have not seen the stocktake of workforce programs that they need to actually provide the necessary funding for a proper workforce in the sector. We have got about 300,000 people working in the aged-care sector, but in the next five to 10 years we will need about 56,000 more. While the government finally got rid of the workforce supplement in December 2013, there has been no audit or stocktake from the government, which they promised they would provide in February 2014 when the minister announced that he would
undertake that. Further, the ministerial dementia forums, which are supposed to be held annually, have not been held.

This is a government which is doing a good thing with this legislation today, but we are still waiting to hear from a government which really needs to focus more on ageing. We are talking about a portfolio that is responsible for about $15 billion of federal government money—this is taxpayers' money. We want to make sure that the sector has improved wages, good career development and increases in the number of job seekers knocking on aged-care providers' doors to get into the sector, and that has not happened, and we have seen no improvement in the profitability of the sector.

It is important that the government take notice of what the sector is having to say. So while the legislation here deals with the complaints mechanism, they are not actually handling properly the implementation of Labor's Living Longer Living Better reforms, and the My Aged Care website and the hotline are difficult to navigate, complex and very flawed, and I ask the government to address this. In circumstances where we have had a number of aged-care providers at forums I have been at around the country, they have said to me they have got almost no referrals through the My Aged Care website. Indeed, if they had not had people on their waiting lists they would not have had anything happen in the last few months. That is simply not good enough.

The government needs to address those issues and make sure that we have got the necessary aged-care assessments and the home care packages and make sure that the kind of grassroots support which people need is actually delivered. At the moment people are bypassing the sector as best they can. That is the feedback I have been getting. I call on the government to work in close collaboration with the aged-care sector to improve, listen to consumers, listen to providers, resolve these issues and improve the aged-care sector, then we will not be in that position where we have to keep criticising the government and making sure that we do speeches like this in parliament and do press conferences and press releases which criticise the government for taking their eye off the ball in this sector. I commend them for this legislation. We offer our support. But they really need to improve the situation with respect to their provision of aged care in this country.

Mr BALDWIN (Paterson—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment) (12:40): I rise today to speak in favour of the Aged Care Amendment (Independent Complaints Arrangements) Bill 2015. This bill is of particular concern to my electorate of Paterson because Paterson is the electorate that is ranked fourth in Australia with the highest number of residents of more than 70 years of age. My electorate has some 18,642 people over the age of 70, which is around 15.6 per cent of the population of my electorate. I can tell you, Mr Deputy Speaker—and I am sure it is something that you acutely aware of—that the closer we get to 70 the less it actually seems like old age.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Broadbent): Thank you very much!

Mr BALDWIN: The purpose of this bill, however, is to amend the Aged Care Act 1997 to transfer responsibility for aged-care complaints from the secretary of the Department of Social Services to the Aged Care Commissioner. This is intended to occur from 1 January 2016. The bill also amends the act and the Australian Aged Care Quality Agency Act 2013 to change the name of the Aged Care Commissioner to the Aged Care Complaints Commissioner.
When I visit any one of the very many wonderful residential care centres in my electorate, be it Raymond Terrace Gardens, the Bill King Aged Care Facility or Regis The Gardens—both of the latter two are out on the Tomaree Peninsula—or Glaica House in Tuncurry to name but a few, I am always very thankful to see what I see, because these are people's homes. What I see when I visit there are happy residents, and what I see there are very, very dedicated staff—and, of course, that is as it should be. We all want our twilight years to be spent as happily and as comfortably as they can, and we want to live longer in our homes.

I was pleased to be able to welcome the Assistant Minister for Social Services, Senator the Hon. Mitch Fifield to my electorate in February this year. That is when I hosted two aged-care forums to engage with stakeholders who are involved in the aged-care industry. I took Minister Fifield to the Lara Aged Care facility at Dungog to host an event, an aged-care forum, and a second forum was held with aged-care providers and stakeholders in my electorate office at Raymond Terrace.

One of the roles of government is to care for its people. To this end, the government subsidises aged-care services for older people who are no longer able to live independently or in their own homes. The Aged Care Act 1997 provides regulatory funding and a quality framework for services, including residential aged care, home care packages and flexible care programs. In 2013-14 the Australian government spent some $9.8 billion on residential care subsidies and supplements and $1.3 billion on home care packages. In this period, around 232,000 people received permanent residential care, around 48,000 received residential respite care and around 83,000 people received home care packages.

The Paterson electorate was allocated $2.131 million to deliver a recommended 29 new residential aged care places at the Tea Gardens Manor, and 20 home-care places in Forster under the latest federal government's Aged Care Approvals Round, ACAR. This is part of a national package of more than 17,500 new aged-care places that will be delivered, worth an estimated $833 million. In December last year I was pleased to announce that the coalition had made a $2 million injection into my electorate, providing aged care and home care for the elderly.

This is a government that believes older Australians want and, indeed, deserve to have the support and the care needed to live active and healthy lives, and continue to be able to choose the aged care services that they need. The objectives of the act include promoting a high quality of care and accommodation and protecting the health and wellbeing of those people receiving aged care. It is important that our aged-care providers are strenuously regulated but also that they are engaged in dialogue with the government. As our older people are amongst the most vulnerable in our community there needs to be a high standard of accreditation for these aged-care facilities. Relatives and friends of residents of aged-care homes need an avenue to air their grievances. The Australian Aged Care Quality Agency accredits and performs quality reviews of aged-care services while the Department of Social Services is responsible for aged-care regulatory policy compliance enforcement as well as funding. Currently, DSS also operates the Aged Care Complaints Scheme.

We are a government that cares for our ageing population. As we face an ever-ageing population the challenge is upon us to make sure that we have the best possible system in place to care for our elderly with absolute dignity. The late American broadcaster Andy Rooney summed this up when he said:
It’s paradoxical that the idea of living a long life appeals to everyone, but the idea of getting old doesn’t appeal to anyone.

Families need—and indeed, expect—an avenue to air their grievances about aged-care facilities that their loved ones are living in if a regrettable experience occurs. The Aged Care Complaints Scheme responds to complaints about the Australian government's subsidised aged-care services, including residential care, home-care packages, the Commonwealth Home and Community Care Program and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program. The scheme received 3,903 complaints in 2013-14. The majority of these—89 per cent—related to residential aged care. The issues most frequently complained about were health and personal care, consultation and communication, the physical environment and personal and medication management.

If a complainant or a service provider is not satisfied with a decision or process of the scheme they can ask the Aged Care Commissioner to review that decision or process. After a complaint has been examined a commissioner may direct or make recommendations to the scheme or to the AACQA. The commissioner can also examine the processes of the scheme or the AACQA without receiving a complaint. In 2013-14 the commissioner had 10 staff and a budget of $1.4 million, and received 96 complaints. Most complaints—56 per cent—were about scheme decisions, and 41 per cent were about scheme processes. People who have complaints about the commissioner's administrative actions can complain to the Commonwealth Ombudsman. Two such complaints were made in 2013-14.

This bill transfers the complaints powers of the secretary of the DSS to the Aged Care Commissioner. This separation of complaints management from the funder and the regulatory body really does make sense and it is actually best practice. In making these changes the government recognises the recommendations of the 2009 review of the former Aged Care Complaints Investigation Scheme, by Associate Professor Merrilyn Walton, and the Productivity Commission's 2000 report, Caring for older Australians. At the request of the Australian government, in June 2011 the Productivity Commission released a report recommending significant changes to the operation and delivery of aged care in Australia. One recommendation, which was broadly similar to the recommendation in the Walton review, was to establish an independent regulatory agency, including a commissioner for complaints and reviews to handle consumer and aged-care-provider complaints about aged-care services. The government did not adopt this recommendation in its 2012 response to the Productivity Commission report, but this bill now rectifies that situation. I commend this bill to the House.

Ms O'DWYER (Higgins—Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer) (12:50): The Aged Care Amendment (Independent Complaints Arrangements) Bill 2015 introduces a measure announced in the 2015 budget, which increases the independence of aged-care complaints handling from 1 January 2016. This is achieved through the transfer of aged-care complaints-handling powers from the secretary of the Department of Social Services to the Aged Care Commissioner, to be renamed the Aged Care Complaints Commissioner. In making these changes, the government has recognised recommendations of the 2009 review of the former Aged Care Complaints Investigation Scheme, by Associate Professor Merrilyn Walton, and the Productivity Commission's 2000 report, Caring for older Australians.
The commissioner is an independent statutory office holder who currently examines complaints about the decisions and processes of the Aged Care Complaints Scheme and the processes of the Australian Aged Care Quality Agency. When the commissioner takes responsibility for the complaints arrangements, review of decisions will be integrated within those arrangements. Concerns regarding the processes of the commissioner and the Aged Care Quality Agency can be raised with the Commonwealth Ombudsman. Existing legislative complaints management functions consistent with the Complaints Principles 2014 will be maintained and will continue to cover Australian government residential and home based aged care. Aged care regulatory policy, compliance and enforcement will remain the responsibility of the Department of Social Services. The Australian Aged Care Quality Agency will remain responsible for the accreditation and quality review of aged-care services.

The change will result in the separation of complaints management from the funder and regulator, which reflects the best practice in complaints handling. I commend this bill to the House.

Question agreed to.
Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Ms O'DWYER (Higgins—Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer) (12:52): by leave—I move:
That this bill be now read a third time.
Question agreed to.
Bill read a third time.

Social Security Legislation Amendment (Debit Card Trial) Bill 2015

Second Reading

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

Ms MACKLIN (Jagajaga) (12:52): I rise to speak on the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Debit Card Trial) Bill 2015. This bill will amend the social security law to enable a trial phase of new welfare arrangements. This is in response to the 'healthy welfare card' recommendation from Mr Andrew Forrest's review of Indigenous jobs and training.

The intent of the trial is to test whether significantly reducing access to discriminatory cash can reduce the habitual abuse and associated harm from alcohol, gambling and illegal drugs by placing a large proportion of a person's welfare payment into a restricted bank account.

The bill will also enable a community body to be involved in determining welfare arrangements within a trial location. The bill enables the trial to be conducted in up to three locations, for up to 10,000 people. The locations for the trial are to be selected on the basis of high levels of welfare dependence and where gambling, alcohol and/or drug abuse are causing unacceptable levels of harm within the community. Within the trial locations 80 per cent of payments received by people on a working-age welfare payment will be placed in a restricted bank account. The remaining 20 per cent of payments will be available for use at the person's discretion. A trial participant will not be able to use the debit card linked to the restricted account to access cash or purchase gambling products and services, alcohol or illegal drugs.
Trial participants will include people in receipt of Newstart allowance, parenting payment, disability support pension and carer payment. The new debit card arrangements are very different from income management. Unlike income management, participants on the new debit card will not receive assistance from Centrelink workers to assist in budgeting or to ensure that income support payments are directed at life's essentials, such as rent, food and clothing.

The new debit card will only ensure that the majority of income support payments cannot be spent on alcohol and gambling products. As such, this card should not be seen as a panacea for all the problems in these communities. It must come accompanied by appropriated wrap-around support services if it is to be successful in tackling complex, multidimensional and intergenerational social problems. I will return to these issues in a moment.

But before I do I want to make it very clear that Labor does support the quarantining of income support payments to ensure that money is spent in the best interests of children and families, and the most vulnerable people in the community. It means that more money will go to providing food, clothes, rent and that less money will go to alcohol and gambling. Labor also believes that quarantining of income support payments can be a useful tool to help stabilise people's circumstances and ease immediate financial stress.

In government Labor did make a number of reforms to income management to ensure it was more targeted and to bring its benefits to more vulnerable people across Australia. In 2008, in Perth and in the east and west Kimberley, Labor trialled child protection income management, making income management available to child protection workers, to help assist families at risk of child abuse and neglect. In 2010, following widespread consultation, the Labor government introduced a new, non-discriminatory model of income management in the Northern Territory. In 2012 Labor introduced income management in five disadvantaged locations across Australia as part of its Building Australia's Future Workforce reforms: Playford, in South Australia; Greater Shepparton in Victoria; Bankstown in New South Wales; and Rockhampton and Logan in Queensland.

Following calls for income management and, after consultation with families, the Labor government agreed to implement income management in the APY Lands in South Australia, to help families on the lands ensure that less money was spent on alcohol and gambling and that more money was available for food, clothing and other life essentials.

In 2013 Labor introduced income management in the Laverton and NPY Lands in Western Australia. Labor also worked closely with the Northern Territory government to provide income management to help deal with people who came before the Northern Territory Alcohol Mandatory Treatment Tribunal, making less money available to spend on alcohol. And now, right across Australia, it is possible for child protection workers to use income management as a tool to support families where their children are at risk of neglect.

Labor does believe that income management can be effective but should be targeted at those who will benefit. We do not believe that everyone on income support should be subject to or would benefit from income quarantining. We do note that the majority of people in receipt of income support payments can manage their money carefully and do not spend it excessively on alcohol or gambling. They use it, like all Australians, to help them live a decent life and provide a decent life for their children.
We work very hard in the Northern Territory to take income management from a blanket discriminatory program, put in place by the Howard government, to a tailored program applying it to at-risk and vulnerable income-support recipients. We want to support people with a high risk of social isolation, poor money management skills and those likely to participate in risky behaviours.

Labor continue to believe that income quarantining should be targeted towards vulnerable people.

However, we will also support community driven initiatives to tackle local issues and deliver long-term positive change—because we do understand just how serious alcohol abuse can be, and is, in some locations across our country. We know that tackling alcohol and drug abuse is critical to building safer, stronger communities. We have a proud history of supporting those communities to develop and drive their own solutions to community specific problems.

In government, Labor created the Breaking the Cycle initiative aimed at assisting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to work with government and non-government organisations to develop and implement alcohol and other drug management plans. Through community led solutions, the Breaking the Cycle initiative helped address the harm caused by substance abuse. Over $20 million was provided to work with the communities of Bourke and Brewarrina in the Murdi Paaki region, Condobolin in New South Wales, Doomadgee and Mornington Island in Queensland, Ceduna and surrounds in South Australia, and Laverton and the surrounding Goldfields region in Western Australia.

Funding was provided to support prevention activities in health education for young people, linking these people with support services; to provide assistance to pregnant women and new mothers; and to work with local businesses about alcohol supply issues. We worked with local service providers to improve the delivery of support services such as education and skills training, prevention programs, referral services and harm minimisation measures. We also supported the Cape York Welfare Reform trials in Far North Queensland, increasing funding for a program aimed at rebuilding social norms in Cape York communities by linking the receipt of welfare payments to the fulfilment of socially responsible behaviours and providing a range of support services. In 29 remote locations across Australia, Labor worked in partnership with communities and state governments to deliver a place based approach to service design and delivery as part of our remote service delivery national partnership agreement. This included harm prevention strategies to tackle community alcohol and gambling abuse.

Labor also provided unprecedented funding to the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory package, which included support for early education, parenting and community safety programs. Stronger Futures also facilitated the development of local alcohol management plans—comprehensive road maps to help communities tackle alcohol abuse and the problems it causes. These were community driven solutions to the issues of alcohol and drug abuse. They were examples of governments getting behind local communities to help them tackle the issues that matter to them in a way that was tailored to those individual communities. We did this because we believe that communities are in the best position to determine local solutions to bring about real and lasting change. We remain committed to working alongside individuals, groups and communities to make sure that they have the skills
and supports to bring about positive local change. Consistent with Labor's history, we will take this approach to the proposed debit card trials.

I do know how alcohol abuse is wreaking harm on the community of Ceduna. Labor acknowledges the memorandum of understanding with the Australian government to trial the debit card arrangements that was signed by representatives of the Ceduna community and the surrounding communities. This MOU is a clear sign that community leaders in Ceduna and surrounds want and need to do more to tackle the harmful effects of alcohol abuse. I have spoken recently with signatories to the MOU and they told me very clearly that it is 'destroying their community'. They understand and have made it very plain to me that something more needs to be done.

Labor have of course supported Ceduna—it was one of the Breaking the Cycle communities—in its efforts to curb alcohol abuse and we provided additional supports and services. We committed significant funding to support Ceduna's alcohol management planning and community driven efforts. This included funding to refurbish and increase the capacity of local sobering-up centres; to employ additional youth workers in a bid to divert them from drugs and alcohol; to local Aboriginal community corporations for their healthy living hubs; for the employment of community engagement officers; for service coordination; to improve night patrols, especially for rough sleepers; and for local community awareness and education. We also introduced voluntary and targeted income management following extensive consultation in those communities. So we did a lot to help the community of Ceduna and the surrounding Aboriginal communities.

Despite these efforts, we know—and the community leaders have made it very clear to me—that alcohol abuse is continuing to devastate the lives of too many people and their families. I know the community is desperate. We cannot now turn our back on what they are telling us. We cannot tell them that they are on their own. Rather, all of us need to listen to their calls for help and do what we can to support them, to make sure that the change they so desperately need and want is delivered.

Addressing alcohol abuse and community dysfunction in places like Ceduna does require a comprehensive approach to reducing harm, to dealing with the supply of alcohol and drugs, and to working with the community to find local solutions. That is why Labor's efforts so far have been all about supporting communities to tackle alcohol abuse and about making sure we have a comprehensive range of responses and support services. We also know how very vulnerable people and families need much more assistance than the quarantining of income support payments.

It is why, in the past, we have provided financial-literacy support to people on income management. It is why we have strengthened the relationship between money-management services and Centrelink; to make sure that people receive help to build their financial literacy, including budgeting, banking, savings and an awareness of the risks of payday loans. It is why we provided additional family-support services in regions where income management applied and in other disadvantaged locations. We made sure that people on income management met regularly with Centrelink social workers to help them budget, to make sure that their priority needs were met and to address other issues in their lives impacting on their wellbeing. I am very strongly of the view that these services must form part of a comprehensive package to
support individuals and the communities where the debit card is being introduced. New income-quarantining arrangements will not achieve change on their own.

Labor is firm in its commitment to help communities tackle alcohol and drug abuse and the harm it causes. We are unwavering in our commitment to protect and provide for children and for vulnerable people, and our commitment continues today. Of course, in principle we will not oppose this trial where there is very clear community support. However, Labor is concerned that the proposed trial is still lacking in details and requires further work to be done. Today we cannot see from this legislation exactly how it is going to operate in practice. We cannot see exactly what additional supports and services will be provided to truly address the problems of alcohol and drug abuse. Labor pushed for a Senate inquiry into the bill so the people who will be effected would have an opportunity to have a proper say and to understand, fully, how the trial will operate.

We are still concerned that representatives from the Department of Social Services have been, so far, unable to provide the detail needed to understand what the trial will look like in practice. The parliamentary secretary has not been able to provide any further clarity about the details of who will actually provide the card and where participants will get assistance—these matters are still unknown. The possible operation of a community panel in determining the amount of quarantined payments for certain participants is not settled. There is no commitment to the necessary additional support services. There has been no mention of increased rehabilitation services, no mention of financial-literacy support services, no mention of support for young people, no formal agreement with the state government on their involvement and no details on a robust evaluation that will help affected communities, participants, service providers and governments determine the trial’s effectiveness and what the future steps should be. I do know that communities want this too.

I have heard, very clearly from people in Ceduna, that strong action is needed and that part of this action must include additional supports, not just a debit card. We will stand with the people of Ceduna and the surrounding communities, and stand with those other parts of Australia who are talking to the government about a possible trial of a new debit card. We will stand with those communities to make sure that they get the supports they need and to make sure that the government delivers in a comprehensive way.

Labor will not oppose this bill in the House. This is to make sure that negotiation with communities can continue and to allow for the details of the operation of the new card to be determined. However, before Labor supports the bill in the Senate, we expect the government to make clear the package of supports that will accompany the introduction of the card. Labor expects to see a comprehensive and funded package, tailored to local circumstances, for each location that is participating in the trial. We expect to see the detail on how the trial will operate, in practice, including how local communities may be involved, and we expect to see a commitment to a proper evaluation. Labor expects this information to be made public so that participating communities have the information and financial commitment to these services that they need. Labor will always work with communities to support those locally driven initiatives to tackle alcohol and drug abuse and work with those communities to make sure the government is held accountable.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Broadbent): I call the honourable member for Boothby, noting that he has announced his retirement and I wish him all the very best.
Dr SOUTHCOTT (Boothby) (13:12): Thank you.

Ms Macklin: If I could just add my best wishes to those of the Deputy Speaker; thank you.

Dr SOUTHCOTT: Thank you, member for Jagajaga, that is very kind. I would like to speak on the debit card. This is an exciting trial, which looks at a different way of managing alcohol, drug and gambling problems. I want to recognise the very significant contribution to the development of this trial by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, the member for Aston, who has been working on this relentlessly and has worked very hard with the communities. The proposal in the legislation is to allow up to three trial sites. It is looking at a cashless debit card for Centrelink recipients in communities where there is significant alcohol, drug and/or gambling problems. The government is planning to introduce this card trial for up to three discrete communities.

One of my roles is to chair the government members’ Indigenous affairs committee, and the member for Aston has been very diligent in keeping us up to date on his consultations with those communities.

The trial locations will be chosen on the basis of high welfare dependence and high social harm indicators and also an openness from community leaders to participating in the trial. It needs local support. Ceduna in South Australia has been selected as the first community, and there is strong support locally for the trial. The government is also in advanced discussions with the East Kimberley region in Western Australia for the trial, and there is capacity in the legislation for a third site as well. The trial will operate for 12 months and will be assessed to see if it works before any further decisions are made.

The cashless debit card is not income management. Participants in the trial can use the card anywhere to purchase anything except alcohol and gambling products, and they will not be able to withdraw cash with the card. The card will look and feel like a mainstream debit card product and will be connected to the Visa, MasterCard or EFTPOS platform. Participants in the trial will receive a cashless debit card for the cashless aspect of their welfare, and their existing bank account and card will be used for the cash component of their welfare. In working with the government, community leaders have nominated 80 per cent as a sensible cashless figure. This figure has support in Ceduna, and leaders in the East Kimberley agree it is a sensible figure. The remaining 20 per cent—cash—will be placed into a recipient’s bank account. The card would work at every store except those store categories which have been switched off. These would be liquor stores and gambling outlets. In a small number of mixed stores there would be a compliance element. Further, because cash will not be available from the card, illicit substances will not be able to be purchased.

As I said, this is a trial. There is a lot of activity going on now in the area of social services looking at increased participation and reforming welfare, and this is an important part of it as well. The objective of the trial is to reduce the social harm, particularly violence against women and child neglect, caused by welfare fuelled alcohol and drug abuse. When the trial is complete, there will be an independent evaluation. Community leaders in Ceduna have signed a memorandum of understanding with the Australian government agreeing to be the first trial site. The government has been working closely with local Ceduna leaders over the last few months, listening to their concerns and jointly designing and agreeing on a trial. As I said earlier, the government is in advanced discussions with the East Kimberley community as to it
being a potential trial site and is consulting with the broader community before a decision to proceed is made.

Just looking at Ceduna, it has a population of about 4,500 and is located 800 kilometres west of Adelaide. There is very strong support in the community of Ceduna for this trial. Alcohol related harm in this community is very significant. In one year, presentations to the hospital emergency department due to alcohol or drug use exceeded 500—more than one per day. The Ceduna sobering-up facility had 4,666 admissions in 2013-14, and hospitalisations in the region due to assault are 68 times the national average. The Ceduna community heads leadership group, who led consultations in the community and worked with the government, said this of the trial:

We want to build a future for our younger generation to aspire to and believe we cannot do this if our families are caught up in the destructive cycle of alcohol or drugs that destroys our culture, our lands and our communities.

At the heart of this reform is a change that is being shaped specifically to meet our local needs. It has been a true collaboration to ensure that we can give our mob and our Communities every chance to create real and genuine change in their lives.

We have grasped this initiative; we have helped shape this initiative; and we are confident that this initiative is for the betterment of all people within our region.

In the East Kimberley there have been advanced discussions. As recently as July, leaders in the East Kimberley region wrote to the government saying this:

We acknowledge that agreeing to the East Kimberley being a trial site for the restricted debit card may seem to some a rather drastic step. However, it is our view that continuing to deliver the same programs we have delivered for the past forty years will do nothing for our people and, besides wasting more time and money, will condemn our children and future generations to a life of poverty and despair. As leaders in the East Kimberley, we cannot accept this.

In the East Kimberley region, similar to Ceduna, hospitalisations due to assault are 68 times the national average. It is encouraging that the opposition appear to be giving some support for this trial. Hopefully the trial will help inform a new way of delivering welfare without seeing so many problems with alcohol, drugs and gambling. As I said earlier, the member for Aston has been amazing in his work on the debit card. I look forward to seeing the results of the trial.

Mr NEUMANN (Blair) (13:20): I rise to speak in relation to the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Debit Card Trial) Bill 2015. We recognise that alcohol abuse is a significant problem in many Australian communities, including some Indigenous communities. We have seen the harm that this abuse inflicts on those communities, particularly on the most vulnerable—women and children. The problems are complex and the solutions are not simple. If they were, we would have resolved them by now.

Breaking the cycle of alcohol abuse in any community, Indigenous or non-Indigenous, requires a range of targeted responses and support. Additional support services are always needed and, crucially, these responses and support services have to be implemented in close consultation with local communities. One size does not fit all. Communities must be listened to and their concerns must be heard. One of the responses that we undertook when we were in government was on income management.
The bill before the chamber is the government's response to the recommendations of the Forrest review for a healthy welfare card. When Mr Forrest published his report he suggested placing 2.4 million Australians on an income management card without any trigger point. In response, I said in numerous interviews that there was some quiet dignity in someone having some cash to take their family out for a meal, to pay for school excursions or to buy Christmas and birthday presents. None of this was contemplated in that review.

The government have extended what they call a trial of 'cashless welfare arrangements' to up to 10,000 people in three locations, instead of to 2.4 million Australians. The government said the locations would be selected 'on the basis of high levels of welfare dependence and where gambling, alcohol and/or drug abuse are causing unacceptable levels of harm within the community', and where there is a level of community support.

The government has recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ceduna community. That was done on 4 August this year. I note from my observation of the memorandum that has been signed that it has the support of the local council, the Ceduna Aboriginal Corporation, the Ceduna Aboriginal health service, other traditional elders in the area and traditional owners in the area as well. From my visit to Ceduna, which took place on 5 May this year, and from follow-up conversations I have had by telephone with people I have met in the Ceduna community, I—along with the shadow minister, the member for Jagajaga—have come to the conclusion that the Ceduna community and others are in support of this change, or this reform, as the Abbott government proposes.

It is proposed to commence a trial of these cashless welfare arrangements next year as provided in this legislation. What it proposes is that people who will participate in this trial are those living in, for example, the Ceduna area who receive payments from Centrelink like Newstart, the disability support pension, parenting payments or carers payments. Those people in aged care can take part voluntarily if they wish. The trial will not change the amount of money a person receives from Centrelink; it will only change the way in which that person can spend it. Eighty per cent of fortnightly payments will be paid onto the card; 20 per cent will be paid into a person's regular bank account. I have no doubt from my investigations that in the local Ceduna community there is support because of the terrible scourge of alcoholism and the problems that gambling and drug abuse are also causing in that local community.

The trial is due to start in 2016, but it is actually a lot longer than 12 months, as the government's propaganda points out. I think it is due to expire in about July 2018, so it is a lot longer than the one year that was proposed. But it is going to cover not just Ceduna but the Yalata and Oak Valley communities and those communities in and around the Ceduna area.

Participants will receive this so-called cashless debit card, and it will be delivered by an organisation that provides, we think, the current income management BasicsCard. The debit card can be used to purchase household necessities but not gambling or alcohol products. The government has said that the goal of the trial is to ensure that the card works seamlessly at existing retailers in much the same way as any other bank card, the only difference being that, as I said before, the customer is prevented from purchasing alcohol or gambling products. One of the things that are absolutely critical in this process is that under the trial a community panel will be established to work with participants who request that less of their payments be quarantined.
We on this side would be happier if there were a trigger mechanism for people to get onto this card rather than it covering absolutely everyone. We relied on a range of triggers to identify income management participants, and we did not take a blanket approach when we were in government. We relied on information from child protection authorities. We considered young people at risk or the length of time that a person had been unemployed. We permitted people who met certain criteria to apply to Centrelink for an exemption. None of this seems to have been contemplated by the government, and none of this seems to have been provided for in the legislation, which I have read. The debit card trial contemplates no such triggers or exemptions. Every person on working-age payments living in the trial location will receive a debit card for the length of the trial. That is what causes us some concern in relation to it.

It is different from income management, as I have said. This debit card will quarantine 80 per cent of the working-age payments and includes no requirement for the funds to be directed to life essentials, which is what income management does provide. So that money can be dealt with in any way, shape or form but not for gambling and not for alcohol. Income management participants are prevented from spending quarantined funds on alcohol, gambling, tobacco or pornographic products, as I say, whereas this debit card trial restricts the spending only on alcohol and gambling products. In this way it is different. As I say, we targeted income management to vulnerable people identified by particular triggers, and that is why we were so concerned about this particular aspect of what the government is doing.

We need additional supports in this area. We recognise that the government has identified that there are real problems in the area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. That is why the government requested the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs to undertake an inquiry, which the Indigenous affairs committee reported on. It handed down that report in June 2015. The report is titled Alcohol, hurting people and harming communities. It is a bipartisan report. The committee was chaired by the member for Murray, and the deputy chair was the member for Lingiari. It dealt with the changes and the challenges that Indigenous communities around the country were facing. We travelled widely and, hopefully, wisely around the country as we talked to Indigenous communities from Groote Eylandt to Coober Pedy to Ceduna and elsewhere, including taking evidence in capital cities—because, of course, many Indigenous people live in the urban areas as well. It is a challenge not just for remote and regional communities but also for urban areas. The government requested that we do this. We handed down a bipartisan report, and I commend it to those people who might be listening to this speech. Those recommendations, I think, form the basis of a very good response to the challenges that Indigenous communities face with respect to alcohol, poverty, drug abuse and the like.

The concerns we have about the 'healthy welfare' card, or the debit card, as it is called, are that there does not seem to have been any additional support provided by the Abbott government—now the Turnbull government, as they might like to be called—to these local communities. I know the South Australian government, for Ceduna, and the Western Australian government, for the East Kimberley, are calling for that kind of support. We call on the government to provide that support, because it is necessary. We are going to need financial literacy support, wraparound support and counselling. If people are going to come off alcohol—
The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order No. 43. The debate may be resumed at a later hour at which time the member will have leave to continue his remarks.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Liberal Party Leadership

Mr ZAPPIA (Makin) (13:30): Yesterday, Liberal MPs dumped Prime Minister Tony Abbott in a desperate bid to save their own jobs. In doing so, what they made clear to Australians is that the only jobs they are prepared to stand up for are their own, with no-one putting self-interest first more than the member for Wentworth, Malcolm Turnbull, has. Where was Malcolm Turnbull, as a senior cabinet minister, when Australia's auto industry was being abandoned by his coalition government and up to 200,000 jobs were being put at risk? Where was Malcolm Turnbull when naval contracts were being awarded overseas and Australia naval shipbuilders across Australia were retrenching hundreds of workers? Where was Malcolm Turnbull when the $50 billion submarine replacement contract was being discussed and turned into a debacle that has left ASC workers in Adelaide in limbo—with no certainty about where, when and by whom the subs will be built? Where was Malcolm Turnbull when Australia's manufacturing sector was being destroyed by his coalition government? And where was Malcolm Turnbull when Australians were being hit with family payment cuts, with health and education cuts, and with pension income cuts?

He was nowhere to be seen or heard. He was happy to see the cuts because it served his self-interest. It was only when the coalition vote in Victoria and South Australia had collapsed that Mr Turnbull emerged—and then only because he saw the opportunity to secure his own ambitions. Australia does not need a Prime Minister who puts his own ambitions first but a Prime Minister who puts the Australian people first and the national interest ahead of his own.

Skyrail Rainforest Cableway

Mr ENTSCH (Leichhardt) (13:31): Tourism is one of the backbones of Australia's economy and there are a handful of experiences which should be on everybody's bucket list: the Sydney Harbour Bridge, Ayers Rock, the Great Barrier Reef and the Cairns Skyrail Rainforest Cableway. Skyrail is truly an iconic cable car experience that transports passengers on a 7.5-kilometre journey that starts from the bottom of the Cairns Range but then flies above the rainforest canopy to the village of Kuranda. On 31 August, Skyrail celebrated its 20th anniversary. Over the last two decades, it has hosted more than 11 million visitors—that is equivalent to half the population of Australia. Her Royal Highness Queen Elizabeth II rode on it, as did the Olympic torch and the Melbourne Cup.

The highest credit goes to George Chapman AO, his wife Margo, their daughters Karen and Helen, their son Dr Ken Chapman and his wife Karen—the family who developed this tourism attraction into the world-class business it is today. Under their leadership, Skyrail has consistently punched above its weight and received awards at local, national and international level. Most recently, it won the 2014 Tropical North Queensland Tourism Award for Ecotourism. The Skyrail team is an undisputed success story for Cairns and the wider Far North Queensland region. I wish them many more successes in the years to come.
Liberal Party Leadership

Mr MITCHELL (McEwen—Second Deputy Speaker) (13:33): We have seen Malcolm Turnbull and Julie Bishop conspire to assassinate a Prime Minister purely to serve their own egos and ambitions. This is a deeply divided, dysfunctional government that is completely and utterly consumed by itself. Mr Turnbull said:

It is absolutely vital to win the respect of the public and indeed of the media itself, to stand your ground, stand up for what you believe in and not be bullied into an echo chamber.

Let me remind the House that he voted against same-sex marriage. He voted against tobacco plain packaging. He voted against the carbon price. He voted against increasing the scrutiny of asylum seeker management. He voted against implementation of refugee protection. He voted strongly against the protection of Australia's fresh water. He voted strongly against increasing marine conservation. He also voted strongly against restricting foreign ownership, strongly against increasing investment in renewable energy, and against increasing Aboriginal land rights. He also voted strongly against increasing funding for university education. He voted strongly against keeping the indexation of pensioner support payments in line with CPI. He has voted strongly against increasing the availability of welfare payments, but he voted strongly for increasing and removing the debt limit, for unconventional gas mining—CSG—and for decreasing ABC and SBS funding. Australians know that, even if you have changed the jockey, you still have the same anti-jobs horse that Malcolm Turnbull now leads.

Far North Coast Rugby Union

Mr HOGAN (Page) (13:34): Saturday was the Grand Final for the Far North Coast Rugby Union. The game was played at Crozier Field, Lismore, and went down to the wire. Wollongbar-Alstonville took on Byron Bay in a hard-fought match. When the final whistle blew, the Wollongbar-Alstonville Pioneers had defeated Byron Bay by 40 points to 36. It was the first time in the Pioneers' history that they have won consecutive premiership. To top it off, this season they were undefeated—the first time this has been achieved in the competition.

The team that won the premiership consisted of Matthew Wright; Bill Johnston; Joel Crowther; Matt Scott; Steve Mason; Lloyd Morgan; Vaughan Sandal—who is still a school student at St Johns College, Woodlawn—Jerry Faifaise; Justyn Keir; Ben Damen, the captain; Vinnie Leatigaga; Nat Regueira; Jack Downie; James Vidler; Sam Kerry; Nick Jones; Gavin Short; Tim Ellis; Josh Herne; Rhys McNaughton; Jason Higgins; Reece Brown; and Jarrod Wyllie. They are coached by John Jenkins and the team manager is Dave Hoskins.

The point-scorers were Ben Damon and Vinnie with two tries each, with one try each to Lloyd Morgan and Joel Crowther and Sam Kerry kicking five conversions. Once again, congratulations to Wollongbar-Alstonville for an outstanding year.

Liberal Party Leadership

Ms RYAN (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (13:35): Last week in question time, finding themselves with a product they could not sell, the government renamed it and tried again. The result was hilarity and disbelief. How gullible do they think we and the public are? Now they have done it again! They are rehashing an old style guide. 'Try this version,' they say: less lycra, more leather; fewer slogans and more tortured metaphors from the member for Wentworth. But the product has not changed. The priorities
have not changed. I know the questions the locals in my community are asking. Do they still believe Labor and the public's rejection of the cruel budget measures is 'unprincipled', as the member for Warringah said less than an hour ago? Do they still believe in $100,000 degrees? Do they still believe people should pay more to go to the doctor? Do they still think a sleek ad campaign will fix the problems we face with ice? Do they still think that their budgets have fixed the economy? Do they still think casual workers do not deserve penalty rates? The answers are yes, yes, yes, yes, yes and yes. This is not a new government. They just turned the lazy susan in the Vietnamese restaurant around. The spring roll tastes the same.

Taree Motorcycle Club

Dr GILLESPIE (Lyne) (13:37): I would like to bring to the attention of the House a visit I made to the Taree Motorcycle Club at Old Bar on 29 August for the Australian dirt bike championships, which were enjoyed by 4,000 to 5,000 people from the region, interstate and internationally. The Taree Motorcycle Club was the recipient of a $70,000 Commonwealth government grant, which it used to upgrade the toilet facilities and the point-scoring board in its newly renovated grandstand. During my visit I was given a great tour of the facility by none other than Troy Bayliss, the international motorbike champion. He is a local and has been involved in the club for many years. Craig Nelson, the president, showed me the good value for money they achieved with their grant.

The races were incredibly exciting. I was disappointed to hear that Troy Bayliss in the finals on the following day had quite a bad crash. He is recovering back at home on the Gold Coast. All of the people in the electorate really value this club. It has been there since 1961 when it moved from the old airport nearby. They had the first Australian dirt bike championships there in 1966. They also have the Troy Bayliss Classic, which brings similar numbers to the area over the Christmas-New Year period. They have a twilight race as well.

Indi Electorate: Environment

Ms McGOWAN (Indi) (13:39): My electorate of Indi has a number of vibrant Landcare groups. Today I would like to acknowledge two recent winners of the Victorian Landcare awards. The Rural City of Wangaratta was the winner of the Victorian Partnerships with Landcare Award. An example of the partnership is the Wangaratta Urban Landcare Group's bush regenerator, Adele Ritchie, working alongside the volunteer members in restoring habitats and bushland areas right along the Ovens River and creek frontages in the city. Another example of a partnership is Kaluna Park, supported also by the Wangaratta Urban Landcare Group. It is a 29-hectare reserve. It has been restored to natural bush parkland right in the heart of the Wangaratta city.

All 12 of the Landcare groups within the Rural City of Wangaratta are absolutely delighted with their award. I particularly would like to acknowledge council staff person Bronwyn Chapman, Manager of Environment and Community Safety. Today I would also like to acknowledge in the House Lyn Coulston OAM, Chair of the North East CMA, from Shelley. Lyn was awarded the inaugural Joan Kirner award for Landcare. Lyn, this is well and truly deserved. I am so proud of you. It is so well named. We know all the volunteer work you do and continue to do for the environment of Indi. Thank you very much. It is wonderful to have all the CMAs in parliament today.
Australia-Korea Politics and Business Forum

Mr LAUNDY (Reid) (13:40): Last Friday I was honoured to join so many friends at the Australia-Korea Politics and Business Forum in my electorate. The inaugural forum last year was a huge success and I am delighted to say that this year's event was even more successful. The Australia-Korea Politics and Business Forum has undertaken important work in the past 12 months in promoting the bilateral relationship between Australia and Korea on both economic and cultural levels. Building from signing the Australia-Korea Free Trade Agreement in February 2014, the forum, under the outstanding leadership of Chairman Councillor Sang Ok, has continued to work towards achieving its goals in creating a better understanding between our two nations, creating opportunities for business success whilst also supporting the advancement of human rights and regional peace.

It was fantastic to see so many representatives of the Australia-Korea community at this year's forum. I was told by them on the night that they had a fantastic day working on people-to-people relationships that will increase and foster bilateral trade through which both countries will prosper today and in the future. I would like to thank Councillor Sang Ok and all of his team for once again helping to build on the already strong relationship between Australia and Korea.

Workplace Relations: Penalty Rates

Ms CHESTERS (Bendigo) (13:41): What does this new Prime Minister think about penalty rates? On 11 March on the ABC Mr Turnbull said:

You see businesses, particularly hospitality businesses, like cafes, restaurants and so forth, closed on weekends when they should be doing brisk business because penalty rates are so high the owners cannot make ends meet.

Now that is just nuts. I will tell you what is nuts. The fact that this Prime Minister does not understand that cutting penalty rates cuts people's take-home pay, meaning that these low-paid workers will not be able to pay for their kid's basketball and will not be able to pay their rent. What this new Prime Minister does not understand is that by cutting penalty rates you hurt some of the lowest paid workers in our regional communities. What this Prime Minister also does not understand is the division he is creating in these workplaces.

Just last Friday in Gosford a small business owner said that she thinks this debate is just nuts. For her paying penalty rates on a Sunday is less than two per cent of her turnover. She is quite happy to pay penalty rates because it means she gets good quality staff who are committed to working for her business on Sunday. This government and this new Prime Minister are just nuts, and the Australian people know it and will say so soon.

Moore, Ms Lauren

Mrs McNAMARA (Dobell) (13:43): I rise to share with the House the achievements of Lauren Moore. Lauren has been a junior netball player in the Wyong District Netball Association for many years, having played for the Bateau Bay Dolphins since she was five years old. From the age of 11 Lauren was selected to play representative netball for the Wyong District Netball Association. At 13 she captained Wyong at the state championship titles. Lauren was also selected to participate in the Central Coast Academy of Sport netball squad. Utilising the outstanding pathways provided by the academy, Lauren gained selection last year in the under-17s New South Wales team.
Lauren's other achievements include selection in the under-17s Australian squad and obtaining a netball scholarship with the New South Wales Institute of Sport. Lauren has continued to hold her position in these teams for the previous two years. Success has continued for Lauren, as this year she was selected as a replacement player for the New South Wales Swifts and more recently Lauren was offered a contract to be part of the 12-member team for the Swifts in the 2016 ANZ Netball Championships.

Lauren has achieved outstanding results in pursuing her dreams. To achieve such high aspirations at a young age is a credit to her determination and ability. We are all very proud of Lauren and wish her every success for many years to come. We hope one day we will see her playing for the Australian Diamonds. Congratulations to Lauren and all the outstanding young sportspeople in the electorate of Dobell.

Liberal Party Leadership

Mr WATTS (Gellibrand) (13:44): Yesterday Australians witnessed the triumph of ego and ambition over long-held personal principle and political values. In 2009, the member for Wentworth indicated, 'I will not lead a party that is not as committed to effective action on climate change as I am.' In that same year, in a scathing description of the Liberal Party's climate change policies, he stated:

The whole argument for an emissions trading scheme as opposed to cutting emissions via a carbon tax or simply by regulation is that it is cheaper ... Now politics is about conviction and a commitment to carry out those convictions ... there is a major issue of integrity at stake here and Liberals should reflect very deeply on it ... Many Liberals are rightly dismayed that on this vital issue of climate change we are not simply without a policy, without any prospect of having a credible policy but we are now without integrity. We have given our opponents the irrefutable, undeniable evidence that we cannot be trusted.

Yet last night all of this was thrown overboard in the name of ego and ambition. Last night the new Prime Minister came into this building and said that he stands for freedom but not for the pursuit of an Australian republic. He says that he stands for the individual, but not if you are a gay Australian wanting to get married. He says that he stands for the market, but not if you are responding to climate change.

The public face of the Turnbull-Abbott-Turnbull Liberal Party may have changed, but the reality is that the extreme and out-of-touch party behind it remains. The only way to change this government is to change it at the next election.

Human Rights: Azerbaijan

Mr ALEXANDER (Bennelong) (13:46): As chair of the House Standing Committee on Economics, I met with the chair of the Azerbaijan-Australia interparliamentary group, Mr Fatiyev, and his delegation yesterday to discuss our trade relationship and the potential for strengthening economic ties. I made clear my concerns that any growth in our relationship should be based on a commitment by Azerbaijan to improve their respect for human rights and political freedoms. Last month the Azeri government handed down lengthy prison sentences to outspoken human rights activists Leyla and Arif Yunus in a prosecution described by Human Rights Watch as 'a despicable political show trial'. Last week the European Parliament passed a resolution to apply targeted sanctions and visa bans against Azeri officials and called on the government to release political prisoners.
I also raised my strong concerns about Azerbaijan's actions in the ongoing dispute with Armenia, in Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan has invested over $1 billion in armoured vehicles and artillery in the past few years, making a mockery of any supposed desire for peace in the region. As we commemorate the centenary of the commencement of the Armenian genocide, it is essential for us as community leaders to call out persecution and to stress to trading partners like Azerbaijan the importance of protecting human rights and political freedoms for all.

**Liberal Party Leadership**

**Mr STEPHEN JONES** (Throsby) (13:47): The great tragedy in Australian politics is not what went on in the government party room last night but the fact that we have more people looking for work in Australia today than at any time in the last 20 years—over 800,000 of them, 10,000 in my own electorate. You would think with statistics like that there would be more people on that side of the House worried about the people who are looking for jobs. These people are just worried about their own jobs, but that is the tragic truth about what is going on.

It takes a lot more than to stand around today and chant about the importance of unity to focus on the needs of Australia, because we know that there are 44 members on that side of the House who did not vote for their new Prime Minister. We also know that not one member of the National Party voted for the new Prime Minister, so it is going to take a lot more than chanting 'unity' to create unity. The fact is this: we have the same horse but a new jockey, and this flashy new jockey has no plan to deal with unemployment. He still backs the GP tax and the attacks on Medicare and the attacks on our public hospitals. He still backs the $100,000 university degrees. I ask you to think about all of the things that you think you like about Malcolm Turnbull, the new Prime Minister of Australia, and I will tell you this: he has let you down on every single one of then.

**Corangamite Electorate: Netball**

**Ms HENDERSON** (Corangamite) (13:49): I rise to congratulate the South Colac netball club for its A grade premiership win at the weekend, the first one ever in A grade. After the game I launched a petition urging the Victorian Labor government to contribute funding to the $3.4 million redevelopment of the Colac Central Reserve. I am incredibly proud that our government is delivering $2.5 million to this vital project. With Colac Otway Shire contributing $150,000 and the local clubs $100,000, there is a funding shortfall of $650,000. In contrast to the state Liberals, it is incredibly disappointing that Labor's Corangamite candidate failed to show any interest in this project by committing funding when she was a state candidate. The Victorian government must deliver this funding to ensure that new netball change rooms can be delivered along with a pavilion and an upgrade of the Central Reserve grandstand. It is imperative that Colac and district netballers do not miss out. It is my pleasure to support the Colac and District Football League Netball Association and the Colac Football and Netball Club in their aspirations for better facilities. I am a big believer in people power and girl power. I ask people to go to my website, sarahhenderson.com.au, and sign the petition. Together, we need to show Labor that this funding is essential.
Liberal Party Leadership

Mr HUSIC (Chifley) (13:50): Just because you put new paint on the house does not mean that you have a new house. It might feel good and it might feel like a new one, but it is not, because the reality is that you have a ratty house. The reality is that everywhere in that house you can see the fingerprints of the member for Wentworth, because he was there supporting everything. In my neck of the woods, this is what he supported—because remember, he was out there as the flag bearer saying he supported every decision, because he was a good team player. What does that mean for our area? Chifley is the worst affected in terms of education cuts. In our area hospitals, they cut the funding for our MRI. In terms of broader health spending there have been massive cuts to hospitals, particularly in New South Wales, which has been terribly affected. In our local council there has been $7 million cut from Blacktown council’s funding to maintain its infrastructure. When you look, everywhere it has been cut, cut, cut, and Malcolm has been there cheering, cheering, cheering all along the way. He is now Prime Minister—it has taken a bit of getting used to. Hang on. I know he has been champing at the caviar to get to the top job, but let me just say that the test on him now is: what does he change? Because if he says he has supported all this in the past, what is going to make him different? Because it cannot be all style; there has got to be substance. And the people in our area deserve better.

Eden-Monaro Electorate: Volunteer of the Year Awards

Dr HENDY (Eden-Monaro) (13:52): On Tuesday, 1 September I had the pleasure of attending the 2015 New South Wales Volunteer of the Year Awards ceremony at the Cooma Ex-Services Club. There we celebrated the work of those many volunteers in our local communities who so generously give their time and employ their skills to help others. The awards program is an initiative of the Centre for Volunteering, the peak body for volunteering in New South Wales. This ceremony in Cooma celebrated the great work of volunteers in the south-eastern corner of New South Wales. Bega Valley Mayor, Michael Britten, and Cooma Deputy Mayor, Rogan Corbett, joined me in presenting awards and certificates.

Eden Marine High School took out the student team award. Over 60 Marine High students have been involved in a community service program helping the elderly. Representing them at the awards were Kiara Banks, Nikea Kebby and Verin Sampson. Berridale’s Benjamin Hearn was recognised for his contribution to cricket in the region. The region’s overall winner was Heather Foggett of Queanbeyan-based Capes 4 Kids. This fine organisation sends handmade capes to sick children, providing then with an ‘armour’ to get them through hospital visits and tough times. Please visit their website, Capes 4 Kids Australia, and please support the volunteers who make this nation great. As the member for Eden-Monaro I take particular pleasure in acknowledging the award winners from this electorate.

Liberal Party Leadership

Ms MACTIERNAN (Perth) (13:54): We have a change in leadership but will this result in a better deal for the people of Western Australia? Will we see the $500 million ripped from Perth rail projects returned to the budget? Will the new leader reverse the decision to deny Western Australia the chance to build the next generation of offshore patrol vessels? Will he reverse the absurd rule changes made this year around remoteness that saw hundreds of millions of GST dollars ripped out of Western Australia? Will he review the reckless Perth
Freight Link project and invest in an outer harbour to ensure that we do not create port bottlenecks that will threaten our export-orientated economy?

Does he have the ability to understand that Australians must have a fair chance at Australian jobs and fix the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement? And will he acknowledge that fibre-to-the-node NBN, using rubbish copper, will be cheating the tens of thousands of households and businesses in Canning out of having 21st century digital infrastructure? And does he have the moral courage to protect the future of all Australians and reintroduce an emissions trading scheme, which he knows we must do to fight climate change? Or is his future more important than that of our children and our grandchildren?

Tourism

Ms LANDRY (Capricornia) (13:55): I recently had the privilege of officially launching an Australian first in cave tourism at one of Central Queensland's most famous tourist attractions. The $300,000 project involved relighting the historic Capricorn limestone caves near a town aptly named 'The Caves,' near Rockhampton, to provide a more dynamic experience for tourists. Inside Capricorn Caves, awaits an amazing experience of stalactites and subterranean wonders. Old cave lighting from the 1960s was replaced with new leading-edge, solar-powered LED technology—the first system of its kind in Australia. It is now the first cave experience of its type in Australia to run lights off solar power. As such, it will provide a template for other cave managers from around the world to come and learn new ideas.

The project, expected to help increase tourism numbers to Rockhampton and the Capricorn Coast, was completed with the support of a $150,000 federal government grant. I congratulate Capricornia Caves operator Ann Augusteyn and her wonderful team for achieving this extraordinary project. I wish Ann all the best with the future operation of her business. The new lighting experience will also reduce the carbon footprint on the historic caves and has the potential to create further jobs.

Education Funding

Ms KATE ELLIS (Adelaide) (13:57): Today we have seen the federal National Party once again squib the opportunity to stand up for our regional schools. We know that it is country schools that will be hit the hardest by the $30 billion in cuts that have been announced by the government. We know this and the New South Wales National Party have confirmed with their education minister, Adrian Piccoli, who has stood up and fought for Labor's Gonski reforms, saying:

Why was I the strongest advocate across all education ministers? I think it’s because I'm the only National Party minister. Our electorates benefit the most.

Yet once again, when renegotiating their deal with the coalition, the federal National Party just fell in blindly behind the Liberal Party and the minister at the table's $30 billion cuts to education.

If gossip is to be true, we may be lucky enough to see a new education minister but will that new education minister actually stand up and reverse these devastating cuts to our schools? Well, I would not get too excited. We know that the new Prime Minister said:

I support unreservedly and wholeheartedly every element in the Budget. Every single one.
That includes the $30 billion to be ripped from Australian schools—cuts which will mean fewer subject choices, less support for students with disability, literacy and numeracy programs cut, less training and support for teachers.— (Time Expired)

Petition: Sativex

Mr HOWARTH (Petrie) (13:58): I rise today to advise the House that I will be submitting a petition for consideration by the Petitions Committee. The petition was launched and presented to me by a Scarborough local, Althea Giuliani. Althea's daughter suffers from multiple sclerosis, and was using a Sativex spray whilst in England. Sativex is currently registered in Australia for patients with moderate to severe spasticity due to MS.

At its meeting in July 2013, the independent Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee considered the listing of Sativex on the PBS. However, the application was rejected on the basis of insufficient evidence to establish comparative effectiveness and safety compared with standard care alone in patients who are intolerant to antispasticity medication. I note that the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee would accept a new submission to list Sativex on the PBS at any time. However, sponsors cannot be compelled to apply for a PBS listing. I thank the signatories of the petition— (Time Expired)

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

BUSINESS

Rearrangement

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Education and Training) (14:00): I move:

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent question time today being postponed until 2.30 pm, to be followed by the usual order of business.

I should inform the House that the Manager of Opposition Business and I have had a discussion about this matter. It is the government's intention—in fact, our commitment—that question time will still go for the usual hour and 10 minutes, starting at 2.30 pm, so as not to take away any of that crucial scrutiny time for the opposition. This is being done, with the kind agreement of the opposition, because the Prime Minister is still returning from Yarralumla.

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (14:00): I apologise to the people in the galleries who have turned up with great anticipation. Imagine that we are in injury time, I guess. At 2.30 pm we will start question time. The government will be ready for question time by 2.30 pm, and we welcome the commitment from the government that the rest of debate will not in any way be jeopardised for the rest of the course of the day. In the meantime I understand we are going to continue with—stay in the galleries—the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Debit Card Trial) Bill 2015.

Question agreed to.
Debate resumed on the motion:
That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr NEUMANN (Blair) (14:01): I am pleased to see that the first part of my speech was so riveting that there are now lots of people in the gallery to listen to the second half. It is great. For those people who are in the gallery now, I am talking about the government's social security legislation to trial the use of debit cards. It follows a recommendation from Mr Forrest in relation to alcohol in Indigenous communities. What I have said is that, if the government is serious about this, there need to be additional support services and more services to the Ceduna district hospital, the Aboriginal community controlled health service and other services in the Ceduna area, as well as in the East Kimberley area. Without those services, this trial will fail.

So far the government has not provided any additional funding and there has been no response, as I understand it, to the requests by the South Australian and Western Australian governments for this support. I have spoken to people on the ground in the Ceduna area and have talked to a number of people up in the East Kimberley, and they support the idea of these additional services. If you are going to get people off the scourge of alcoholism, if you are going to reduce the addiction to gambling, you have to have those services on the ground to support it. Otherwise this trial will fail. We also support a Senate inquiry to allow the impacts of the trial to be thoroughly explored and to give the people who are affected a say. It is important that locals can have a say.

The government has, as I have said before, had a House of Representatives inquiry, and recommendations have been made to the government. Those recommendations—which deal with alcohol hurting people and harming communities in Indigenous areas of Australia—were bipartisan. But sadly, before those recommendations were delivered, the government decided that they would not proceed with the alcohol management plans and they did so without telling that bipartisan committee. The government last approved an alcohol management plan—these are plans which come from local communities—back on 26 May 2014 in relation to the Titjikala community. I am a member of the committee that made those recommendations. Recommendation 7 was that the backlog of alcohol management plans—plans which are driven by the people of these local communities to deal with the challenges of alcohol, domestic violence and substance abuse—be fast-tracked by the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Nigel Scullion from the Northern Territory, by January 2016. Unbeknownst to our committee, he made a decision. On 10 July 2015—after the report had been handed down—he answered a question on notice that we put to him, saying that they would not be proceeding with the alcohol management plans.

In opposition the coalition said they would support the alcohol management plans because they were community driven. That they have broken this commitment is consistent with their budget cuts of about $800 million to preventative health programs that help people to address the issues of alcoholism. In addition to that, the Abbott government—who now might like to call themselves the Turnbull government—have cut $165 million from Indigenous health
programs, including preventative health programs aimed at such things as tackling smoking and encouraging the adoption of healthy lifestyles. They cut the funding, they have not proceeded with the AMPs and in the inquiry that they established they got no cooperation from the CLP Northern Territory government. We recommended they restore the banned drinker register. With the CLP government in the Northern Territory—the colleagues and comrades of the Minister for Indigenous Affairs and this government here—we recommended they restore the banned drinker register, which was working in the Northern Territory. We also recommended that they stop criminalising drunkenness and start treating it as a health issue. But the minister says no. He says that, if we are going to deal with issues of alcohol, we are going to come up with ideas like this and this alone, that we will cut funding and that you can rely on the Northern Territory government, who have a shameful record in this area.

I call on the government, if they are fair dinkum about this strategy, to provide the necessary resources and reverse the cuts. Get on the phone to Adam Giles, the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, restore the banned drinker register, work with local communities, provide the additional resourcing and make sure they can deal with issues properly—because we have real scepticism about this. We have real concern that they are not fair dinkum and that this is a symbol. We hope this works. We are expecting the government to provide the resourcing. I ask them to cooperate with local communities and the Western Australian and South Australian governments in relation to these matters.

Mr GOODENOUGH (Moore) (14:07): I rise to speak in support of the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Debit Card Trial) Bill 2015. The bill seeks to amend the existing social security legislation to enable the trial for up to 10,000 social security recipients of a Centrelink cashless debit card in up to three discrete communities. The purpose of the trial is to assess whether quarantining the majority of a recipient's welfare payments from spending on liquor, gambling and cash advances will be effective in reducing the social harm caused by welfare funded alcohol, gambling and drug abuse.

The objective of the policy is to: break the cycle of addiction to alcohol and drugs; minimise gambling problems, violence and antisocial behaviour; address the neglect of children and dependents; and stop long-term intergenerational welfare. The policy aims to promote responsible lifestyle choices through welfare payments being spent on providing clean, hygienic homes, nutritious meals and more stable family environments. This is the foundation for increasing attendance at school and successful placement in vocational training, with a view to increasing employment participation in the workforce. Money alone will not fix the problem of social disadvantage. Closing the gap requires motivation of individuals through support programs and mentoring.

The criteria to be used for selecting local trial sites include high dependence on welfare, high social harm indicators and a willingness by local community groups to participate. The year-long trial is proposed in response to a key recommendation from the Forrest review. A central recommendation of The Forrest review: creating parity report is the introduction of a cashless debit card that restricts the purchase of alcohol and gambling services for all welfare recipients called the healthy welfare card. Subject to the passage of this bill, the trial is due to be implemented from February 2016.

Let me put the broader issue of welfare into perspective. In 2015-16, the government will spend $154 billion on welfare, which is around 35 per cent of the total government
expenditure. The current welfare payment system manages 40 different payments and 38 supplements. The Department of Human Services is responsible for delivering welfare payments through Centrelink to 7.3 million people annually. In Australia, we have a very generous welfare system to support those in our community who genuinely need support. However, we must implement policies to encourage greater workforce participation, individual independence and the spirit of endeavour and enterprise. We as a nation can do much better than having one-third of our population dependent on welfare.

The government has announced that the Ceduna region will be the first trial site. Ceduna is located on the mid-coast of South Australia, approximately 800 kilometres west of Adelaide. The town and its surrounding region has a population of 4,425 people. The regional towns to be included include Koonibba, Oak Valley, Yalata and Scotdesco. The region runs further west to the Western Australian border. Despite its relatively small population, which is the size of a typical metropolitan suburb, the region had in excess of 500 presentations to the hospital emergency department due to alcohol or drug related use in the 2013-14 year. Over the same period, Ceduna has had 4,667 presentations at its sobering-up facility. Hospitalisations due to assaults in the region are 68 times higher than the national average. Clearly, in these circumstances there is justification for the government to take preventive action.

Following extensive consultation with community leaders, a memorandum of understanding was signed agreeing to the trial. In addition, advanced discussions with leaders in the East Kimberley region in my home state of Western Australia are progressing. A letter to the government, dated 27 July 2015, stated:

We acknowledge that agreeing to the East Kimberley being a trial site for the restricted debit card may seem to some a rather drastic step. However, it is our view that continuing to deliver the same programs we have delivered for the past forty years will do nothing for our people and, besides wasting more time and money, will condemn our children and future generations to a life of poverty and despair. As leaders in the East Kimberley, we cannot accept this.

Under the terms of the trial, all working-age social security support recipients will compulsorily be part of the trial and will receive a mainstream debit card connected to the Visa, MasterCard, or EFTPOS platform. The trial is not discriminatory on ethnicity or race. Everyone of working age in receipt of an income support payment and residing within the trial boundaries will be required to participate in the trial. The debit card will be able to be used universally for the purchase of all goods and services, with the exception of alcohol and cash advances. Furthermore, as cash will not be able to be withdrawn, the debit card will prevent the purchase of illicit substances.

It should be noted that the trial is not compulsory for aged pensioners, veterans and workers. However, they may opt in if it assists them with budgeting and money management. Under the system, 80 per cent of a person's social security payment will be placed in the recipient's cashless debit card account, with the remaining 20 per cent cash deposited into the recipient's bank account to be available for discretionary spending. These parameters were set in consultation with the Ceduna community. As part of the trial, a local authority will have the power to adjust the parameters and settings of the card should an individual apply to that authority for a change and demonstrate that they are responsible by adhering to a set criteria of social norms.
Public and stakeholder consultation has been extensive and has included peak welfare advocacy organisations, such as the Australian Council of Social Service and carers and seniors groups. Industry groups have been involved with the process, including the financial service institutions issuing the debit cards, Clubs Australia, the liquor industry and local retailers. Locally, the Ceduna and East Kimberley communities have been consulted, including local governments and retailers. In addition, the views of a broad section of Indigenous leaders have been canvassed, including the Prime Minister's Indigenous Advisory Council. The state governments of New South Wales, Western Australia and South Australia have also been consulted.

Some welfare lobby groups have argued that the card will breach the rights of welfare recipients to spend welfare payments as they choose. However, the community has a justified expectation that governments will take responsible measures to minimise social harm, violence and child neglect. Overall, there has been little public opposition to the trial. The debit cards are less prescriptive than the current BasicsCard, as they do not set expenditure limits on prescribed categories and they are more universally accepted by retailers and service providers as part of the wider Visa, MasterCard and EFTPOS banking platforms. There have been suggestions that attempts will be made at circumventing the system through bartering and through other schemes. However, it does not make impulsive access to alcohol and gaming easy, so it is reasonable to predict that the Centrelink cashless debit card will significantly increase compliance with social norms. In a small number of instances, additional compliance arrangements will have to be made for general stores in remote communities which are permitted to sell alcohol and general goods.

The rationale behind targeting social security support recipients of working age is that the trial is based on the premise that welfare support is only intended to be temporary, to assist people who are unemployed whilst they transition between jobs. Welfare is not intended to be a long-term or generational option. Increasing workforce participation is a key objective of the coalition government and essential to our nation-building agenda. The budget allocates $331 million to increasing employment participation and providing the skilled workforce needed to build the economy, including $212 million earmarked for the Youth Transition to Work program. To assist job seekers transition into the workplace, 6,000 places have been provided in the National Work Experience Program, as has $106 million to provide intensive support trials for job seekers of all ages from disadvantaged backgrounds. Furthermore, $1.2 billion has been allocated in the national wage subsidy pool to counteract long-term unemployment.

I have personally visited remote communities in Western Australia and witnessed firsthand the living conditions of our most disadvantaged citizens, who, despite receiving welfare support, are living in squalid living conditions and a state of neglect due to addiction, mental illness and an inability to satisfactorily manage their own financial affairs. On an outback trip with the former member for Durack, Mr Barry Haase, we came across an individual who loaned money to desperate locals on very non-commercial terms, holding their ATM cards as security until their next welfare payment was due. The same individual operated a gambling operation at the back of the local race course where the locals betted very heavily and invariably ended up losing their money and being unable to meet their basic living needs. A short time later the media reported that the individual concerned had been investigated by the
authorities and charged with various offences. In this scenario, quarantining the majority of an individual's welfare payment and restricting cash advances would protect the vulnerable in our community from being taken advantage of by unscrupulous individuals.

On a trip to northern Western Australia, I witnessed individuals camped on the outskirts of town, sleeping rough with no form of shelter. The local chamber of commerce had expressed concerns about these individuals roaming around town in an intoxicated manner and antisocially harassing customers and tourists in the hospitality precinct. Given that these individuals were in receipt of social security payments, it was evident that addiction issues had prevented them from adequately providing for their basic needs. Our social security system provides adequate support for individuals to meet their most basic needs; however, there are certain individuals who need assistance with making these choices. The Centrelink cashless debit card will assist welfare recipients in meeting their basic needs by quarantining a major component of their social security payment to meet essential living expenses, with a small amount reserved for discretionary non-essential purchases.

Unfortunately, it is the case in our society that serious alcohol, drug and gambling problems across Australia not only affect the individuals concerned but also cause significant social harm to others in the form of domestic violence, the neglect of children, homelessness, destitution and a range of law and order problems.

This trial represents a policy initiative aimed at addressing these issues. At the conclusion of the trial an independent evaluation will occur to measure the effectiveness of reducing social harm by analysing the relevant key indicators, including hospitalisation statistics and law and order rates. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GRAY (Brand) (14:22): The Social Security Legislation Amendment (Debit Card Trial) Bill 2015 is an important bill. I think both sides of this parliament will be pleased when we see it pass. It is important that it does pass. It implements some of the most significant changes to welfare delivery in a number of important communities. Principally, this initiative is designed to address alcohol abuse, which causes immense harm across our nation but, in particular, in certain communities. This bill is directed at a remedy designed to affect Indigenous communities in particular. And while urgent action is needed to tackle the alcohol problem we also know that breaking the cycle of alcohol abuse and dysfunction is a complex task.

Labor believes that quarantining income can be a useful tool to support vulnerable people where it is targeted at people who need it most. This bill will amend the social security law to enable a trial phase of a new, cashless welfare arrangement in response to the 'healthy welfare card' recommendations from Mr Andrew Forrest's review of Indigenous jobs and training. The trial will be conducted in up to three locations, involving up to 10,000 people. One of those locations is Kununurra, in the east Kimberley, and another is Ceduna, on the South Australian west coast. Locations have been selected on the basis of high levels of welfare dependence, where gambling, alcohol and/or drug abuse are causing unacceptable levels of harm within the community and where there is a strong level of community support.

Just last week I was in Kununurra and able to listen to the arguments of the Wunan Organisation, led by Mr Ian Trust, arguing very strongly for the cashless credit card in order—
Mr Gray: Sorry, the cashless debit card—thank you, Member for Aston, and congratulations, too, on the great work that you have done to bring to realisation this very difficult measure. In the early days of its design many of us did not think it would actually see the light of day. But through your efforts, your focus and your dedication you have been able to give life to this idea that we hope will bring a better life to Indigenous communities across Australia, especially those in which this trial will be conducted. The Australian government has deployed a prodigious level of additional support to provide those communities with certainty and guidance and to also provide the Commonwealth with the understanding that it needs to better deploy this measure if, indeed, it can be made to work, as we sincerely hope it will.

Income management is one tool to help vulnerable people stabilise their lives. But it must be done in conjunction with a range of support services. It requires a range of responses and supports, provided in close consultation with communities, including the provision of adequate services.

Labor supports community-driven initiatives to tackle alcohol and drug abuse and the harm that they cause. While Labor will not seek to oppose this bill—and, personally, I hope it passes unencumbered—where there is clear community support Labor is concerned that the proposed trial lacks some details and is yet to be thoroughly worked through. It is not possible to see from this legislation exactly how it would operate in practice. We cannot see exactly what additional supports and services would be provided to truly address the problems of alcohol and drug abuse. For example, a comprehensive approach to alcohol and drugs is needed and the debit card is potentially one productive element, but there has been no response yet from the government to the recommendations of the report on harmful use of alcohol in communities.

There has been no rollout yet of the alcohol management plans and there have been cuts to alcohol and other drugs programs. One element without the others will not work and the costs of this trial will be money misspent if we do not focus this trial as best as we possibly can.

I want to spend some time talking today about the communities of the east Kimberley. Aboriginal leaders and organisations in the east Kimberley have been frustrated by the pervasive social challenges faced by its large Aboriginal population. Alcohol, gambling and drugs divert income into destructive behaviours. East Kimberley has very high levels of long-term welfare dependency and resulting social dysfunction, including chronic substance abuse. This is largely funded by income support payments, paid by the Australian government. Chronic alcohol and drug abuse have caused a range of very poor social outcomes in the region.

In 2012-13 there were 100 reported incidents of family violence per 1,000 people in the Kimberley, compared with the next highest incidence of 43 per 1,000 in the south-eastern region. That is according to Western Australia’s Family and Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy to 2022 and its Achievement Report 2013, of the Department for Child Protection and Family Support.

East Kimberley Aboriginal children are being taken from their families and put into care at a very high rate. According to the WA Department for Child Protection, 100 per cent of
children in foster care in the east Kimberley are Aboriginals and six per cent of all Aboriginal children in the east Kimberley are in care. Many young people and children in Kununurra spend all night on the streets rather than go home where parents and other adults are drinking and where children do not feel safe. These children then sleep rough. They sleep all day and they do not attend school. Operation SHARP—safely home, with a responsible person—was a joint agency initiative, led by the WA Department for Child Protection in Kununurra, in June 2012. Over a one-week period contact was made with 125 children who were spending their nights on the street, according to the Department for Child Protection in its response, in February 2013.

Foetal alcohol spectrum disorder is becoming increasingly common in Aboriginal families and communities throughout the region. The rate of foetal alcohol spectrum disorder in Aboriginal children in the Kimberley is significantly higher than in non-Aboriginal children. The Kimberley has one of the highest suicide rates in the world. The third highest cause of preventable death to Aboriginal people in the Kimberley, between 1997 and 2007, was suicide, followed closely by alcohol related disease.

Western Australia has an Aboriginal suicide rate of nearly 36 per 100,000 Aboriginal people in the Kimberley. This rate is 70 per 100,000 people. In July this year ABC *Lateline* reported that the hospitalisation rate for assaults in Kununurra is nearly 70 times higher than the national average rate.

*The SPEAKER:* Order! It being 2.30 pm the debate is interrupted in accordance with the resolution agreed to earlier.

**MINISTERIAL ARRANGEMENTS**

*Mr TURNBULL* (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:30): As honourable members are aware, last night I was elected leader of the parliamentary Liberal Party and I have been subsequently sworn in as Prime Minister by the Governor-General today. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Julie Bishop, has also been re-elected as the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party. I can confirm that the Leader of the Nationals has confirmed the support of the Nationals in the formation of a coalition government under my leadership. I table for the information of the House a document reflecting the changed ministerial arrangements and seek leave to have the document incorporated into *Hansard*.

*The SPEAKER:* Is leave granted?

*Mr TURNBULL:* Is leave granted? You are meant to say yes—or someone is meant to.

*Mr Burke:* I need to be asked by the Speaker. He runs the parliament.

Leave granted.

*The document read as follows—*

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**CHAMBER**
Tuesday, 15 September 2015

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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.

**Mr TURNBULL:** I inform the House that the Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development will be absent from question time today. The Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development will take question on his behalf.

**STATEMENTS ON INDULGENCE**

**Abbott Government**

**Mr TURNBULL** (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:31): With your indulgence, Mr Speaker, and the indulgence of the House, I want to make some remarks on the former Prime Minister, Tony Abbott. Our nation, our parliament, our government and our coalition parties owe Tony Abbott an enormous debt of gratitude for his leadership and his service over many, many years. He led us out of opposition, back into government. The challenges of leadership are very considerable. The pressures are enormous. As Tony Abbott has often said himself, very profoundly, all of us here are volunteers; it is our families who are conscripts. We should acknowledge today, of course, the debt we also owe to his wife, Margie, and their daughters.

Tony has discharged his role as Prime Minister—indeed, as Leader of the Opposition—with enormous distinction and achievement. The free trade agreements alone, which have been negotiated under his leadership, represent some of the most significant foundations for our future prosperity. Of course, under his leadership our government restored the integrity of our borders, with the consequence that we have been enabled to make the increased and very generous arrangements for Syrian refugees last week.
We owe a great debt to Tony Abbott. We thank him for his leadership and we thank him for his service. He is a great Australian and our country has been improved and has been better led under his time as Prime Minister.

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:33): I want to add my remarks to the events and the departure of Mr Abbott as Prime Minister. It is a privilege to serve here and it is a vocation, but, as we know, politics can be very hard as well. It is part of the Australian spirit not to score points when someone is down, so I just want to say that public life is hard on people who serve and it is hard on their families. It is not for me to be partisan about Mr Abbott's record, but he certainly led the Liberal Party formidably for well in excess of five years. He is a fierce and formidable proponent of his views and a ruthless advocate for what he believes in. From his first victory in 2009 to become the Leader of the Liberal Party, right through to last night, he has been a fighter—a formidable fighter.

I have exchanged harsh words with him in my time as opposition leader. I have disagreed with his politics and decisions on many occasions, but I also wish to record that he had this frustrating ability on occasion, just when you were really frustrated with a particular decision he might have made, to do something unexpected, generous and personal. At the time when my mother passed, he was very sensitive to that. I said this to him and I explained this conundrum of his frustrating behaviour. He just smiled at me said, 'I'm sure I will frustrate you again.' And he did.

It is a very tough day for Mr Abbott. I say to him, to Margie and to his remarkable daughters that we wish you well. To Mr Abbott's personal staff, led by the formidable Peta Credlin, you have served the boss loyally and according to your code, and we recognise this. In conclusion, I just say to Mr Abbott: I had the privilege, on several occasions, of being with you when we addressed serving men and women of our defence forces. What I thought was remarkably humble of the member for Warringah was that he would frequently begin his remarks to them by saying, 'I have never served.' He was conscious of this, even disproportionately. I say to Mr Abbott: you have served. I do not think you need to judge yourself any lesser for not having actually worn the uniform of this country. You have represented and been the Prime Minister of this country. That is service indeed.

Mr TRUSS (Wide Bay—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development) (14:36): May I briefly add my warm regards to the member for Warringah, Tony Abbott, on his term as Prime Minister of this country. It was a very great pleasure to serve with him for all of his five years as Leader of the Liberal Party. He certainly had a vision for Australia. He had a particular interest in promoting infrastructure and wanted to be known as the infrastructure Prime Minister, and so it was perhaps easy to be minister for infrastructure when there was such a strong level of support from the Prime Minister. While his term as Prime Minister was relatively short, I was pleased that he did get to open one or two projects. I acknowledge that some of those projects were inherited from the previous government—because building big projects these days takes a long time—but so many new projects have been started, and they will be part of his legacy to his country.

I also want to acknowledge Margie Abbott. Lyn and I enjoy our relationship with the Abbotts as a couple and we appreciate the tremendous sacrifice that a family in this position makes. While Margie is not a particularly political person—I think she is happier doing other things—she was very supportive of Tony through all of that period.
In his relaxation time, Tony did the most extraordinary things, such as ride a bike faster than most people in this country and for longer than most people in this country. I suspect that the AFP might be relieved to have someone who is a bit slower runner—sorry, Malcolm!—and a bit slower bike rider—

Mr Turnbull: And a larger target!

Mr TRUSS: than his predecessor, who usually took two teams to keep up with and, when he travelled around the world, was able to train and ride with some of the fastest people in the country. In addition to that, his hobbies, such as being involved with the volunteer fire brigade, lifesaving et cetera, really marked him as a true Australian who has made a wonderful contribution to the nation as Prime Minister. I wish Tony and Margie every success and happiness for whatever the future may hold. We very much value the privilege of having worked with him.

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:39): On indulgence, I congratulate Mr Turnbull on being chosen by the Liberal Party to become Prime Minister of Australia. It is a signal honour. It is one which is afforded to very few Australians. You have sought an active role in public life and this is the highest position which can be awarded. We on the Labor side congratulate you. We also recognise that you have a unique opportunity to make this country more modern, more adaptive and more responsible. It may be a genuine chance for this nation. This chance is not defined by you or me but by the coalition's policies and Labor's policies and what we can do for this country. That is the real test. For us, it will be about the ideas you put forward and the ideas we put forward. It will be a genuine choice and a genuine chance for this country. It will be up to this country, between now and the next election, to select who has the best ideas to advance Australia.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE Turnbull Government

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:40): My question is to the Prime Minister. In June 2014, when asked if he supported the government's first budget, the now Prime Minister said:

I support unreservedly and wholeheartedly every element in the Budget. Every single one.

Will the Prime Minister change the substance of this government or is it just about its style?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:40): I thank the honourable member for his question. The Leader of the Opposition would be very well aware that we operate a cabinet system of government in Australia, and every member of the cabinet supports the cabinet's decisions. All of the cabinet supported that budget. When the Leader of the Opposition invites me to unilaterally disown one policy or another, he demonstrates that he fails to understand that cabinet government—

Ms Butler interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Griffith is warned.

Mr TURNBULL: is a collective method of making decisions. We are a cabinet government. I will lead a traditional cabinet government. Policies will change in the light of changed conditions. Of course they will. They will change all the time. They have to—under any government. But the cabinet stand by every decision we make and, as we revise them and
improve them in the light of experience, we will stand by those too. The honourable member is inviting me to make a unilateral decision, and he should not be surprised to be disappointed.

**Employment**

**Dr STONE** (Murray) (14:42): My question is to the Prime Minister. I heartily congratulate him on becoming this great nation's 29th Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister update the House on the challenges the government faces in ensuring jobs and growth for the future? How is this government moving to overcome these challenges?

**Mr TURNBULL** (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:43): I thank the honourable member for her question and for her congratulations. We are living in the most exciting time to be an Australian. The opportunities and challenges of a rapidly globalising economy are remarkable. The rate of economic and technological change is utterly without precedent. An Australia which seeks to succeed in remaining a high-wage economy with a generous social welfare net, which should be our goal, must be agile, dynamic and looking to the future. We cannot look to the past; we always have to be on the front foot. We know that we have to be unless we want to live in the darkness of fear that the opposition seeks to throw us into by, for example, frightening people about the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement, trying to scare people and failing to recognise that that agreement alone is one of the most important foundations for our future prosperity.

We know that our future lies in technology. It lies in science. It lies in all of the new industries. It lies in the future. Let me give you some examples. China's rapid urbanisation has led to 80 Australian architectural studios opening up in China, with a further 220 Australian firms winning work. A good example is Cox Rayner Architects, which recently won a competition to design China's $290 million national maritime museum in Tianjin, beating a field of 80 of the world's leading design firms. These are the types of opportunities the Leader of the Opposition would deny us. This is the type of market, this gigantic market, the largest in the world, which the Leader of the Opposition in his efforts to frighten Australians would seek to have closed to us.

We know that the coming election next year will be won by the party that is able to embrace the future, able to envision and explain the future and able to set out the means and the road map to ensure that Australians do not need to talk about being future proofed and ensure that Australians will understand that the future for us is formidable. The future is one of great opportunities, and that requires confidence and leadership. Those opportunities will be lost if we embrace the politics of fear and scaremongering of which the Leader of the Opposition is so fond.

**Higher Education**

**Mr SHORTEN** (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:46): My question is to the Prime Minister. In June 2014, when asked if he supported the government's first budget, the now Prime Minister said, 'I support the reforms to higher education.' Given that the Prime Minister was part of a cabinet that supported it and voted for it in the parliament, does the Prime Minister still support forcing Australians to pay for $100,000 degrees? Will the Prime Minister change the substance of the government or just the style?

**Mr TURNBULL** (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:46): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question, but I think he has got his pack mixed up because it sounds almost
entirely the same as the first one he asked. The reality, as he knows, is that we support all of our policies and all of our measures.

Ms Macklin interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Jagajaga is warned.

Mr TURNBULL: It is open to the Leader of the Opposition to criticise them, and he can use the procedures of the House to do so. But he would be better served, if he wants to inquire into the education policies of the government, by addressing his question to the Minister for Education for a greater level of detail.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members on my left will cease interjecting.

Mr Fitzgibbon interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Hunter is warned.

National Security

Mr BROUGH (Fisher) (14:47): My question is to the Prime Minister. Prime Minister, will you update the House on what steps the government is taking to keep and maintain a safe and secure nation?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:47): I thank the honourable member for his question. My first briefing as Prime Minister designate today was with the director of security. There is no more important obligation or duty for any government than protecting the safety of the people. We as a government are committed to ensuring that our borders are secure and to getting the balance right as we counter extremism at home and abroad. These are very, very complex challenges, and we focus on them relentlessly.

We are a vastly more open and interconnected nation in the world than we have ever been before. Technology, which has brought with it so many benefits, also brings new challenges. As the tragic events of MH17 and the acts of brutal violence and terrorism in the Middle East remind us so regularly, we are no longer a country far away from the problems of the world. Terrible scenes and terrible incidents are seen on our television screens and on social media and, of course, can confront us here at home.

As I speak today, members of the ADF are in the Middle East, putting themselves in harm's way to stop the spread of a violent ideology. As honourable members know, the government announced on 9 September our decision to extend our air operations to target Daesh in Syria, and we also announced an additional $44 million in humanitarian assistance for people displaced due to the fighting in Iraq and Syria. That assistance will support more than 240,000 Syrians and Iraqis forced to flee their homes or seek refuge in neighbouring countries. In no small part because we have been successful in securing our borders, we can play our part in helping resettle an additional 12,000 refugees from Syria and Iraq. That is over and above the regular humanitarian program of 13,750 refugees, who will be resettled as soon as possible.

We are conducting a review of our Defence forces via a white paper, due out later this year, which will help define our key national priorities. But countering violent extremism also begins at home, and we are working with social media companies and communities in countering the spread of extremist ideas. The defence of Australia and its people is the single
most important duty of this government, and we remain focused on that mission now, as we have always been.

**Economy**

**Mr BOWEN** (McMahon) (14:51): My question is to the Treasurer. Does the Treasurer agree with the statement yesterday by the now Prime Minister when he said:

It's clear enough that the government is not successful in providing the economic leadership we need.

**Ms Macklin interjecting**—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Jagajaga has been warned.

**Mr HOCKEY** (North Sydney—The Treasurer) (14:51): I thank the honourable member for McMahon for the question—entirely unpredictable, of course! The honourable member for Wentworth is perfectly entitled to make a statement, as he did yesterday, about how we can do better. Do you know what? We can always do better. But I will tell you what—we are doing a hell of a lot better than the Labor Party. Because, when the Labor Party left office, only 2,000 jobs a month were being created in Australia, and at the moment it is 21,000 jobs a month.

When Labor left office, they left a $48 billion deficit.

**Dr Chalmers interjecting**—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Rankin will cease interjecting.

**Mr HOCKEY:** We are getting that down to around $35 billion and getting it back on a credible path to surplus. We have reduced expenditure that Labor left behind by $50 billion, and along the way we have had to make some incredibly difficult decisions about the size of the Public Service and reducing the number of quangos, committees and inquiries and so on that were undertaken—

**Mr Husic interjecting**—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Chifley is warned.

**Mr HOCKEY:** by the previous government. But ultimately it comes down to the prosperity of the Australian people, and the economy today is $68 billion bigger than the economy that we inherited from the Labor Party.

In relation to business surveys, I note that, in the National Australia Bank Monthly Business Survey, business confidence has always been in positive territory since we have been in government. It currently sits at plus one. In Labor's last year of government, business confidence was negative throughout the year. It was negative throughout the year, and it has been up under us ever since we were elected. The same NAB business survey says that business trading conditions sit at plus 20, the second highest level in over seven years. And Dun & Bradstreet noted just a fortnight ago:

... we're seeing robust levels of optimism across all sectors in the Australian business community.

I would be the first to say that we can always do better, because on this side of the parliament we aspire to do the very best by the Australian people.

**Dr Chalmers interjecting**—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Rankin is warned.
Mr HOCKEY: But everything we do and everything we have done has been a hell of a lot better than a very bad Labor government.

Climate Change

Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (14:53): My question is to the Prime Minister, and congratulations on becoming Australia's Prime Minister. Many people hope that it means a change of direction for the country, and you said that we need leadership that respects people's intelligence and explains complex issues, so my question is: does this include climate change? Are you beholden to the hardliners in your ranks, meaning that you will stick with pollution targets that fudge the science? Or will you explain and persuade that the science requires much deeper pollution cuts than the Abbott government had proposed?

Mr Ewen Jones interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Herbert will cease interjecting.

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:54): I thank the honourable member for his question. The cuts proposed by the government which are being taken by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for the Environment to the Paris Conference of the Parties are very substantial ones, and they are in line with cuts proposed by comparable economies.

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr TURNBULL: What are the cuts that the Labor Party proposes? What is the Leader of the Opposition's proposal? Behind the Leader of the Opposition are people who were proposing 26 to 28 per cent cuts in 2005.

Mr Bandt: Mr Speaker, I raise a point of order on relevance. I did not ask about anyone else's cuts; I asked about—

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

Mr TURNBULL: I thank the honourable member for his question. The cuts that we are proposing—

Mr Champion interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Wakefield has been warned.

Mr TURNBULL: are absolutely comparable and appropriate, in line with other comparable economies. They are very substantial cuts. The means that we are using, which the Minister for the Environment has diligently and carefully put in place to achieve them, are doing their work. I can just give the honourable member an example. The first Emissions Reduction Fund auction in April 2015 was a resounding success: 47 million tonnes of emissions contracted, the largest ever emissions reduction commitment by business. The average price at the auction was $13.95 per tonne—

Mr Bowen interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for McMahon will cease interjecting.

Mr TURNBULL: of carbon dioxide reduction. So this plan, this reduction fund, is actually working.
The honourable member and, I know, some members of the Labor Party make the same mistake. They make the mistake of turning everything related to climate policy into ideology. The objective is to lower emissions. There are many means of cutting emissions, some more complex than others, some more expensive than others. There is no inherent virtue in any particular method of cutting emissions. There is no ideology there. The object, the only thing that matters, is the outcome.

The targets we have set are reasonable ones. They are comparable ones. They are substantial ones. The methods that the environment minister has put in place to achieve those cuts are working. It works. It is doing the job. The cuts are at the right level. And so—with great respect to the honourable member and recognising his strong interest in the matter—the government's policy on climate—

Ms Plibersek interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Sydney will cease interjecting.

Mr TURNBULL: is right, and it is being proved right.

Infrastructure

Mr IRONS (Swan) (14:57): My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development. Will the Deputy Prime Minister update the House on action the government is taking to build the infrastructure needed to support jobs and growth in Western Australia?

Mr TRUSS (Wide Bay—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development) (14:57): I thank the member for Swan for the question. Western Australia is certainly a winner with this government's infrastructure program. We have a large number of very important projects being undertaken in Western Australia, worth about $5.4 billion in all. They will be transformational for Perth and also make significant upgrades to the state's rural highway network. The funding includes the $116 million allocated over the last few days for the duplication of the Armadale Road and, of course, our commitments to projects like the Perth Freight Link, a $925 million project; $894 million to NorthLink WA; and $676 million to Gateway Western Australia. These are important projects, and I think they will make a real difference to Western Australia and particularly to Perth and the way in which traffic flows around that region. And of course these projects are fully funded.

Labor, when they were last in office, claimed credit for some of these particular programs and boasted—particularly the member for Grayndler, who is not with us today.

Mr Husic interjecting—

The SPEAKER: I remind the member for Chifley that he has been warned. The member for Chifley has been warned twice.

Mr TRUSS: The member for Grayndler boasted that these were Labor funded projects—except the problem for him was the member for Lilley, when he was Treasurer. He made it absolutely clear that these projects were not in fact funded, because he said that revenue from the mining resource tax went:

… to investment in infrastructure projects like the Gateway project in Western Australia around the airport. That's what it's all about … If we don't have the revenue from the tax then we can't make the investments.
Of course, how much revenue did they get from the tax? Zero. Labor, in fact, was funding these projects with money that did not exist, and the Treasurer knew that it did not exist. The projects were simply not funded. From our perspective we have got the projects working, we have got them under construction, we have got them advancing and delivering jobs and opportunities in Western Australia, and they are paid for. That is the difference between a government that believes in sound economic management and those who believe that you can build things with Monopoly money, that you are never brought to account.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER (15:00): I wish to inform the House that we have present in the gallery this afternoon the former member for Robertson, the Hon. Jim Lloyd. On behalf of the House, I extend a very warm welcome.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Climate Change

Mr BUTLER (Port Adelaide) (15:00): My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer to the Prime Minister's previous answer and to reports that the Prime Minister will retain the previous Prime Minister's Direct Action Plan. Given that the Prime Minister has previously said that Direct Action was 'a recipe for fiscal recklessness on a grand scale', how can Australians believe a word this Prime Minister says?

Ms Rishworth interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Kingston will cease interjecting.

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (15:01): I thank the honourable member for his question. One would have hoped that the opposition could do better than this. The reality is, as the honourable member should know,—

Mr Brendan O'Connor interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Gorton has already been warned.

Mr TURNBULL: that the environment minister's Emissions Reduction Fund is capped— it has a cap. It cannot result in an unlimited amount of fiscal commitment. There is a clear financial commitment to it.

Ms O'Neil interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Hotham!

Mr TURNBULL: The policy that we have in place is very clearly costed and calibrated—

Ms Kate Ellis interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Adelaide.

Mr TURNBULL: and it is affecting reductions in emissions now, and at a very low cost. The honourable member does not like—

Mr Conroy: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order on relevance: to be relevant—

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The member for Charlton will resume his seat.
Mr TURNBULL: You cannot take people's remarks about different proposals years ago. The fact is—

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr TURNBULL: Honourable members can scoff. The fact is that we have a set of very different measures today. The Emissions Reduction Fund is a set of very specific measures which deal with reducing carbon emissions, and they are doing so at a low cost. We are not talking about a theoretical measure—

Mr Conroy interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Charlton is warned.

Mr TURNBULL: We are talking about a very specific policy that was carefully put together by the Minister for the Environment, that was carefully considered by the government, and it is working. What honourable members hate most is that it is actually working. The honourable members would like to say that the environment minister's policy may work in practice but it fails in theory. The reality is if it works in practice it works. If it cuts emissions it does the job. The objective is not the means; the objective is the goal. And what sticks in their craw—what they cannot bear—is that the Minister for the Environment is reducing emissions at a remarkably low cost—

Mr Conroy interjecting—

The SPEAKER: I remind the member for Charlton that he has been warned.

Mr TURNBULL: That is a great credit to him and a great credit to the government, but it offends their prejudices. It offends their preconceived notions. It offends their ridiculous ideology about climate change where every measure is turned into an article of principle. It does not matter how you cut emissions as long as they are cut—

Ms Rowland interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Greenway will cease interjecting.

Mr TURNBULL: and the Minister for the Environment and this government are cutting emissions. Our goal is reasonable, it is responsible and it is comparable to that of other countries that are similarly situated.

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Ryan, members will cease interjecting. I am addressing the House before I call the member for Ryan. The member for Charlton was warned twice. He continued to interject repeatedly through the answer. He will leave under 94(a).

The member for Charlton then left the chamber.

The SPEAKER: A final warning to those members who have been warned.

Economy

Mrs PRENTICE (Ryan) (15:04): My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer please update the House on the state of the economy? And what actions has the government taken to strengthen the economy and create more jobs?

Mr HOCKEY (North Sydney—The Treasurer) (15:05): I thank the honourable member for Ryan for her question—I really do. The Australian economy is going through a significant
transition as we move from the mining construction phase into the mining production phase. Mining represents—as I have said many times in this place—around 10 per cent of GDP, 10 per cent of the economy and 55 per cent of our exports. The biggest part of our economy is services—health services, education services, financial services—and they represent around 70 per cent of our economy, 80 per cent of our jobs and just 17 per cent of our exports. What can we do to create more jobs? When Labor was last in government they were creating jobs at around 2,000 a month. We are creating jobs at around 20,000 a month. What can we do that helps in that regard? The starting point is to get rid of Labor's taxes.

We have already got rid of Labor's carbon tax, which was a handbrake on the Australian economy. We got rid of Labor's mining tax, which was a disincentive for mining investment. We got rid of Labor's piggy bank tax, where they were rating every piggy bank that was not used for a certain period of time. We got rid of Labor's bank deposit tax, which was going to apply to everyone who had a savings account. And, significantly, we got rid of Labor's FBT car tax, which they were going to apply to everyone in the charitable industry who was relying on a motor vehicle supplied by their employer. We got rid of those five Labor taxes, which is significant microeconomic reform in its own regard.

We also inherited 96 taxes that were announced but unlegislated by Labor, and we dealt with all of those as well. I can report to the House that after negotiations at the G20—with George Osborne, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and other members of the G20, in Turkey, a fortnight ago—tomorrow I will be introducing into this parliament the multinational anti-avoidance law, which is the first and foremost law of its kind in the world to go after multinationals that are not paying their fair share of tax. We are ensuring, after having Australian Taxation Office personnel lodged in 30 multinational companies, we are now going to those companies—

Dr Leigh interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Fraser will cease interjecting.

Mr HOCKEY: identifying what their profits are and saying that they have to pay their fair share of tax in Australia. This is world-class and world-leading legislation.

Dr Leigh interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Fraser is warned!

Mr HOCKEY: We have worked with the OECD, I have worked with the Chancellor of the Exchequer and we have worked through the G20 to deliver this world-class leading legislation that ensures that the multinationals making big profits, in Australia, pay their fair share of tax in Australia.

Economy

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (15:08): My question is to the Prime Minister. Can the Prime Minister confirm the accuracy of the Treasurer's statement about the Prime Minister, yesterday, 'He has never said to me or to the cabinet that we are heading in the wrong economic direction'?

Mr Pyne: Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I am not sure that that is within the Prime Minister's responsibilities nor am I sure that the opposition can ask about—

Ms Plibersek interjecting—
The SPEAKER: The member for Sydney will cease interjecting. The member for Sydney repeatedly interjects when I am trying to hear a point of order. It is highly disorderly.

Mr Pyne: Mr Speaker, that question offends a number of sections of the standing order. One, it is obviously hypothetical and, clearly, it is not within the Prime Minister’s responsibilities, what the Treasurer ever thought or said.

Mr Snowdon interjecting—
Mr Dreyfus interjecting—
An opposition member interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Lingiari will cease interjecting as will the member for Isaacs and whoever else is interjecting behind the member for Watson. You are blocking their view.

Mr Burke: Mr Speaker, on the point of order: it has to be in order for the opposition to ask a new Prime Minister whether or not he believes Australia is heading in the wrong economic direction. That has to be in order. If you want it reframed without the quote, the phrase could be asked. It has always been allowed that—

The SPEAKER: Having listened to the question and listened to the member for Watson, I am going to give an opportunity for rephrasing of the question. As it was worded, originally, it does offend standing orders that the Leader of the House referred to.

Mr SHORTEN: My question is to the Prime Minister. Did the Prime Minister ever tell the Treasurer that he thought—that is, Mr Turnbull thought—that Australia was heading in the wrong economic direction?

Mr Pyne: Mr Speaker—

The SPEAKER: I am sorry, no. The Leader of the House can resume his seat. I will go to the next question. It has not been rephrased adequately.

Mr Burke: Mr Speaker, we had a change of Prime Minister yesterday on the basis of this argument, on the basis of the economic direction of Australia. We have to be allowed to get an answer to that question.

The SPEAKER: The member for Watson himself articulated the question that would be in order, if it were rephrased, and it has not been rephrased adequately. I am going to move to the next question. I am happy to give the opportunity, during the three minutes that we have, to rephrase the question. I call the member for Hasluck.

Small Business

Mr WYATT (Hasluck) (15:11): My question is to the Minister for Small Business. Will the minister update the House on how the government is supporting small businesses in my electorate of Hasluck and elsewhere?

Mr BILLSON (Dunkley—Minister for Small Business) (15:11): I thank the member for Hasluck. His electorate has 10,700 small businesses. I actually feel like I have met most of them from the visits we have had over there and the small-business forums and interactions we have had that were organised by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. What has come through from all of those meetings is just how welcome and encouraging the small-business community is about the action we are taking to support their enterprise.
The Treasurer has outlined the transition in the economy and the challenges that are there. A renaissance in entrepreneurship, support for small-business men and women, getting behind the family and farming enterprises of our nation and of our economy, is at the heart of our agenda. This is not only to grow jobs and grow the economy but also to recover the jobs lost under Labor. We lost nearly half a million jobs in small business under Labor. In fact, under that period of Labor government, fewer small businesses ended up employing people, at the end of it, than they were at the beginning.

Our focus is on making sure the environment is right for small businesses and enterprising men and women to thrive and prosper in this economy, getting those conditions right to drive growth and job creation, putting incentives in place to encourage dynamism in the economy, agility, entrepreneurship, a preparedness to compete and invest. And we are getting there. We are making gains, and this deserves to be recognised. It is of great encouragement to small businesses right across our economy. Retail sales are up. Exports are up. Housing approvals are up. Residential dwelling construction—this is actually homes being built—is some 23 per cent higher than the rate of housing construction when Labor was last in office. Personal bankruptcies are down to a 20-year low. We are seeing investment right across all sectors of the economy, and the signs are very encouraging for the future.

In the member's own electorate, when I meet with his local small-business people, they tell me that there is a positivity in the air and optimism. Eddie Peters, from the Honda Shop in Midland, talks about the great budget package, those initiatives of tax cuts and incentives with asset write-offs that have not only benefited his business, directly, but also many of his customers—tradespeople; primary-industry producers—have seen a lift in opportunity and encouragement for their entrepreneurship.

We have more work to do. Jobs growth is there and small businesses are providing about half of those new jobs in our economy. We have seen the small-business share of the private-sector workforce actually increase, but there is more happening. There are the employee share schemes that we have repaired, given that Labor had messed that up and harmed that initiative.

Ms MacTiernan interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Perth will cease interjecting!

Mr BILLSON: There is the technological engagement that I have enjoyed working closely with the Prime Minister on. There is crowd sourced equity funding, the shared passion we have to see the start-up community and the entrepreneurial culture in our economy thrive and prosper.

Ms MacTiernan interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Perth is warned!

Mr BILLSON: That is our plan for the future. We have been getting on with the job. We are delivering results. The signs are positive. We have more work to do. That is about giving small business men and women the support and respect they deserve. That is what this government is doing.
DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER (15:14): Before I call the member for McMahon, I inform the House that we have present in the gallery this afternoon a former member of this House and former Attorney-General, the Hon. Tom Hughes QC. On behalf of the House, I extend a warm welcome.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Economy

Mr BOWEN (McMahon) (15:15): My question is to the Treasurer. Does the Treasurer stand by his statement of yesterday in relation to the now Prime Minister, 'He's never said to me or the cabinet that we are heading in the wrong economic direction'? Does the Treasurer agree with the Prime Minister?

Mr Turnbull interjecting—

Mr HOCKEY (North Sydney—The Treasurer) (15:15): I know—that is right. The Labor Party are verballing again. This is familiar territory for them. Australia is heading in the right economic direction, but we have still got work to do. There is no suggestion that it is mission accomplished. There is so much more work to be done. On the coalition side, we will not give up until the job is complete, and we are a very long way from completion point. We still have a tax reform process to prepare the taxation system for the 21st century. We have received 850 submissions in relation to the taxation white paper. It has been coalition policy to fix the federation, to work with the states in a constructive way and to get rid of the duplication—that is hugely important. I am sure the new Prime Minister will take up that with great relish—trying to fix the federation.

It is also the case that we are rolling out the biggest infrastructure program in Australia's history. More than $50 billion in new additional productive infrastructure is going to deliver $130 billion of new projects, backed by the single most significant microeconomic reform in recent years, which is the asset recycling program. If you look at, for example, Sydney, where you have a Premier in that state who is willing to work with the federal government, today there are 75 registered cranes in the middle of the Sydney CBD and 165 within a kilometre around that CBD. That is because you have a Premier who is engaging with the Commonwealth government on an asset recycling program where, if he sells assets such as poles and wires and uses the proceeds to go into new infrastructure, we provide a 15 per cent bonus to the state to help them with that new infrastructure. That is why you get 160-odd new cranes within one kilometre of a CBD like New South Wales. We hope that the rest of Australia takes that up as well.

There are many areas to continue the reform. Budget reform is absolutely essential. There is still $18 billion of savings held up. We have already delivered $50 billion of savings. That is hugely important. It helps to improve the budget bottom line.

But there is more work to be done, and the one significant initiative that Labor could support immediately to help to create jobs and to build a stronger economy would be to back the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement. The Labor Party can no longer sit on the fence about this. This is about jobs and better-paying jobs for Australian workers and they should
immediately back the initiatives that the coalition government has put in place to strengthen the Australian economy such as the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement.

**Trade with Asia**

Ms MARINO (Forrest—Government Whip) (15:18): My question is to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Will the minister advise the House how the free trade agreements with China, Japan and Korea will help increase economic prosperity in Western Australia? Are there any threats to the realisation of these benefits?

Ms JULIE BISHOP (Curtin—Minister for Foreign Affairs) (15:18): I thank the member for Forrest for her question. As she well knows, the three free trade agreements with China, Japan and Korea are critical for the Western Australian economy and, therefore, the Australian economy. Almost 80 per cent of Western Australia's exports are destined for these three markets.

Mr Champion interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Wakefield.

Ms JULIE BISHOP: We want to grow our trade because it means more jobs and it means more opportunities for Western Australians. It means more opportunities for Australians and higher standards of living for all.

The Western Australian economy has had a long and prosperous relationship with our North Asian trading partners. In fact, it was through decades of strong trade with Japan that Western Australia built its iron ore and oil and gas industries. South Korea has played a significant role in Western Australia's prosperity, consistently appearing as one of our top five export markets for two decades.

China, which already accounts for more than half of all exports from Western Australia, offers significant opportunities for the west across diverse industries and sectors, from resources to agriculture to wine to services. Western Australian businesses and workers will stand to benefit from this free trade agreement with China. Wines of Western Australia chief executive Larry Jorgensen says the China free trade agreement means:

… we are on the pathway towards having a level playing field in China with regard to our international competitors.

The CEO of the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council, John Harrison, said that the agreement was 'a real game changer'. Free trade agreements with other Asian countries had 'greatly stimulated domestic job creation and opportunities for Western Australian businesses'—that was WA Chamber of Commerce and Industry CEO Deidre Willmott. She said:

WA's manufacturing, agriculture, food and service industries stand to benefit greatly from the agreement …

Ms MacTiernan interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Perth has been warned and will cease interjecting.

Ms JULIE BISHOP: But what is really exciting for us is our creative economy. Western Australia is the exemplar. We boast talented designers, architects and fashion designers, and graphic and industrial expertise. We have engineers, those in the IT industry and researchers. They all have new and enhanced opportunities to sell their services into China. We have
among the most innovative and creative and entrepreneurial talent in the world, and now they are being given access to one of the largest markets in the world.

What I cannot understand is why Labor is doing everything it can to prevent Western Australians and Australians from reaping the benefit of this free trade agreement. The Leader of the Opposition is showing that he puts the interests of the union bosses ahead of the interests of Western Australian workers. His readiness to sell down Western Australia's future economic prosperity should send a shiver down the spine of every Western Australian worker whose job depends on selling goods and services to our North Asian partners. It is time for Labor to back the jobs of Western Australians—back the free trade agreement.

Marriage

Ms PLIBERSEK (Sydney—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (15:21): My question is to the Prime Minister. A private member's bill on marriage equality introduced by the member for Leichhardt is currently before the House. It would take half an hour of parliamentary time to allow this bill to be voted on. It could be done tomorrow. Will the Prime Minister allow a vote on this bill and allow members of his party a free vote as he has publicly called for previously?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (15:22): I thank the honourable member for her question and I respect her very deep interest in this issue. Marriage equality, or same-sex marriage, is a very significant issue on which people of good faith, the best faith, honestly have different opinions both on the honourable member's side of the House and on our side of the House. Historically, issues of this type have been resolved in parliament by free votes. The honourable member is correct in referring to that. Another way of dealing with this is by a vote of the people. Our government has decided that the resolution of this matter will be determined by a vote of all the people via a plebiscite to be held after the next election.

Mr Dreyfus interjecting—

Mr TURNBULL: I hear the honourable member for Isaacs calling it 'a sell out'. It underlines the utter failure of the opposition to approach issues in other than a thoroughly ideological way. The object is to ensure that Australians—

Ms Kate Ellis interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Adelaide is warned.

Mr TURNBULL: either through their representatives or directly, can make an honest, conscientious decision. Our government, our party room, has decided that the decision will be taken by a plebiscite. Why is the opposition afraid of the people having a vote? Why don't they want all Australians having a vote? There is no greater virtue in a free vote here or a plebiscite. They are each means of resolving the matter. One of them, I grant you, is more expensive. Nonetheless, it is a very legitimate and democratic way of dealing with it. That is what we have resolved.

Ms King interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Ballarat is warned.

Mr TURNBULL: At the next election, Australians will have a choice. The Labor Party will say, 'Vote for us and marriage equality will be dealt with by the politicians, by the parliament, in a free vote after the election.' And we will say, 'If we're re-elected to
government, every single Australian will have a say.’ We all respect members of parliament—after all, we are all members of parliament—but we are just representatives and we are just 150 in number. Every single Australian will have a vote on the issue after the next election if we are returned to government. How can the opposition seriously and credibly say that that is anything other than thoroughly democratic? When did it cease to be democratic to let the people speak?

Mr Brendan O’Connor interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Gorton has been warned twice. This is his final warning.

**Trade with China**

Mr ALEXANDER (Bennelong) (15:25): My question is to the Minister for Trade and Investment. Will the minister update the House on how key stakeholders have received our landmark trade deal with China, and what risks are there to this agreement?

Mr ROBB (Goldstein—Minister for Trade and Investment) (15:25): I thank the member for his question. His extensive commercial experience makes him very well placed to judge the strength of this agreement. About three weeks ago I went to China. I took 35 Australian CEOs there to explore the opportunities that would come to Australia under the China free trade export agreement. I have to say that I was really struck by the remarkable sense of anticipation not just among the 35 CEOs but among all the business people I ran into and interacted with when in China for a few days. It brought home to me the great breadth and depth of this agreement. That mood is consistent with the view expressed today by respected businessman Graham Bradley, who said:

Scorning the FTA would … forgo huge market access benefits that have so much to offer Australia in so many sectors, including agriculture, value-added food products and high-value services.

I have been asked what risks there are to this agreement. Yesterday I dealt with the blatant untruths about labour market testing. Today I want to address the appalling scare campaign by the likes of the ETU and those opposite about the skills assessment of Chinese electricians. The disgraceful advertisements and robocalls are claiming lives will be lost and houses will burn down because of the China free trade agreement. This is grubby politics. Those opposite should be ashamed of this nonsense. The robocalls and ads are frightening the seniors in our community. The truth is that, under the China free trade deal, electricians and other skilled workers from China will be subjected to the exact same skills verification process as visa applicants from 150 other countries—whether it is Japan, Korea, Poland, Chile, Germany, Singapore, the UK, the US or Somalia. You would think we could give our biggest trading partner the same treatment we give Somalia.

There are a raft of requirements that are necessary—skills, qualifications and experience—that have to be presented by the potential Chinese entrants coming here on a temporary basis. Identity, work history, professional education qualifications, professional registration, licensing, previous employers, English language proficiency and more—and they have to register in each state and territory. This is another major untruth—(Time expired)

**Turnbull Government**

Mr CLARE (Blaxland) (15:29): My question is to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister has previously said that ‘few are so publicly humiliated as a poleaxed Prime Minister’. Is the
Prime Minister finally satisfied that, after all these years, he has poleaxed and humiliated the member for Warringah?

**Mr Pyne:** Mr Speaker, clearly that question is not in order and should be ruled out of order.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Blaxland, that question is out of order. It does not relate to the Prime Minister's responsibilities.

Opposition members interjecting—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Watson will cease interjecting. The member for Isaacs is warned. The member for Wills is warned. The member for McEwen can leave immediately under standing order 94(a).

**The member for McEwen then left the chamber.**

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Blaxland has an opportunity to rephrase the question to relate it to the Prime Minister's responsibilities. If he cannot do that, I am going to call the next question from the other side.

**Mr CLARE:** My question is to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister has previously said:

... few are so publicly humiliated as a pole-axed prime minister.

Prime Minister, why did you poleaxe the member for Warringah?

**Mr Pyne:** Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the House will resume his seat. I am calling the next question. I call the member for Dobell.

**Trade with China**

**Mrs McNAMARA** (Dobell) (15:30): My question is to the Minister for Education and Training. Will the minister inform the House of the benefits to the international education sector of the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement? How does this agreement help boost jobs and growth across the economy?

**Mr PYNE** (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Education and Training) (15:30): I thank the member for Dobell for her question.

*Mr Champion interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Wakefield will leave under standing order 94(a).

**The member for Wakefield then left the chamber.**

**Mr PYNE:** I know that the member for Dobell, like most members on this side of the House, is keenly interested in growing the international education sector even further than it has grown in the last two years under this government. It has grown from about $15½ billion to over $18 billion in just two years—a 14 per cent increase in enrolments in just 12 months. We have done it because this government has brought a laser-like focus to the management of international education—things like, for example, the streamlined visa processing arrangements and, also, the new Coordinating Council on International Education which, for the first time, has brought together those ministers in the government who have responsibility for international education, whether it be the Minister for Industry and Science, the Minister for Education and Training, the Assistant Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, the
Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Trade and Investment. We are coordinating the government's response, because there is tremendous opportunity in the modern Australian economy to grow international education using our very high-quality reputation around the world for higher education.

The China-Australia Free Trade Agreement, sometimes called the ChAFTA, is a new opportunity to do that by opening the Chinese market even more through the good work of the Minister for Trade and Investment. The China-Australian Free Trade Agreement clears away a number of obstacles for private providers of higher education and the university sector, allowing them to get into the Chinese market and bring more international students here. It also establishes more joint ventures and arrangements in China to use the best of the Chinese institutions and the best of the Australian institutions to improve the skill sets of both Chinese and Australian young people. So I am very pleased that the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement has a large services component.

I am also pleased that the Minister for Trade and Investment is working on the Australia-India Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement. I met with Prime Minister Modi when I was in India recently and I talked specifically about this issue, because India is our second largest market. There are great opportunities through free trade to grow international education even further. It is one of the great success stories of the last two years, and it has not been achieved by accident. It has been achieved by sensible planning, coordination of government policy an open mind to international education, a welcoming approach and things like making visa arrangements easier and collaborations easier. It is good for jobs and good for growth in the economy. It is the future of the Australian economy, and I am very pleased to have had oversight of it.

**Turnbull Government**

**Mr BOWEN** (McMahon) (15:34): My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer to reports that the Prime Minister has made a captain's call to support an effects test and to put the National Party in charge of water policy as part of a new dirty deal with the National Party. Is this what 'traditional cabinet government' and 'making decisions in a thoughtful and considered manner' looks like?

**Mr Pyne:** Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I hate to interrupt the flow of question time, but today the opposition has made the same mistake again and again of not making their questions fit within the standing orders. The Prime Minister is more than happy to answer questions on a whole range of issues, but he cannot answer questions on a hypothetical matter. He is not required to answer questions about internal party matters. This question goes to internal party matters, hypothetical matters and things that have not even been reported in the press. Therefore, the question is out of order and cannot be rewritten.

**Opposition members interjecting—**

**The SPEAKER:** I will not call the member for McMahon until those on my left cease interjecting. The member for McMahon.

**Mr Bowen:** Mr Speaker, on the point of order, questions go to ministers in the area of their responsibility. There is only one person in this House responsible for ministerial appointments, and he sits in that chair opposite. He is the only person to whom that question can be asked.
The SPEAKER: The Leader of the House.

Mr Pyne: Mr Speaker, one of the reasons this question is hypothetical is that the current ministerial arrangements are all entirely in place until they are changed by some potential reshuffle down the track. So asking about ministerial arrangements that have not even been canvassed is obviously hypothetical. If the opposition want to ask a question about a specific matter within the responsibilities of the Prime Minister, I am sure he will deal with it. But this is not such a question. Therefore, it should be ruled out of order.

Ms Kate Ellis interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Adelaide is warned. The member for Watson.

Mr Burke: Mr Speaker, the matter that the question refers to has been reported. It is public. Apparently, the Leader of the House is unaware of it, but, apparently, there is a full agreement between the new leader of the Liberal Party and the National Party. It goes to the machinery of government for which the Prime Minister is responsible.

Mr Pyne interjecting—

Ms Chesters interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the House will cease interjecting. The member for Bendigo will cease interjecting. The question, as originally framed, did not quote from anything. It made an assertion and it was hypothetical. Once again, the member for Watson has sought to clarify that. If the question is rephrased to ask about a report, it would be in order. If you are not in a position to do that now, I will go to the next question and come back. Are you in a position to rephrase it now?

Mr BOWEN: Mr Speaker, my question is to the Prime Minister. Has the Prime Minister done a deal with the National Party to give the National Party responsibility for water policy?

The SPEAKER: I am sorry: that is out of order. It did not refer to a—

Government members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members on my right will cease interjecting. Member for Watson, as I said, he made the point that it was referring to a report. If the question is rephrased—I am going to give it one more time; I am a tolerant kind of chair—

Mr Ewen Jones interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Herbert is warned. My ruling was based on the point of order from the member for Watson.

Mr Pyne interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the House will cease interjecting.

Mr McCormack interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Riverina will cease interjecting. The member for McMahon has the call.

Mr BOWEN: My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer to reports on ABC Rural at 3.32 pm today that the Prime Minister has done a deal with the National Party to introduce an effects test and give the National Party responsibility for water policy. Are these reports accurate?
Mr Pyne interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the House will cease interjecting.

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (15:38): Mr Speaker, your patience with the opposition as they try to frame an acceptable question is really admirable. The honourable member will be well aware that any decision about amending the Competition and Consumer Act relating to the so-called effects test will be a decision of the cabinet. That is not a decision that is made by me as Prime Minister. It would be a decision by the cabinet. In terms of machinery of government, which—the honourable member is right—is a responsibility of the Prime Minister, ministerial arrangements will be reviewed and announced later in the week or early next week.

Trade with China

Dr GILLESPIE (Lyne) (15:39): My question is to the Minister for Health. Will the minister explain to the House the benefits to the health sector of the landmark export agreement with China? And what is the government doing to improve the health of all Australians?

Ms LEY (Farrer—Minister for Health and Minister for Sport) (15:39): I am delighted to take a question from the member for Lyne about the China free trade agreement and the health of all Australians. As we have heard from the Minister for Trade, this export agreement opens up opportunities for all Australians but in particular Australians in the health sector—something you would think Labor would be interested in, as there are so many people in the health sector who look to the Labor Party for leadership and at the moment are not finding any.

The key thing is the burgeoning of the middle class in China and their access to and desire for new models of health care, private hospitals and medicines, including complementary medicines. All of those opportunities that are available to the Australian sector, the workers, the small businesses, are here waiting for Labor's decision. If Labor has no plan on the China free trade agreement, does Labor have a plan for health? Absolutely not. Two years in and there is no vision, no policy—not one, single idea. You would think Labor would support the sensible measures the government is putting in place, and I just want to touch on those, because they are important. We are looking at reforms to health that focus on the patient—

Ms King interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Ballarat!

Ms LEY: against the background and the context of a landmark health and hospitals agreement between the Commonwealth and the states that recognises that if we work cooperatively together and pool our resources—

Ms Butler interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Griffith!

Ms LEY: we can avoid about $7 billion of waste in avoidable hospital admissions and we can look after patients at the primary care of the spectrum before they come to hospital. It recognises that what Australians want is a system that looks after their entire journey, that does not allow the clunkiness of different funding models to get in the way.

CHAMBER
Look at our approach, which includes new models of primary care, enrolment funding for chronic and complex care design, a review and a rewrite of the MBS—the first in a generation—because it no longer reflects contemporary clinical practice—

Mr Stephen Jones interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Throsby!

Ms LEY: and our e-health record, which is going to revamp Labor's failed electronic health record, and contrast that with Labor's year of absolutely no ideas in health. As the member for Ballarat often says, 'Look at our record.' Unfortunately we have had to refer to Labor's record: the epic fail of the GP superclinics, the undermining of medical research in this country, the attack on the Medicare safety net when Julia Gillard said, 'That's just for rich people', the attack on the—

Ms King: Mr Speaker, a point of order on relevance: in order to be relevant the minister needs to say—

The SPEAKER: The member for Ballarat will resume her seat. The Minister for Health has the call.

Ms King interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Ballarat will resume her seat or she will leave.

Ms LEY: On the comment by the member for Ballarat, the opposition would be kidding itself if it did not recognise that there are challenges and that no area is going to be exempt from cuts. That is all we have had from Labor. (Time expired)

Mr Turnbull: I ask that further questions be placed on the Notice Paper.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Turnbull Government

The SPEAKER (15:43): I have received a letter from the honourable the Leader of the Opposition proposing that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely:

The failure of the Government to provide stable and competent government at a time of increased unemployment and economic uncertainty.

I call upon those honourable 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 SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (15:43): Like the rest of the Australian people, Labor has watched the tumultuous last 24 hours. Many Australians actually hope that the events, regardless of the manner and the method, will be a move away from the reactionary, fractured government of Mr Abbott. We know the list. Apparently everyone in this government supported them and never raised these particularly, but we know the list of this reactionary, fractured government—this government of a wasted two years taking Australia nowhere. We remember the knighthoods. We remember the unfairness and the unbroken promises of the 2014 and 2015 budgets. We remember the more recent foolish remarks, denigrating climate change, by the immigration minister—the latest in a string of
insensitive blunders and gaffs by that repeat offender. We remember the petty ideological fights with everyone who ever dared to be a critic of this government. Most importantly, we remember the lack of economic direction and the lack of economic leadership, rising unemployment, stalled growth and falling wages.

Now our new Prime Minister, Mr Turnbull, has made a promise to restore stability. He has said that they will restore cabinet government. Now I happen to think that just promising to have a cabinet government, in and of itself, is not exactly the tyranny of high expectations. But we, the Australian people and Labor on behalf of the Australian people, look forward to even this modicum of stability. But what I wish to place on record today is that good intentions alone are not enough. The real challenge is that Mr Turnbull leads a political party hugely of the reactionary right. The question which remains to be seen after the last two wasted years of this experimental Liberal government is: can Mr Turnbull move this reactionary party to something approximating the centre of Australian politics?

Labor have always been prepared to be constructive if we receive and see rational, reasonable policy—not, of course, the unfairness and the dishonesty of the 2014 budget. But our fear for Australia is that the Turnbull Liberal government is already fatally comprised. The once great Liberals have moved to the right, and the test for the Prime Minister is: can he bring the Liberal Party back to the centre against the proclivities of a range of his MPs and, indeed, his new partners, the Nationals? But we already see that Mr Turnbull has made promises. He has been prepared to throw his long-held convictions overboard. He has made a deal with the National Party, the existence of which we had to practically interrogate the government to concede. He says, 'Well, it will all be dealt with by cabinet.' But the problem is the deal is already done. You do not run government and cabinet government by fait accompli. So much for the pledge for new process! Indeed, in his first hour on the job, Mr Turnbull has already given away $3.6 billion that his new apprentice Treasurer—we are not quite sure who the Treasurer is; we are just reasonably sure it is not the current one—has already spent on his childcare package.

In the period between now and whenever the election takes place, perhaps we will finally get the answer to the great conundrum of Australian Liberal politics: is it style over substance? Today in question time, I asked Mr Turnbull, 'Are the policies going to change?' And he said very clearly, 'We support all of our current policies.' To me this confirms that last night the change was all about the style. It was about panicked MPs worrying about their job security and not thinking about the jobs of Australians. There is nothing of substance which will change in this government.

Another way to put this question is this conundrum of Australian politics: is it style over substance? Does Mr Turnbull believe in much at all? Does he believe in taking political risks to see Australia advance? I know he says he believes in the republic, marriage equality and climate change. But does he really want to advance the republic? Will he have to be signed up to become a constitutional monarchist to keep his caucus in line? Why does he not wish to fulfil the Menzian tradition of a free vote on important matters like marriage equality? He says, 'Oh, no, we want to have the people.' That is fine, Mr Turnbull. The people will get to decide at the next election. What I do not understand is why he wants to have a $150 million taxpayer-funded opinion poll designed by the man he replaced to delay marriage equality in his country. Another example of what Mr Turnbull does or does not believe in is: will he...
move to an emissions trading scheme or will he compromise? Has he done a deal to obtain the highest office in the land which means throwing overboard issues which he said he has believed in for a very long time?

The truth is that Australia wants more than a new Liberal leader; it wants a new direction. Mr Turnbull yesterday, said that the case for change was this: we need to have a cabinet government. Thanks for telling us that for the last two years you were not participating in a cabinet government. When did you decide that the cabinet government was not a cabinet government, and why did it take you two years and two rotten budgets to be truthful with the Australian people? Mr Turnbull said yesterday the case for dumping Mr Abbott was that there have been 30 Newspolls in a row. That is it—30 Newspolls in a row—and they decided: 'That's it, Mr Abbott. We are going to change who the leader is.' Furthermore, what he and his deputy said is that there was real change in the party room. Well, apart from the deputy leader and Mr Turnbull, actually there were only 52 people that changed what they thought. So all of this is the case for sacking Mr Abbott: the panic of a bare majority of Liberal MPs and some opinion polls.

I do not think, though, that last night was all about that. I think it was actually a rejection of Mr Abbott on some deeper grounds. It was not just the self-interest of Liberal MPs and it was not just a string of bad opinion polls. Last night was not just a rejection of Mr Abbott; it was a rejection of the last two years. How dreadful it must feel to wake up every morning and work in a government and realise your first two years of government has to be junked. How dreadful must it be to look in the mirror and realise that the nation does not want what you have been selling Australia: two years under this dysfunctional government, two years under what has clearly been a very divided government—although no-one told Mr Hockey what was going on at all.

But the real problems are not the dislikes of those opposite me. The real problem is that unemployment is up. I think we are all sick and tired of the government saying there have been a certain number of jobs created. Why don't they tell the truth? When you look at the number of extra Australians in the last two years of adult working age, only 57 per cent of these people are actually in work. The real truth of the matter is that this has been a lacklustre, do-nothing, disastrous government. Underemployment is up. Youth unemployment is up. Debt is up. Deficit is up. Growth is down. Confidence is down. Real wages increases are down on what they have normally been. We have just gone through two years of cuts to pensions, cuts to schools, cuts to hospitals, cuts to families, cuts to carers, cuts to veterans and attacks on Medicare. There are the $100,000 degrees. There have been even been cuts to the ABC and SBS.

The truth is that the question that Australians have is: what does Mr Turnbull believe in? Does he believe that this is just a question of changing the salesman or the product? Is it just a change of leader or is it a change of direction? The truth is that all those people who voted Mr Abbott out last night—Mr Turnbull and his whole coterie of supporters—have voted for every cut for every pension. There are reams of transcripts. This group, who now say that the economic direction has been wrong, were for two years cheering it along. They have sat at the same cabinet table and they have signed the same deals. I believe now that the burden is upon Mr Turnbull to choose policies that are in the best interests of this nation to prove that he believes in something beyond his own promotion.
Our party is guided by universal principles. We have certainty and comfort in our values and our vision. We shall see where this rather ratty Liberal Party goes. There is a chance for this nation to step up and debate policies in this parliament for the next election that give Australians a genuine choice about the best path to the future. Labor is up for this challenge. We will find out if the government are.

Mr BILLSON (Dunkley—Minister for Small Business) (15:53): We learnt nothing about Labor from the contribution from the Leader of the Opposition. He was masquerading. He was supposed to be talking about economic stability and the plan for employment and economic growth. We heard absolutely nothing—not a word—from Labor. This is the two years of living dangerously for Bill Shorten. In that time he has had to placate the unions. He has had to keep the Labor crowd together. He has had to go further to the left to make sure his popularity was not I suppose displaced by the popularity of Mr Albanese. He knew he was not the popular choice so he has had to do the bidding of the union movement to keep his grasp on power.

We heard the Leader of the Opposition, a fully owned subsidiary of the union movement. He was to talk about a plan for the future and yet we managed to get absolutely nothing. He talked about wasted years. The wasted years were clearly the wasted years of Labor. They have talked about being constructive but have not managed to do it. They have moved further to the left, further from the sensible centre of Australian politics. They have sought to hide from their record of failure, lack of commitment and their complete absence of a plan when they were in office. They talk about what everyone else should be doing.

Even today when the 29th Prime Minister of Australia had his first question time what did we get from Labor? We often look to the member for Blaxland. Some people have him in high regard—I have him in high regard. He ended up wanting to have a conversation about whether the new Prime Minister has personally poleaxed somebody. What does that add? How does that help in any way whatsoever to get more opportunities for jobs in our economy and stronger growth and to build resilience and agility in our nation? It does not help at all, but it tells you all you need to know about modern Labor. They are not interested in policy issues. They are not interested in turning their mind to the challenges that we face as a nation. They are not interested in crafting policies that enable us to be the best we possibly can be as an economy and as a people. No, we get a question about someone being poleaxed. That says all you need to know. For all of their talk Labor has no credibility.

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr BILLSON: They have lots to say as interjections but that adds nothing in terms of some sort of alternative plan. They damaged the economy. They hurt and harmed businesses. They hard-wired in economic challenges and budget burns with no plan to meet them. They have damaged every respect of good governance. They have no credibility at all to speak about the performance of this government, because they left such a mess and we are getting on with the job of fixing it.

They have spent the last 10 months or so defending a carbon tax. They have consistently voted to keep it, to hit and harm Australian households and small businesses. They do not build our capacity to compete and win new economic opportunities made possible by free trade agreements—no, they want to nobble our capacity to take advantage of those agreements and then bag the agreements as well. I recount in this place that the now
opposition leader when he was the tsar of the Australian Workers Union seconded a motion at the Labor state conference—I think in 2004—opposing a free trade agreement with China before negotiations had even started. Before those negotiations even started he was against any kind of agreement with China that would open up jobs and trading opportunities. So let us have none of this nonsense from Labor that there are deficiencies in the deal. They do not want any deal at all. Why don't they want any deal at all? Because that is what the unions demand of them.

It is interesting to see where the strength in the union movement is. The unions are most dominant in the areas of the economy that are not trade exposed. That is where they are bullying, pushing around, huffing, puffing, blustering and demanding good things for the unions even if they harm the economy. They think it does not matter because all it does is push up costs and damage opportunities for others.

Do you see much union activity in the traded sector of the economy? No, you do not. This is why you see this inherent hostility to trade opportunities, to opening the door to hundreds of millions of new prospective customers—the very markets that enable our agile and enterprising businesses to delight those customers and grow the economy and the jobs that flow from them. That is what we are trying to do. Labor cannot even face up to its ambition to make it harder for Australian businesses to win the contest of modern economies—that is, new markets that are not reserved for us. This is what Labor does not seem to understand.

Yes, we are an increasingly global marketplace. These trade agreements give us an advantage to make the most out of those trade opportunities to create new customers, new value, new jobs and new growth opportunities.

What does Labor want to do? Nobble our potential to meet that—load up the burdens of carbon taxes and keep the red tape festival they presided over so we lose the agility and the capacity to win those markets. Newsflash for Labor: there is a world of delicious opportunities out there but they are not reserved for us. We need to win them; we need to work to secure them and get the economic benefits that flow from them. That is off the back of the price that all of our citizens in our nation are paying for six years of Labor incompetence. We are still paying $1 billion a month to service Labor's debt. We borrowed $100 million today because of the budget settings hard-wired by an incompetent and economically illiterate Labor Party that has learnt nothing over the journey.

While we repair the budget so we live within our means, while we deal with changes in the economy, from the mining sector to the non-mining sector, while we address the demography that is having an impact on our future opportunities, while we work hard to boost productivity, entrepreneurship and private endeavour—all of the things we need to grow the incomes for the future and to underwrite the great promise of our country that the next generation will have it better than us—what do we get from Labor? Obstruction. No ideas. No capacity to engage in a constructive way. Just thinking that life is about a Labor Party branch meeting.

As long as they keep talking the talk that they like hearing amongst themselves, ignoring—is it one in eight members of our economy who are members of a union?—the interests of the rest of the economy, ignoring the opportunities we want to provide to those people looking for jobs, for new markets and for new ways to grow the economy, we have that plan and we have been implementing that plan. It is to repair the budget and it is to remove the obstacles to
economic and jobs growth. You can see the results, which are extremely strong and positive. They build a great foundation for the next phase of clear-sighted and clear-minded coalition policy.

The economy is now $68 billion larger than when we inherited it from Labor. There are over 300,000 living, breathing Australians who have jobs now compared with under Labor. There are more women in the workforce than ever before and more women creating the new enterprises for the future than ever before. These are deserving of celebration. They are positive momentum. They are about opportunities and the results of a clear plan. Jobs growth in the Australian economy has been 10 times the jobs growth that we inherited from Labor. Our jobs growth makes look pale the jobs opportunity in other economies, like the US, the UK and Canada. In fact, our jobs growth over the past year has been stronger than any G7 nation around the world. If only there were a job for every bit of interjection from Labor members—there would be no unemployment, because they would just keep gobbing off without putting forward any alternative plan.

We see that job advertisements are up. That is a good sign for the future. Retail sales are up. Exports are up. For residential-building construction—for those Labor members who do not realise—for the subcontractors, the self-employed, who are at the heart of the one million construction employees, this is good news. We have building construction. That is houses being built at a 23 per cent higher rate than at the last election. Personal bankruptcies and the challenging economic insecurity that creates are at a 20-year low. We are seeing investment in the services sector.

Ms Butler interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Whiteley): Order! The member for Griffith will either return to her seat—she should be quiet anyway.

Mr BILLSON: It is something we should all celebrate, because 70 per cent of our economy is in the services sector. We are seeing investment right across the services sector. Dun & Bradstreet nailed it a fortnight ago when they said we are seeing robust levels of optimism across all sectors of the Australian business community. This is fantastic! In 2014, 223,000 new companies were registered. This is really a positive sign. We are encouraging the small business men and women, and that is great.

Ms Plibersek interjecting—

Mr BILLSON: That is all you have, is it? You have no content but you can pass me a book. That is fantastic. You could probably write a book on which one of you guys will be the deputy leader! What we are doing is energising enterprise. It is private endeavour. It is encouragement and incentive for courageous men and women investing in their ideas and ambitions to grow our economy. That is a plan. We have a plan and it is working. All Labor has is politics. What a surprise! (Time expired)

Ms PLIBERSEK (Sydney—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (16:03): You have a plan so cunning, haven't you? From one end of the member for Wentworth's universe to another, from Edgecliff all the way to Watsons Bay, people are breathing a sigh of relief. Finally, someone sensible is in charge, they are thinking. The member for Wentworth has been out there for six years—a nod, a wink, a quiet word here—saying, 'Gosh, this Tony Abbott; he's not much good, is he? Put me in charge and see how things will change.'
We had a question time today that showed exactly how little things will change with the change of leadership. Here we have the people of Australia thinking, 'Thank goodness, we can have a change in climate change. We can have more ambitious targets; 50 per cent renewable energy. We can do something about funding for the ABC. We can move forward on marriage equality. We can do something about public transport.' I have never seen more selfies of someone catching a train! Does he want an award for this? They are thinking, 'We can restore some funding to the aid budget.' All of these changes that the member for Wentworth has been intimating to the people of Australia—with a nod, a wink and a sly word here and a little bit of tricky talk there—we saw today how long that lasted. It did not even last for question time.

We had a Prime Minister today who said he is going to stick with $100,000 university degrees. He said that in question time today. He said, 'We support all of our current policies.' We thought, perhaps, he could have used today to reset on climate change—but no. He did not just defend the weak, pathetic targets that the coalition have come up with, he defended the mechanism that he said—I cannot say it, it is unparliamentary, but the first letter is a B and the last letter is a T. That is what he called Tony Abbott's climate-change policy. He said, 'Any suggestion you can dramatically cut emissions without any cost is to use a favourable term of Mr Abbott's'—moreover, he knows it. It is the fig leaf that he has adopted for his own fig leaf. And it comes to ABC cuts. ABC cuts that the communications minister has been trying to intimate to his supporters: 'We can change it; we can fix it if only you elect me'. No, he has also defended those changes to cuts. But if there are to be savings made across the board, 'The ABC and the SBS should not expect to be exempt,' he said.

Today, in question time, I asked what the Prime Minister said would be the 'obvious question to ask' about marriage equality. If it is the obvious question to ask, I am amazed that he did not have a better response than to say, 'Yes, as late as 11 August this year I was saying a plebiscite was a terrible idea. But now I have had to win over the right-wing of the Liberal Party; suddenly, it is great public policy. Suddenly, I am a true democrat.'

What we have found through question time, today, is that this new Prime Minister is just like the old one. The policies are the same. There is a difference to the style, but the policies are the same. We have found out in one short question time that the new Prime Minister is a hollow man. This new Prime Minister is the man who accused John Howard of being the Prime Minister that broke the nation's heart. But this is the Prime Minister who will break the heart of the progressive end of the Liberal Party.

It is not me saying so, it is Jeff Kennett:

This is a very, very sad day. … This is an individual who always puts self interest first.

So says Jeff Kennett:

You self centered, selfish individual. It has always been about you. … You have … put your own interests above all.

Again, that was Jeff Kennett. But what about Brendan Nelson, a leading light of the left of the Liberal Party? He said that Mr Turnbull has:

… got narcissistic personality disorder. He says the most appalling things and can't understand why people get upset.

Tom Switzer said:
… Turnbull's record as opposition leader three years ago helps explain why ordinary Australians shrug their shoulders with a profound lack of interest. All that he displayed as leader was an ignorance of his party's core beliefs, a detachment from a clear majority of the electorate, and his own arrogance and inexperience.

This new Prime Minister is Tony Abbott 'light'. No change to policy, just a change to the style.

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong—Assistant Treasurer) (16:08): The member for Sydney had no energy, no conviction, no policy and no ideas in that little speech, because—you know why, Mr Speaker—she is part of the guilty party. She is part of the party that took a situation with no government debt and no interest on that debt and gave us a trajectory of $667 billion worth of debt and an interest bill of $1 billion a month, growing to $3 billion a month.

Who could forget those 21,000 cheques for $900 to dead people, and those 27,000 cheques for $900 to people overseas? Who could forget that deadly, costly, pink batt disaster? Who could forget the cash for clunkers? Who could forget the overpriced school halls? Who could forget the $11 billion wasted on a failed border protection policy that tragically saw lives lost at sea? Who could forget the more than $29 billion wasted on an NBN? And who could forget having six small-business ministers in just six years? And now the member for Sydney is walking out, cowardly, from this place because she has refused to listen to the arguments and refused to take the blame for her poor performance as part of a government that received the lowest primary vote in 100 years! Her party, because of its poor economic performance, received the lowest primary vote in 100 years!

In contrast, this government, has got on with the job of creating more than 300,000 jobs, and more than 170,000 jobs for women so that female workforce participation is at its highest levels since records first began. Who can forget those three free trade agreements with our biggest trading partners in Asia—with Korea, Japan and China? There is a fault line here in this parliament between those on this side of the House, who believe in jobs through free trade, and those sitting opposite, who believe in xenophobic campaigns that are run at the behest of the union movement.

Mr Speaker, did you know that the 95 per cent of all of the goods that we export to China will be tariff free over the life of this agreement? Did you know that Australian dairy farmers are currently behind their New Zealand cousins, because New Zealand has no tariffs on its dairy? They will benefit from this agreement. Or did you know that Australian wine producers, that currently have up to a 14 per cent tariff on their exports to China, are behind their New Zealand cousins, who do not have any tariffs? We will all benefit under this agreement.

What about in financial services? There are 400,000 jobs in Australia in financial services. That is nearly 10 per cent of our economy. We will be supercharged in the financial services sector by virtue of this China-Australia Free Trade Agreement, because we are good in wealth management, we are good in banking and we are good in superannuation. And they are the products that we will export into Asia, and we will benefit from the three billion people that enter into that middle-class over the coming decades.

What about our small businesses in Australia—the more than two million businesses that employ more than four million people who benefit from the lowest small-business company tax rates in Australia's history as a result of Joe Hockey's last budget? Who can benefit more
than small business and big business from the more than $2 trillion that we have cut from red tape? Who can benefit from those innovative policies, like getting rid of the employee share ownership schemes that existed under Labor? Under this government we have produced a much more small-business-friendly employee share ownership scheme. And what about in tax and what we have done to abolish the carbon and mining taxes? We have not gone through with Labor's policies of billions of extra dollars on superannuation, negative gearing and multinational taxes that ACCI and the BCA say will send investment and jobs offshore. What about our infrastructure policies, which are a record $50 billion spend on infrastructure projects like the WestConnex. It would have been on the East West Link too, but for the Labor Party introducing sovereign risk into this country by ripping up contracts.

You see those on the opposite side, led by the Leader of the Opposition, are not fit to govern again, because they do not recognise the fault of their ways and they do not recognise that we in the coalition are best placed to serve the Australian people.

Dr CHALMERS (Rankin) (16:14): In their stupendous arrogance they think that if they apply a smug, self-satisfied coat of paint on the same policies that nobody will notice. In their breathtaking arrogance they think they can say one thing to one group of Australians and another thing to another group of Australians, and that they will not be found out. In their astounding arrogance they think they can change the soundtrack but not the movie and that people will stand up and applaud.

The unfortunate truth for Australia is that the nation now has a Prime Minister who has spent his entire career pretending to be something that he is not. For as long as we can remember, this is a man who has put the 'con' in 'conviction'. It began so long ago when he was sitting down with Richo trying to get a Labor Senate seat in the mid-1990s, when he was all for the Labor Party and he was ready to do a deal with Richo to be on our side of the parliament, in the red house. When there was political capital in believing in a republic or believing in climate change or in marriage equality, he was all for it. When it was an opportunity to differentiate himself from the Prime Minister, he was all for it. But now there is no price that he would not pay for the job he now occupies. His suite of policies is indistinguishable from that of the man he replaced. The next thing we know he will be trying to squeeze himself awkwardly into those little red swimmers. He is so like the man that he replaced. There was the embarrassing display in question time today when he stood up and said, 'Oh, no, these pathetic emissions targets that we've announced—I'm all for those,' and, 'Do you know what? I don't think we should have a conscience vote on marriage equality anymore,' and, 'Do you know what? All of the things that I pretended to believe in, I no longer believe in.'

He wants Australians to believe that if he changes the colour of his tie from light blue to purple then people will forget this disastrous government and all of its policies. But they will not forget that he went on radio and said, 'I support, unreservedly and wholeheartedly, every element in the budget—every single one.' They will not forget that he stood at that dispatch box and said, 'But of course every single member of the government supported every element in the budget.' He supports cuts to pensions, to schools, to hospitals, to families, to carers, to veterans. He supports the attacks on Medicare, the $100,000 degrees, the cuts to the ABC and the SBS—the whole thing. He is in full-throated agreement with every single part of that disaster.
He said yesterday that the government has not been successful in providing economic leadership. The member for North Sydney said straight after that that he has never said to the member for North Sydney or to the cabinet that we are heading in the wrong economic direction. He has even disowned the comments that he made not 24 hours ago. He is just as responsible for the smoking policy ruin as any other member on that side of the House. His fingerprints are on every aspect of that disaster: unemployment up, underemployment up, youth unemployment up, debt up, deficit up, growth down, confidence down and wages down. And he has made his own unique contribution to this cacophony of catastrophes with an NBN which is half as good as ours and cost twice as much money. What a disaster!

He wants us to believe that everything has changed now that he has come to the rescue, but nothing has changed. Nothing has changed when it comes to the policy agenda of those opposite. It is not a reset; it is a rerun. The policies are the same. The dog-eat-dog ideology is the same. The message to Australians that you are all on your own to fend for yourselves is the same—the same trickle-down economics that says that if we accumulate lots of wealth at the very top of society then maybe some people at the very bottom will get the scraps, but probably not.

Australians are not fooled by this smug, self-satisfied coat of paint that those opposite are trying to apply to the policy disasters that they have piled up over two years in government. Australians know that you do not fix a catastrophe with cosmetics. Australians need real change. Our quarter-century of remarkable economic growth is at real risk if we continue down the wrong path that those opposite are walking Australia down. The Leader of the Opposition is right: as a nation we have to decide whether we get smarter or we get poorer. If we want to get smarter, we have to invest in science and technology. We have to teach and train our people for the jobs of the future. We have to grow our economy so that there is enough opportunity and enough prosperity to go around. They will not get that agenda from that side of the House, no matter who leads them. They will get that agenda from this side of the House, and the next election cannot come soon enough.

Ms O’Dwyer (Higgins—Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer) (16:19): For anybody listening to this debate, I think it is worth reiterating what it was that the matter being brought forward by those opposite actually is. The matter is: ‘The failure of the government to provide stable and competent government at a time of increased unemployment and economic uncertainty’. I have not heard anything from those opposite that goes to the real question as to whether or not this government is providing stable government and whether or not we have the economic vision right for the nation. I am here to say that the answer is that we are providing stable government and we are providing the right economic vision for the nation. I know those opposite, those in the Labor Party, do not like to let facts get in the way of a good story but, for those interested in this motion, it is important to get some of those economic facts on the record.

The first is on employment. Let’s just understand this. Have the employment figures gone up or have they gone down? They have gone up. There are now over 300,000 people in Australia who are in work as a result of the policy settings of this government. More Australians are in work than ever before. And, in fact, more women in Australia are at work than ever before—more than 160,000 women are in jobs since the time that the previous government was in government in 2013. In fact, in Australia jobs growth this year has been
10 times that of the legacy that Labor left us with. When you compare us to the rest of the world—and I know they like to compare us to the rest of the world—jobs growth in Australia over the past year has been stronger than that of the US, the UK and Canada. In fact, it has been stronger than that of any other G7 nation. So do not let facts get in the way of a good story, because they do not fit with the narrative that those opposite are presenting.

Why is our focus on the economic policy of this country and on creating jobs working? It is working because we are focused on long-term plans and on a vision for the future of this nation, such as the economic opportunity that comes from delivering free trade agreements. During the course of this government we have been able to deliver three free trade agreements: with China, with South Korea and also with Japan. The one we are looking to deliver right now is with China, and that is the one that is at risk because of those opposite.

Independent modelling has demonstrated that, if we can deliver all three of these free trade agreements, we will add more than $24 billion over the next 20 years to our economy. That $24 billion will mean that we have increased opportunities for Australian businesses to grow jobs, our exporters will have access to markets that they have never had access to before, and our financial services industry will have, in China, the opportunity to compete as never before. This is to the great benefit of all Australians. But what are the risks? Well, let's go to one of the Labor luminaries who I think outlines the great economic risk that is in this place. Martin Ferguson said—

**Mr Conroy:** You said Labor luminaries, not turncoats.

**Ms O'DWYER:** He said:

… too many of that shadow ministry and the caucus are almost as if they're prisoners of the union movement … they wait for the phone call from the trade union heavy to tell them what to do.

And that is what they are doing now. They are listening to the CFMEU and they are dancing to their tune—

**Mr Conroy interjecting**—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Charlton that he was warned in question time.

**Ms O'DWYER:** They are dancing to their tune and, because they are doing this, they are at risk of imperilling the future economic opportunities of Australians—to their shame. I say to them: be honest with the Australian people. Be honest with them and come clean with them about the future opportunities that you are blocking. (Time expired)

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I give the call to the lucky-to-still-be-here member for Charlton.

**Mr CONROY** (Charlton) (16:24): I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker Whiteley. I am indebted to your generosity, as always. This MPI is about stable government, or more correctly the lack of stable government. What we have seen on the other side is all chaos. Instead of concentrating on combating the increasing economic uncertainty, the jobs crisis and the failure to get investment into this economy, we have seen infighting and desperate manoeuvres. We have seen Kevin Andrews attack the member for Wentworth, publicly run against the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, get smashed in the ballot and then do the most
publicly sycophantic suck-up job to retain his defence ministership. This is the quality of them. The tragedy is that this impacts on our economy. This impacts on the future prosperity of Australia.

The truth is that all that they have changed is the salesman. The package is still a stinking carcass and it is still a used car of woeful proportions. They have just changed the used car salesman trying to sell the Leyland P76. That is what they are trying to do. They have replaced the member for Warringah with a man with some reputation. The new Prime Minister does have a reputation. He is a man who professes that his first love is for himself—so he has been honest at times! He is a man who will, I am confident, prove that the grass is always greener when you look at leadership stakes. He is a man whose management style—he ran his campaign on reforming cabinet government—has been referred to by Annabel Crabb, in her excellent piece ‘Stop at nothing’, as ‘bad Malcolm’. She said:

Bad Malcolm, however, can be anywhere on the scale from distant to vicious, none of it good. Bad Malcolm is well known for blowing up at his staff… ‘He was not really interested in the tools he had; he just worked to bully them into getting the job done. If they were inappropriate for the job, he’d just keep bashing them against a rock until they were finished.”

Mr Watts: They are the tools.

Mr CONROY: Yes, that is very true. They are the tools over the other side that will be bashed. I withdraw. I withdraw. I accept that.

Mr McCormack: And your mate can withdraw too!

Mr Watts: I withdraw.

Mr CONROY: Returning to the point, we are supposedly going to see good cabinet management from ‘bad Malcolm’. That is the truth of the matter. But it is no surprise, because ‘bad Malcolm’, or the Prime Minister, has a particularly dystopian view of humanity, and we have to include Australians in it. This is a man who supposedly will care for the huge number of jobless Australians, but here is a man who has said on the public record, ‘One has to be somewhat egotistical to achieve anything given the jealous carping nature of the mass of humanity.’ So it is hard to believe that this man, now that he has the reins of power, will somehow discover a new love for Australians and a new love for people who are out of work right now—the 800,000 unemployed Australians.

That is why this MPI is so important. You do not have to go further than the Hansard to understand his real lack of concern and the fact that he is completely out of touch with the struggles of Australians. This MPI is about jobs, so I went back and looked at the Prime Minister’s contribution to the Hansard on jobs in his 11-year career in this place. When you strip away references to ‘someone had a job to do’ or ‘someone is doing a good job’, guess how many times he has actually spoken in parliament about creating jobs. Give me a number.

Dr Chalmers: Hundreds.

Mr CONROY: Hundreds, the member for Rankin said.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! You will not engage in surveying.

Mr CONROY: Eighteen! There are 18 references to jobs in an 11-year parliamentary career. I checked it. I double-checked. To put that into context, for example, he has made references to rugby, sailing and wine the same combined number of times that he has mentioned job creation—rugby, sailing and wine! That was not isolated. The same number of
times he has mentioned 'job creation', he has mentioned 'chardonnay', 'cafe', 'Ferrari', 'poultry' and 'luxury'. This is a man completely out of touch with the real struggles of Australians. I pleased to note that he has mentioned 'Conrovian' 19 times.

An opposition member: More times than jobs?

Mr CONROY: More times than jobs. He has mentioned my name—unfortunately with reference to a senator rather than me—more times than he has mentioned job creation in this place.

I will finish by saying that I am looking forward to him continuing to be the minister for women—because we have talked about female participation before. I am looking forward to him continuing to be a proud minister for women in the fine tradition of the member for Warringah. I am happy to inform the House that he won a poultry prize for a poem entitled 'A woman is just a women, but a good cigar is a smoke'. This is the quality of the Prime Minister we have in this country. This is the quality of a man who cares nothing about real Australians, who will divide this country and run this country to the ground just like his predecessor. (Time expired)

Ms MARINO (Forrest—Government Whip) (16:29): The MPI before the House today is misleading, which is not unusual given the other side of the House. This is often the case. The poorly worded and researched opposition MPI makes it a statement based on inaccurate premises. This MPI bases itself on economic uncertainty.

Let me give the House some economic certainties that belie both the premise and the motion itself. What we can be certain of is that we as a coalition government were left with a legacy of abject economic failure from those years of the previous Labor government. We also know for certain, because it is written in the history books, that in 2007 the Howard government left office with Australia carrying a budget surplus of $20 billion, and not a net debt but a net surplus of over two per cent of GDP. We can also be certain that in two terms of government the Labor Party turned that into a budget cash deficit of nearly $50 billion and a net debt of 10 per cent of GDP. How can we be sure? Let's use the ABC, whose Fact Check division carries this quote:
The 45 years of historical data in the budget papers shows that when the Coalition won the 2013 election, the deficit was 1.2 per cent of GDP—
This is Fact Check—
… Mr Rudd inherited a surplus but Mr Howard received a deficit amounting to 2.9 per cent of GDP.

What we can be certain of is that Labor spends money and sends our great nation into debt. It repeatedly relies on a coalition government to get this nation out of the trouble that Labor creates. We can be certain again that Labor's last five years of government saw cumulative deficits of $191 billion—that is a proud record for Labor. It is certain that this profligate spending by Labor saw gross debt blow out to $360 billion and net debt passing $200 billion. That is the Labor legacy and the Labor way. It is also certain that this debt left to the government by Labor is costing us more than $12 billion in interest every year. That is $1 billion a month in interest thanks to Labor, or $33 million a day thanks to Labor or $1.4 million an hour thanks to Labor. In fact, for the duration of this short address alone we can be certain that the interest bill being paid by the Australian government and the Australian taxpayer—thanks to Labor—is $116,000. We have a lot to be grateful for with Labor.
If Australia were to endure another Labor government it is absolutely certain that we would be heading for bigger deficits and much greater debt. In fact, had they won in 2013 we would have had a projected $123 billion in additional debt in the subsequent four years, projected to peak at an astounding $667 billion of gross debt. The National Commission of Audit identified that, if left unchecked, government expenditure would have exploded from $409 billion to $700 billion within a decade. We can be certain that no Labor government would have paid it back. That was obvious.

We can be certain that the mining boom prices may have come to an end and that while the mining sector will continue to make a massive contribution to our economy the enormous growth of the last decade will not be sustained. Mining will return to long-term average prices and long-term average growth, as every smart analyst predicted. And we can be certain that the debt Labor left us will, under another Labor government, be left to our children and grandchildren to pay off. I have to say, there were some children up in the gallery here. I look at those kids and I think, ‘They are the ones who will have to pay off a debt created by those opposite during their time in government.’ Intergenerational transfer of debt. I found that absolutely appalling.

So, there is a lot of certainty around the economy. More importantly, this nation certainly cannot afford another Labor government. I look at the unfunded promises that Labor is making—billions and billions of unfunded promises ahead and more debt for this nation should Labor ever get back into government. (Time expired)

Ms BUTLER (Griffith) (16:34): It is a pleasure to speak to the matter of public importance before the House today, because it is actually very important that we talk about the failure of the Turnbull-Abbott government to deliver stability. We have seen an utter failure to provide any stability and it is an utter shame, particularly given the challenging economic times in which we live.

Mr Deputy Speaker, if you want to think about those challenging economic times, I think it is always useful to give a bit of a stocktake of where we are. At the moment we have unemployment that is not only above six per cent but that has been six per cent or higher since May 2014, coincidentally the date of the first Abbott-Turnbull budget—that disgrace of a federal budget that we saw last year that so shattered confidence and harmed our economy.

What else can we say about the economic circumstances of the time? Last quarter’s GDP growth was 0.2 of one per cent—a shocking result. It is even more shocking when you realise that it is half of what the government thought our GDP growth was going to be for the quarter. Probably even more concerning, I think, for the people in this parliament is the fact that disposable income per capita has contracted for five consecutive quarters. For the past five consecutive quarters, gross disposable income per capita has shrunk. It is a very concerning state of affairs that we have for the people of this nation. What is the point of stable government and what is the point of good government if not to deliver for the living standards of the people of this nation?

These are very troubling times for our country and these troubling times demand strong leadership. They demand stable government and they demand a group of parliamentarians in whom the public can have trust. But what have we got instead? We saw the knifing of a Prime Minister last night by someone whose self-interest is a matter of public record.
It is almost as though we are dealing with someone who, for all of his life, wanted to be Prime Minister. In fact, he actually did a really interesting interview some time ago, in which he claimed that he would be Prime Minister before he was 40. When asked for which party, he said, 'Oh, it doesn't matter.' This is the importance of power to this man. This is a man who cares about powers so much that he is prepared to compromise on principles that he purportedly held dear. He would sell his own grandmother in order to be the Prime Minister. It is a surprise that he has not done that!

Last night I thought to myself, 'This man is a sell-out.' What did I get today? Confirmation of the fact that he is a sell-out. Last night it was a suspicion. But today in question time it was proven beyond any doubt when this Prime Minister stood up for the radical Right of his party, for the radical Right of his base, when he compromised on his previously held-so-dear commitment to combating climate change, caring about the future of this world and actually taking meaningful action on climate change. What has he done? He said, 'Oh well, I know these targets are terrible, but I'm going to cop them because that is what the Right needs for me to become Prime Minister.' That is the sort of man we now have in the prime ministership of this nation—someone who would compromise on climate change.

It is actually worse than it was under former Prime Minister Abbott. Prime Minister Abbott did not believe in climate change. He thought the science was—I cannot use the unparliamentary language, but we know what he thought of the science. We also know that this Prime Minister actually understands the science and the significance of climate change and the challenge that our globe faces. Even though he understands the challenge that we all face and the work that needs to be done, nonetheless, he is prepared to cop to the radical Right and the inadequate targets that the former Prime Minister, the member for Warringah, had determined. He is going to cop them, even though he knows it is the wrong thing to do and that is why, when it comes to climate change, he is worse than the former Prime Minister.

He is also worse when it comes to marriage equality. Marriage equality is something that so many people across our country hold dear. So many people, their friends, their families, would like to see it resolved and resolved without a divisive national fight and a national publicly funded opinion poll. The Prime Minister knows how we can do it. We can do it with a free vote, but he is sold out on that as well. He is a sell-out of a Prime Minister. It is a disgrace.

Mr McCormack (Riverina—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance) (16:39): Second Deputy Speaker, welcome back to the chamber. I rise to speak on this matter of public importance. As I do so, I am here to answer some of the criticism that has been levelled at the new Prime Minister in relation to his negotiations with the National Party, of which I am a proud member. It is much better to do a deal with the National Party—under the longstanding arrangements that have always been in place for decades and decades with the coalition agreement—than it is to do a deal with the Greens and with the Independents, as happened after the 2010 election.

The agreement that the Nationals have signed with the member for Wentworth today underpins the relationship between the Liberal and National parties in the government going forward. The member for Wide Bay and the member for Wentworth have agreed on a broad range of key policy issues, including but not limited to maintaining the existing policies in relation to climate action, carbon taxes and emission reduction targets. That is important.
Also, the transfer of responsibility for the water policy outcomes of the Department of the Environment and the Murray-Darling Basin Authority to the agriculture portfolio. That is important. We had Greens Senator Sarah Hanson-Young wanting to take 6,000 gigalitres of productive water out of the Murray-Darling Basin system. We are putting it back where it needs to go and that is in the agriculture portfolio.

Also, ongoing funding for communications technology, including the mobile phone and television black spot programs. The parliamentary secretary at the table has done magnificent work in regional areas with the black spot program and that will continue in the government led by the member for Wentworth.

Also, the establishment of a new jobs program to address areas of high regional unemployment. Those over on that side do not care about the coalmines in Queensland. They do not care about unemployment in regional areas, but we do.

Also, a proper consideration by cabinet of amendments to the Australian Competition and Consumer Act to prevent abuse of market power and that will come as welcome news to many.

Also, support for the government's Infrastructure Investment Program, including the Nationals' commitment to the Inland Rail and the implementation of a plan to overcome financial barriers in accessing higher education for rural, regional and remote students. I well recall how those students were abandoned by Labor in the 43rd Parliament.

Also, support for the Nationals' commitment to the Northern Australia and Agriculture white papers and our dams implementation policies. We had a dams phobia over on the other side. We have had it for a long time, but we are in the process of identifying sites and, what is more, building dams to fill them with productive water for agricultural use.

Also, maintaining the existing policy to refer the same-sex marriage issue to a plebiscite of the people in our next term. We can think what we like about same-sex marriage, but we are going to give the people their say. And what is wrong with that?

Also, increased family tax benefit part B payments to stay-at-home parent families, with a child under the age of one being eligible. That is also important, because some people choose to stay at home and raise their families. And why not give them some relief? My goodness, Labor doesn't. It means that the Nationals are delivering for regional Australia, as we always will. It means that the member for Wentworth is prepared to see that the Nationals will continue to deliver for regional Australia. It means that the Liberal Party, unlike the Labor Party, does not make dodgy deals with suspect parties to get a broad range of policy and programs through. We saw what Labor did in the last term with the one Green member of parliament, the member for Melbourne. But we have seen today and last night the fact that the Liberals identify that regional Australia is important. We have seen that the National Party are always prepared to stand up for rural and regional Australians. That will continue. There are good regional Liberal members of government. They will benefit. All of regional Australia will benefit from the policies that we have been able to negotiate in this new coalition agreement. It is important.

This matter of public importance is an absolute nonsense inasmuch as it talks about jobs. Only 2,000 jobs a month were delivered under Labor. There are currently 21,000 jobs a month under the coalition government. We heard the Minister for Small Business say that
bankruptcies are down to a 20-year low. We heard the Treasurer talking about the 75 registered cranes in Sydney's central business district and, if you count a kilometre of the CBD of Sydney, it is 165. We are getting on with the job of building a better Australia. The Nationals are getting on with the job of building a better regional Australia, and I am sure that the Turnbull-Truss government will continue to do that in spades.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Mitchell): Order! The time allotted for this debate has expired.

MOTIONS
Coalition Government

Debate resumed on the motion:

That so much of the standing and sessional orders be suspended as would prevent the Member for Watson from moving the following motion forthwith—

That this House calls on the Government to end its internal arguments and actually govern the country and if it can't, to restore the selection of the Prime Minister to the people in an election, where it should be.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Mitchell) (16:44): In accordance with standing order 133(c) I shall now proceed to put the question on the motion moved earlier today by the honourable member for Watson on which a division was called for and deferred in accordance with the standing order. No further debate is allowed. The question is that the motion by the member for Watson be agreed to.

The House divided. [16:49]

(The Deputy Speaker—Mr Mitchell)

Aves .................... 45
Noes .................... 79
Majority ............... 34

AYES

Bandt, AP
Burke, AS
Byrne, AM
Champion, ND
Clare, JD
Collins, JM
Elliot, MJ
Feeney, D
Fitzgibbon, JA
Gray, G
Hayes, CP
Jones, SP
Leigh, AK
MacTiernan, AJGC
Neumann, SK
Owens, J
Perrett, GD
Rishworth, AL
Ryan, JC (teller)
Swan, WM
Thomson, KJ

Bird, SL
Butler, TM
Chalmers, JE
Chesters, LM
Claydon, SC
Conroy, PM
Ellis, KM
Ferguson, LDT
Giles, AJ
Hall, JG (teller)
Husic, EN
King, CF
Macklin, JL
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Question negatived.
Debate resumed on the motion:
That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr GRAY (Brand) (16:55): In the East Kimberley, Aboriginal leaders are stepping up to drive a change in direction. They are led by Ian Trust of the Wunan Foundation, Lawford Benning and Ted Hall of the Gelganyem corporation and Des Hill of the Miriuwung Gajjerong Corporation. They are saying that, for the future, a business-as-usual approach is not an option for their people. The leaders' objectives are supported by the local Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley and John Moulden, the mayor of that shire. This has led to the establishment of a complementary trial that will control some of the local flow of alcohol in the Kununurra community. The WA state government has established a complementary effort, led by key ministers of the WA government, to discuss how Aboriginal families, children and individuals can have the best opportunity for success. In this, Minister Helen Morton has been extremely supportive in providing both departmental support but also her own personal oversight.

I have been in the Kimberley recently and spoken to most of the key players in leadership roles. I attended the East Kimberley Aboriginal Achievement Awards, where almost 400 people came together in what is now a regular celebration, every second year, of local Aboriginal achievement. The message from that leadership group was clear. The objectives of Aboriginal leaders are clear. The challenges they face are pervasive and require us to try new mechanisms. Successive state and Commonwealth governments have invested heavily for over a decade in a comprehensive framework of fundamental infrastructure supporting the community of the East Kimberley. That investment has been made across the political divide. It has been made by the former state Labor government, the current coalition government in Western Australia, the current federal government and the former federal government. In a bold future vision for the East Kimberley, significant social investment and hard infrastructure investment has taken place. That investment will only yield dividends when we can collectively stop the damaging behaviour that is linked to alcohol, gambling and drugs.

Achieving the vision that is so strongly embraced in the local area means we must recognise the needs and respond to the leadership by supporting local capability that will allow growth and development to be embedded in a fully functioning community of the East Kimberley. The Prime Minister and Parliamentary Secretary Alan Tudge have recently been in the East Kimberley, and they have seen and heard what I have seen and heard. They have seen and they have heard what the former Prime Minister saw and heard, and they have taken action. This parliament should congratulate them for taking their action. There is a strengthening and growing appreciation of the radical changes that are needed to accommodate the East Kimberley vision and provide a leg-up to families and individuals who face the pressures of alcohol, drugs and gambling. Labor knows that communities want this.

I spoke recently to the Wunan organisation and heard about Ian Trust's 'swimming the river'—a metaphor that he uses for explaining survival in the Kimberley. Ian has strongly supported this action. But part of this action must include additional supports, not just the
debit card. This parliament will stand with communities to make sure that they get the support that they need and that the government systematically delivers what is needed to make this initiative work. To make sure that negotiation with the communities can continue, Labor will not oppose the bill in this House. We will work with those communities and we will work with the government to ensure that we can get this initiative through and give it the best possible chance that it can have to succeed.

Last weekend, while in the Kimberley, I was pleased to meet with Grahame Searle, who has been appointed to lead the regional reform initiative from the government of Western Australia. He is a former Department of Housing Director General, and he left his position in Perth to head to Kununurra in order to head up the reform initiative, supporting the state government's significant investments in the area.

Jenny Goolagong has also provided her presence in the area, supporting the Commonwealth's response, which has led to these very significant reforms through the debit card. In addition to that, the state government has put in place a framework for strategic regional advisory councils in the Kimberley and also in the Pilbara. Minister Helen Morton has asked Patrick Davies, Brenda Garstone, Mary O'Reeri and Martin Sibosado to join the Kimberley council to support the state government's reform initiatives.

So we see very significant initiatives supported by the local shire to control alcohol flow in the community. We see very significant measures being engaged by the state government to support a different way of life in the East Kimberley. We see hundreds of millions of dollars of hard and soft infrastructure investment going into the community, supported by the Rudd government, the Gillard government and the Abbott government, and I am sure it will be supported into the future by the current Turnbull government. And we see the continued support from the governments of Alan Carpenter and then Colin Barnett to support this community through a very difficult transition—to support it not just with spending on infrastructure but also with outstanding public servants, who commit their lives to making the lives of the people of the East Kimberley even better and to allowing a situation to grow whereby the next generation of the East Kimberley's youth have a better opportunity for education and healthier lives as a consequence of controlling and limiting the influence of alcohol in this community.

While I was at the Indigenous achievement awards two weeks ago, the fourth time I have attended these awards, I was struck by the quality of the Aboriginal people who are stepping up in their community to provide leadership in a range of functions. We are seeing the Aboriginal community of Wyndham, East Kimberley, stepping up in areas like sport, education and local business; in providing training, arts and culture; and in supporting family and community life. We should listen to what they say, and what they are saying to us when they step up is that they want to give this debit card a try. They want to make it work in the interests of their community, and mostly they want to give it a go in the interests of their children and in the interests of the future of their community. I commend this bill the House.

Ms HENDERSON (Corangamite) (17:02): I rise to speak on the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Debit Card Trial) Bill 2015. In doing so I want to begin by acknowledging the Labor Party's support of this bill. I think it is fair to say that that too often in this place good policy is opposed by members opposite for perhaps no good reason other than politics. I want to commend particularly the member for Brand for his contribution,
which was very gracious and very constructive. Let us hope that this spirit of cooperation prevails into the future when we present good policy to the House.

This bill introduces a number of measures, including legislation to trial a cashless debit card for Centrelink recipients in communities where there is significant alcohol, drug and/or gambling problems. Locations have been chosen on the basis of their openness to participate in addressing welfare-fuelled alcohol, drug and gambling abuse. As we have heard, Ceduna in South Australia has been selected as the first trial site, and I am very pleased to say that there is tremendous local support for the trial.

The government is also in advanced discussions in the East Kimberley region in WA for a trial in Kununurra. The trial will operate for 12 months and will be assessed to see if it works before any further decisions are made. The government is planning to introduce a cashless debit card trial for up to three discrete communities. These locations will be selected on the basis of high welfare dependence, high social harm indicators and also, very importantly, an openness from community leaders to participate in the trial. The trial is very much focused on reducing social harm, particularly violence directed towards women and children, and issues in relation to child neglect, which predominantly, as we have seen in many communities, is caused by welfare-fuelled alcohol and drug abuse.

The member for Brand has made some very significant and constructive comments about our government's efforts in relation to what we are doing for Indigenous Australians. As I mentioned, his comments were very gracious. I also note the former Prime Minister Tony Abbott's very strong commitment to Indigenous affairs, taking the seat of government to Indigenous communities over the last two years. But I want to make the point that this trial is colourblind. It is not directed at anyone in particular; it is based on the geography and determined by the parameters I have just set out.

I particularly want to commend community leaders in Ceduna in South Australia, who have signed a memorandum of understanding with the Australian government, agreeing to be the first trial site for the debit card. The government has been working very closely with local Ceduna leaders over the last few months, listening to their concerns and jointly designing and agreeing to a trial. On that note I want to commend the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister—or to the former Prime Minister—the member for Aston, for his work in conjunction with members of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. There has been a huge amount of engagement, much discussion, much negotiation and much consideration, and it is to the parliamentary secretary's credit that this trial has been signed and is underway. I can see the member for Brand nodding in furious agreement.

Participants in the trial will receive a mainstream, everyday debit card, which will be connected to the Visa, MasterCard or EFTPOS platform. The card will be able to be used anywhere for the purchase of anything except alcohol and gambling products. Because cash will not be made available from the card, illicit substances will not be able to be purchased.

The Ceduna community agreed that 80 per cent of a person's social security payments will be placed into the recipient's debit card account. The remaining 20 per cent will be placed into the recipient's existing bank account. All working-age social security support recipients within the Ceduna region will be part of the trial and receive the card. Age pensioners, veterans and other workers may also volunteer to opt in.
I think that one of the really important markers of this trial, which perhaps demonstrates the extent to which this has been so comprehensively negotiated, is that a local authority will have the power to adjust the settings down on the card should someone apply to that authority. So, if an individual feels that they need to have access to more cash than, say, the 20 per cent designated to go into their account on a weekly basis, they can make that application, particularly if they are known to be someone who has not been using this money for the purposes of purchasing alcohol or gambling consumption, and then the settings on the card can be adjusted accordingly. Also, to support the implementation of the trial, the federal government will work with state governments and local community leaders to provide a tailored package of additional assistance.

I just want to reflect a little on the community of Ceduna and also, I guess, at this point, invite other communities to look at what is happening in Ceduna and the very proactive and positive way that they have embraced the trial. Ceduna and its surrounding region have a population of just over 4,000. The regional towns that will be captured by the card are Koonibba, Oak Valley, Yalata, Scotdesco, all further west. The region runs all the way to the Western Australian border.

I need to make this particular point. The trial has received the overwhelming support of the community. The community and the community leaders see this as an opportunity to get on top of the social problems which affect their community, and there are significant social problems. In 2013-14, presentations to the hospital emergency department due to alcohol or drug use exceeded 500, more than one per day. The Ceduna sobering-up facility had 4,667 admissions in that same period. Hospitalisations due to assault are 68 times the national average in this particular region.

The Ceduna community heads leadership group—and this is referring to a press release they put out on 5 August 2015—said this of the trial:

We want to build a future for our younger generation to aspire to and believe we cannot do this if our families are caught up in the destructive cycle of alcohol or drugs that destroys our culture, our lands and our communities.

At the heart of this reform, is a change that is being shaped specifically to meet our local needs. It has been a true collaboration to ensure that we can give our mob and our Communities every chance to create real and genuine change in their lives.

We have grasped this initiative; we have helped shape this initiative; and we are confident that this initiative is for the betterment of all people within our region.

As I mentioned, the government is also considering a trial in the East Kimberley and is in some advanced discussions with respect to rolling out the trial there. On 24 July 2015, leaders of the East Kimberley region wrote to the government in support of the trial, stating:

We acknowledge that agreeing to the East Kimberley being a trial site for the restricted debit card may seem to some a rather drastic step. However, it is our view that continuing to deliver the same programs we have delivered for the past forty years will do nothing for our people and, besides wasting more time and money, will condemn our children and future generations to a life of poverty and despair. As leaders in the East Kimberley, we cannot accept this.

In the East Kimberley region, hospitalisations due to assault are in the same range as Ceduna: 68 times the national average. So again we are seeing a community embracing this trial and embracing this debit card for the betterment of all people within the region.
I think it is very important to reiterate this: the cashless debit card is not income management. Participants in the trial can use the card anywhere and purchase anything except alcohol and gambling products and will not be able to withdraw cash with the card. The card will look and feel like a mainstream debit card and will be connected, as I mentioned, to one of the Visa, MasterCard or EFTPOS platforms. Their existing bank account and card will be used for the cash component of their welfare. What we are seeing is a certain degree of flexibility in the way in which the card is used.

Under the trial, if you are on Newstart, single with three children and live in your own home, you will have over $145 cash per week, with the remainder of your payment on the card. On a parenting payment, single with four children and living in a private rental, you will receive over $220 cash per week, with the remainder of the payment on your card. On the DSP, the disability support pension, partnered with no children, you will receive over $85 per week, with the remainder of the payment on the card. What happens is that the card will work at every store except those store categories which have been switched off. I note that there has been a lot of work behind the scenes, obviously, with the payment providers to make sure that this mechanism can be delivered.

I want to reflect on some very important contributions from the likes of Professor Marcia Langton, the Indigenous academic. In *The Monthly* in May 2015, Marcia Langton, a renowned Indigenous leader—an Australian leader, I think it is fair to say—said this:

A woman goes to withdraw cash and is met by a line of male “relations” who threaten and intimidate her for money … Her children and other dependants will go hungry before the end of the fortnightly payment cycle … the smart card—debit card—approach makes good sense. It gives people the power to help themselves.

Allan Suter, the Mayor of Ceduna Council, said on ABC Radio on 5 August:

We're also very confident that the use of this card will help the few families that suffer because the responsible parents are addicted to alcohol and gaming. We see the card doing a massive amount of good.

Ian Trust, Ted Hall Junior and Des Hill, in a letter to the government from the Wunan Foundation, the Gelganyem Trust and the MG Corporation, on 24 July 2015, said this:

We acknowledge that agreeing to the East Kimberley being a trial site for the restricted debit card may seem to some a rather drastic step.

But, as I said before, it is their view that continuing to deliver the same programs as they have done over the past 40 years will not help progress their community and their region.

The card is designed to be as light a touch as possible. It will have very little impact on people if they are responsible. It will reach out to the communities to provide positive, constructive and, I think it is fair to say, lifelong change in these communities that embrace the trial. This is a very significant piece of legislation, and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr SNOWDON (Lingiari) (17:16): I am pleased to be able to participate in the debate on the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Debit Card Trial) Bill 2015, and I acknowledge the contributions which have been made by the speakers before me. I note that there is bipartisan support for the development of a debit card, and I will talk in some detail about...
issues which I think arise as a result of this debit card and which need to be properly understood.

My electorate, as you would know, was the subject of the intervention from the Commonwealth, and that meant imposing mandatory income management for whole slabs of the population. Indeed, for some it was very important, but for others it was an absolute insult. I think what we have to do here is understand that this particular card captures everyone. There is no way of getting out of it once you are in that category of people determined by the legislation.

What does it do? The purpose of the trial is to enable a trial of a cashless welfare card of the type recommended by the Forrest review and to determine whether reducing the amount of income support that is available for spending on alcohol, gambling and illegal drugs will reduce violence and harm in trial areas, where these measures are more effective when community bodies are involved. Of course, the government wants to encourage socially responsible behaviour. There are a number of trial areas which the House has heard about, the first one being Ceduna, with the prospect of the East Kimberley. The bill limits the number of trial areas to three, and the minister may specify an area by legislative instrument. The legislative instrument will determine which income support recipients are subject to cashless welfare arrangements in each trial area. The legislative instrument can determine a particular class of person who may not be a voluntary participant in the cashless welfare arrangements. A legislative instrument can vary the percentage of participants' payments that are restricted. The instrument can apply different percentages to trial areas and to particular classes of people within a trial area. Through a legislative instrument, the minister can authorise a community body with the major role to make case-by-case decisions about the percentage of the person's payments that is restricted. On welfare-restricted bank accounts, another legislative instrument will determine the kind of bank account the trial participant or voluntary participant must have in order to receive the restricted part of their income support payments. On the kinds of businesses blocked by those restricted debit card, there will be a further legislative instrument which will declare which types of businesses will be blocked. The instrument can do this by referring to merchant category codes or codes that identify particular businesses or point of sale terminals.

I do not think that there are many people who would argue it is not a good idea to have a debit card that people can use, but there are a number of issues that arise out of it, although I have to say that it certainly beats the BasicsCard, which was the instrument by which incomes were being managed in the Northern Territory. The BasicsCard would prevent people shopping in particular locations where particular products were sold: alcohol, tobacco and pornography. That of itself is not a bad thing, except that it meant that it was discriminatory in terms of the shopping locations. For example, at the beginning of this process you could shop at the general Woolworths store and buy, for example, running shoes or a suitcase, but you could not go around to the handbag store adjacent—which did not sell alcohol or tobacco—and buy the same suitcase or to the local sports store and buy the same shoes unless they got accepted under the BasicsCard. It took an extremely long time for the then government, the Labor government, to recognise the need to broaden the nature of the outlets that could be used for this card.
So the BasicsCard gets over that problem, and that is a good thing. But under this card, unlike income management, the trial does not allow participants to seek an exemption. So, if a person falls within a category identified as a compulsory participant, they will have their payments restricted. This happened under income management when it was broadly applied. This would inevitably mean that, regardless of your status and regardless of your history of being an employer or an employee, paying taxes, raising children and being a responsible member of the community, you will be impacted by this. You will automatically have your income debited through the debit system and have 80 per cent of your income quarantined. That is effectively what is going to happen.

I remember when the proposals were put in place for income management in the Northern Territory. I visited Ti Tree, which is a couple of hundred kilometres north of Alice Springs, and had a chat with an old chap who had worked all of his life. He had raised a family and paid taxes. He was unemployed at that particular point and was subject to income management. He was mortified. He regarded this as an insult. He had been a responsible member of the community and was well able to responsibly manage his own affairs and those of his family. He did not overindulge in alcohol and was not a gambler. Under this system this person and every person like him will be captured by this proposal, and I think that is a failing.

Additionally, there is no process for opting out. Once you are in you are caught. You can have a local committee or it can go to Centrelink and they can potentially vary the proportion of your income that is quarantined through the debit process but you cannot opt out. A very responsible person might say: 'Right, I get it. You are going to apply this to everyone, but it should not apply to me because look at what I have got. I live in a house that is well kept. I have a family who are well fed. I look after the interests of my children and my grandchildren. I do things responsibly. Why should I be subject to compulsory control of my income in the way in which you have proposed? By the way, I do have a drink from time to time just like the person who lives next door who is employed and does not have their income quarantined and is able to go to the local shop and buy a couple of takeaways, come home and act responsibly. He is not overindulging in alcohol consumption. He is being fair and reasonable to his family and his family is well looked after.' This is an issue. I believe over time we will find that the process we have put in place here will need to change.

I need to make the point here that there needs to be an independent external evaluation of this trial—not some internal mechanism. This trial needs to be externally evaluated to understand its impact upon the communities and understand its impact on alcohol consumption and gambling in those communities. Frankly, at the moment there is no proposal for that independent type of evaluation, and that is a major cause of concern.

We need a comprehensive approach alcohol and drugs. This is one element. Controlling income is important in a way to make sure that people do not misspend if they are in that category of people. If we think about this we are led to believe that all Aboriginal people encompassed by this and all people in the communities encompassed by this, Aboriginal or not, will be identified potentially as a result of this process as people who overindulge in alcohol or abuse alcohol. That is also a problem because it will stigmatise people who should not be stigmatised.
Bearing in mind the importance of addressing alcohol consumption, there has been no response from the government to the *Alcohol, hurting people and harming communities: inquiry into the harmful use of alcohol in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities* report of the committee of which I was the deputy chair. The report calls for a comprehensive response to issues to do with alcohol consumption across Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across this country. It calls for tough decisions by government around a whole range of issues, including understanding the nature of poverty that exists in these communities and including understanding the need for support services in these communities.

This legislation does not provide support services. It does not provide additional resources for rehabilitation. It does not provide programs for limiting the supply of alcohol or changing the way in which alcohol is supplied and sold. The committee recommended, for example:

- the introduction of a national minimum floor price on alcohol—which was supported widely by public health advocacy organisations across this country, and—
- prompt consideration be given to the recommendations of the Henry Tax Review on volumetric tax.

These are key issues that are shown to work, but, for whatever reason, the government and opposition are a bit afraid to attack the whole tax dilemma because they are concerned about the impact on industry. This is not an issue to do with industry; this is an issue to do with the public health of this country and the use of alcohol and its abuse. It is important we look at this. It is important that we look at the number of alcohol outlets involved in these communities. It is important to look at banning advertising on television during sporting events. These are the sorts of recommendations in this report for which we had no response from the government. This trial of itself will not work without complementary measures and those complementary measures include consideration of the recommendations that are in this report.

It may seem trivial but for many getting access to support services through Centrelink and other agencies requires professional social workers. The government has cut those services. People are now required to ring 1800 numbers. Imagine you live in north-east Arnhem Land, East Kimberley or communities surrounding Ceduna and English is your second or third language and you are illiterate. How do you engage in getting help if at the same time you need that help the government is cutting back services in its own agencies?

These are important issues. We need to understand the social needs of communication and the cultural issues involved with communication. And there is another simple thing.

For many people in more remote communities, the problem is the basic internet. And I am now not talking about Ceduna but those communities around Ceduna or, indeed, around Kununurra who might be affected by this proposal if it gets up in Kununurra. We who live in the bush understand that often these services get interrupted. If services get interrupted, say, for a week, which happens in some cases, then it is entirely possible you will not be able to use a debit card. So you would be left without the resources that you require. And the trial does not really allow for one-off expenditures, despite what the member previously spoke about, that cannot be paid for via retail outlets: school fees, excursions and the cost of doing normal, day-to-day things.
In my view, one of the things that this trial misses out on entirely is the issue of tobacco. And given the public health issues that surround Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the importance of Closing the Gap, and I have talked about alcohol previously, one would have thought that tobacco would be a focus. The single greatest impact we could have on Aboriginal health in this country would be to bring down tobacco consumption. We make all sorts of rules in metropolitan Australia about where you can smoke and we have increased the taxation on tobacco, yet we are allowing people to purchase tobacco using these cards. That is a problem.

We need to ensure the importance of community consultation in support of the trial is genuine and comprehensive. It is always difficult and sometimes it is short-circuited, but it is important. I am pleased to be able to support the trial, and I do think this debit card is a good idea. But there is a range of ideas which have not been properly contemplated that will come back to bite us.

Ms PRICE (Durack) (17:31): I rise today to speak on the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Debit Card Trial) Bill 2015. The federal government is building a strong, prosperous and sustainable economy for a safe and secure Australia. Since coming to office in September 2013, more than 335,000 jobs have been created. This bill is part of the government's plan for a sustainable economy for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

The bill will introduce a cashless debit card trial for up to three discrete communities across Australia, limited to 10,000 people. Welfare reform is critical if we are to ensure that all Australians have the opportunity to reach their potential. We have to try something, because clearly what we are doing in Australia with respect to welfare is not working, particularly in parts of my electorate in Durack.

Let me be very clear about this: this is only a trial; it is not necessarily the final result but it clearly is a good start. The trial locations will be chosen on the basis of high welfare dependence for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, high social harm indicators and an openness from community leaders to participating in the trial. As I said before, what we have been doing so far is not working and it clearly is time to consider alternatives for a more sustainable economy, for a better Australia, for all Australians. The debit card trial is for up to three discrete communities, with locations chosen on the basis of high-welfare dependence and high social harm indicators, and an openness from community leaders to participating in the trial. If this bill is passed, the trial will operate for 12 months only.

The trial is aimed at reducing the welfare-fuelled alcohol, drug and gambling abuse, which plagues some Australian communities—both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Age pensioners and workers may volunteer to participate in the trial. The government has been working closely with communities on the ground on designing the proposed trial. Community leaders in Ceduna and the Kimberley region helped design this proposal, and Ceduna has recently signed an agreement to be the first trial site for the cashless debit card. Kununurra, which is in my electorate, together with the rest of the Kimberley are also considering participating in this trial.

Participants will receive an everyday debit card, which will be compatible with EFTPOS. This card will be able to be used anywhere except for the purchase of alcohol and for gambling. Furthermore, illicit substances will not be able to be purchased as there will be a limited amount of cash available from the card. The hope is that, because there will be a
limited amount of cash, the opportunity to buy illicit substances will be limited. This side of
the chamber is compassionate and believes in opening arms and lending a hand when
necessary. I am confident those on the other side will also see the benefit of the trial of this
cashless debit card.

This bill aims to reduce social harm, especially domestic violence against women and
children caused by welfare-fuelled alcohol and other drug abuse. If passed, the trial would be
independently evaluated. It is not set in stone that this bill will become permanent legislation,
but I have high hopes that this will be successful and expanded to further sites around
Australia, not just in regional Australia but in more urbanised areas.

Community leaders from around Australia have commended the proposal, illustrating their
support in addressing issues in their communities. This is a consultative government. I have
had a number of constituents and community leaders contact my office expressing their
support for this bill, knowing that this will go towards reducing domestic violence and
ensuring welfare recipients do not spend their government-provided income on alcohol, drugs
or gambling.

I had the pleasure of meeting with Ian Trust, executive chairman of the Wunan Foundation,
representatives from the MG Corporation and the Gelgangem trust together with then Prime
Minister Tony Abbott in Kununurra in my electorate last month. These organisations all
commended the government on the proposal for the debit card trial and it was an incredibly
positive meeting. This is building on the many meetings that have been held in my electorate
by the Hon. Alan Tudge, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister. I congratulate him on
the work that he has done to bring this bill to the House.

I am pleased to say that the government and I support this bill because I believe it will
make rural, regional and remote towns in Durack safer and, in time, more prosperous. It will
create a better environment for families, locals and tourists alike to live and visit. This
government's vision is for kids to go to school, parents to go to work and the family home to
be safer, and I truly believe that this bill is one step closer to achieving the vision.

I believe in the party's core values of rights and freedoms of all people and equal
opportunities for all Australians. I believe in supporting those who need it most. However, the
current welfare system is not sustainable. We as a country cannot continue under the current
rules or else our children and their children will be left a massive debt. This bill is not only
about making our communities safer but it is about restoring faith in the welfare system and
ensuring those who are on welfare spend it on what they need and what their family needs but
not on things like alcohol, gambling and drugs.

I am pleased the Ceduna community agreed that 80 per cent of a person's social security
payments will be placed into the recipient's debit card account and the remaining 20 per cent
will be put into the recipient's existing bank account allowing for cash withdrawals. The
cashless debit card would work at every store except those store categories which have been
switched off. This includes liquor stores and gambling outlets. In the fraction of multipurpose
stores, there would be a compliance element allowing people to purchase food goods only.
Participants will benefit from advanced banking technologies, which include a range of online
budgeting options. Participants can set daily spending limits, maximum transaction values and
a maximum number of transactions per day—of course this is only an option and not
mandatory.
As I said at the start of the speech, the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Debit Card Trial) Bill 2015 is only a trial and is not set in concrete. I fully acknowledge that there are some who will not agree that it will work and acknowledge that there are many potential pitfalls but I sincerely think that it is time for us to try this type of initiative. The bill will ensure welfare recipients spend their money on essentials and will minimise allowance for alcohol, drugs and gambling. It has been welcomed by leaders in my electorate of Durack and throughout towns such as Ceduna as I mentioned earlier.

The bill aims to reduce domestic violence and improve family life caused by welfare fuelled alcohol and drug abuse. As a federal member of an electorate which has some of the most remote towns in Australia, I simply cannot sit by and do nothing so therefore I am clearly very highly supportive of this bill. This government has inherited a massive financial burden and we need a sustainable and fair welfare system which does not lose faith in the Australian people.

I, like the member for Lingiari, am a member of the Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs. We recently completed our report on alcohol abuse in Aboriginal communities. There are some excellent recommendations contained within that report and many of those recommendations need to be considered very clearly and should be put hand in hand with this bill. I encourage the government and my colleagues to look very carefully at those recommendations. But, in the meantime, I sincerely commend this bill to the House.

Mr KATTER (Kennedy) (17:41): I rise to speak on the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Debit Card Trial) Bill 2015. In the 26 years, 25 years or whatever it was since I was the responsible minister in Queensland, all I have ever seen is an effort to suppress the symptoms. It is really like we just want to make sure that nobody sees how bad it is. We do not actually want to do anything to fix up the problem; we just want to make sure that nobody sees the problem; that is really what we are doing here.

Andrew Forrest would be one of the Australians who I most admire. His neighbouring mining entrepreneur—I am not in the business of running people down—said, 'Until Australians are prepared to work for $320 a week then I simply have to get my workers from overseas.' On a sharp contrast, Forrest trained up 2,000 First Australians—some cannot read or write much at all and some cannot even speak English properly—and he still had 600 the last time I was there on his employment rolls. If a person does not turn up for work—people that are not used to working do this—he has a team of five people that go around and see them and coax them and encourage them to come to work. They do not just give up on them and forget about them and sack them. It is a really remarkable achievement.

When we get down to the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Debit Card Trial) Bill 2015, I think a blanket approach of doing this is just absolutely not where we want to be going. Let us take the AMP, the Alcohol Management Program as it was delightfully called. Clarence Waldron was a long-time chairman at Doomadgee. I thought a confrontation between Clarence Waldron and a state government official was so good that I put it in my—should I be modest—bestselling history book. He said to the state government official, 'You do not come here and say what is what and that is that. This is my land.' And that is the way it should be. God bless Clarence Waldron.

There are do-gooders like Mr Fitzgerald, who gave us a real good touch-up in the state parliament and did not capture the person who was at the heart of the police corruption. We
had police corruption, and this government very courageously went ahead and tried to weed it out, and all we did was destroy ourselves with the help of that particular person.

Mr Fitzgerald also did an inquiry into what is wrong in the Aboriginal communities and basically said, 'They are drinking too much,' and that the answer was to ban alcohol. So the Queensland ALP government went out and banned alcohol. I was with the honourable member, who is now very prominent in the Northern Territory, and I said, 'You'd be very pleased with the ban on alcohol,' and he released a string of obscenities, because everyone knew what was going to happen: they were simply going to leave the communities where alcohol was banned. These people are alcoholics; you cannot take alcohol away from an alcoholic. So they all ended up in places like Mount Isa, Darwin, Alice Springs, Cairns and Mareeba. We simply moved the problem from over here to over here, where there were highly respectable people of First Australian descent, who now have a terrible name thanks to the people—the no-hoper crowd—that were forced out of their communities by the AMP plan. What a wonderful plan! It was not very long before resourceful people figured out a way to ferment alcohol. I was with certain people on Mornington Island, where alcohol is banned, two years after the ban and I said: 'Those two people are drunk. How can they be drunk when there is an alcohol ban here?' And they said, 'They make the brew.' I could argue that there are 11 cases of deaths from the brew. You have no quality controls over how much alcohol, which can poison you, goes into the brew, and there are certain other health problems related to it. What we are saying here is that we go in with a blanket that is not a solution to the problem but suppresses the symptoms. When I was minister, every day of my life I said: 'Do not see the problem. Just work out the solutions and work toward the solutions.'

I answered a telephone call from a young man who got off his backside in a First Australian community and got two trucks working for one of the local mines and did very well for himself. He asked if he could take up an area of land on the community with a view to getting cattle. He is in the local football team, and I knew him well. He came to see me when I was in town and said: 'I've got one of those blocks. I've got fences. I've got yards. I've got waters. I've even got a homestead. The only thing I haven't got is cattle.' I said, 'Have you been to the banks?' He said, 'Of course I've been to the banks,' because he had already borrowed money for his trucks and that. I said, 'What did they say?' He said, 'They won't loan me any money unless they've got the security of a mortgage.' I said: 'It's got nothing to do with your being First Australian—that applies to everybody. Banks want security; you can't have them loaning out money without security. Have you been to the lands department to see if you can get a lease?' He said, 'They said there is no such thing as a lease on any blackfella land.' I said, 'Sadly, that's true.' He said, 'I thought your legislation allowed that.' I said: 'Yes, that is my legislation, and we issued pretty close to 800 title deeds in Queensland. They say it can't be done, that it's very difficult and very complicated, but it wasn't too complicated for us. We got 800 out in the space of about 3½ years.'

Once you have got a title deed, it says that you own that piece of land. Then you can borrow money to buy cattle, to build a service station, to build a takeaway food place or to build a pharmacy. If your daughter is away studying pharmacy at university, when she comes home you can set her up in a pharmacy and we can have a business in our community called a pharmacy. But all these things cannot happen unless there is a golden item called a title deed.
If the Anglos got ahead of the rest of the world, it was because the Americans, in the 1600s, had private ownership. The English, in 1270, had issued freehold titles under an act called Quia Emptores, which followed not all that long after Magna Carta. We decided that individuals should own that land; that it should not be some sort of community ownership or feudal ownership or family ownership or any of those things, and that those who were prepared to work hard and live on that land and love it and look after it should own it, not some community ownership arrangement, which was tried in a place called Russia and in a place called China. The French threw the feudal system out, I think, in 1788 or around about then—1789. Why did the Americans and the British skip ahead of the rest of the world? I would say it was because they had an item called private ownership of land. The great ethnologist Robert Ardrey wrote some very good books—in fact, The Territorial Imperative is something that has worked its way into the English language from when he wrote about these things. If my constituent could get a title deed then we would have cattle there.

Once again I have let the parliament down. I meant to bring down a map of Australia that shows Cape York Peninsula in red and Victoria in red, and they are both the same size—almost identical in size—but there is a big difference between the two places. One place, the Cape York Peninsula, has a 70-inch rainfall. Victoria has around a 30-inch rainfall. Cape York Peninsula, where the south-east trade winds meet the north-west monsoons, has a 70-inch rainfall. Cape York Peninsula has 154,000 head of cattle, and Victoria has 4½ million head of cattle. What is going on here? Why has one place got 4½ million head of cattle and the other place does not? You might say, 'Yes. Well, it only rains for one part of the year.' But hold on a minute. Half of Victoria is under grain and sheep, so it is not available, and you have got the little matter of the Snowy Mountains there too. You do not run many cattle up on the Snowy Mountains. So what is going on here?

What is going on here is no title deeds. I have spoken about this again and again in this place for the 21 years that I have been here. I have pleaded with state government after state government, and in 26 years probably a dozen or two dozen title deeds have been issued in the state of Queensland. Yet in the 3½ years before that Eric Laws, the head of department, and the late Lester Rosendale were able to get out nearly 800 title deeds. Let me also pay great tribute to Mal Brough in this place. As soon as Mal was appointed minister he went straight at it as fast as he could go to try to get title deeds issued to the people of the Northern Territory. He did not have control over the states, but he could at least do it in the Northern Territory. He might have made some mistakes and unfortunately his tenure was cut short by a loss of government, and that was a great tragedy for all of Australia.

If the top third of Australia were a separate continent, a separate country, it would be one of the wettest places on Earth—most certainly north Queensland would be one of the wettest countries on Earth. We are not short of water. You could allow us to use that water. This place and the Queensland parliament have not allowed us to use that water. There has hardly been a single water licence issued in 26 years. There has hardly been a title deed issued to the first Australians in 26 years.

When I was minister I would visit the Torres Strait probably once a fortnight, sometimes even a bit more than that. So a significant portion of my life was spent up there. I cannot
remember having a meal in the Torres Strait that did not consist of Indigenous food—yam, taro, sweet potatoes, mangoes, bananas, coconut and, of course, fish, crayfish, crabs, dugong and turtle. All of the food was local Indigenous food. Some 12 years after we had lost government in Queensland I went up to the Torres Strait. We had eight meals up there with a government committee of inquiry, and I did not touch a single skerrick of Indigenous food. When we went to Joey Mosby's island—and Joey Mosby and I did not see eye to eye when I was minister—Joey screamed from the back, 'They're killing our people. They've closed down all our market gardens. They will not allow us to fish.' And proof of that was the fact that I was eating non-Indigenous food the whole time I was up there.

These people are reduced to having to pay out of their welfare payments to try to buy fresh fruit and vegetables in the Torres Strait or at Mornington Island and Doomadgee. I put on public record here once again that I asked every councillor at Doomadgee and every councillor at Mornington Island whether they had close relatives dying of diabetes, and every one of them said, 'Yes. Yes, Bobby. I have two or three relatives dying of diabetes.' The government must acknowledge that there is a failure out there and that something has got to be done about it. The first thing you do about it is use your title deeds and allow them to use that water for irrigation, and get off their backs in the Torres Strait and let them go back to the market gardens and let them have access to the seas, which they have had for 20,000 years until we came along and took it from them.

Mr John Cobb (Calare) (17:57): In common with people I have heard speak tonight, I rise to speak in favour of what to me is a common sense bill, the Social Service Legislation Amendment (Debit Card Trial) Bill. It is a trial, and for a very good reason. I listened to the member for Lingiari, and if the things he talked about need looking at then I hope that this trial will deal with them. But in saying that I support this bill, I am not singling out any particular section of people. I think that this is a good trial to be run by the Australian social services in general. I think it is a sensible way to address social harm that is hitting our communities as people, without doubt, struggle with alcohol and drug addictions, gambling problems and domestic violence.

Some of the problem is that the welfare system has enabled people to, in a sense, take advantage of the system to stay on dangerous substances. I think the new debit card can act as a safeguard, a way to help locals struggling to make the right choices about how to use their money. Obviously it can sound a little high and mighty, it can sound a little as though we are sitting and looking down on people, telling them how to live their lives, but we are responsible for the nation's character, in a sense. I think we are certainly responsible for the spending of the nation's tax dollars, and I think we owe it to the people concerned, we owe it to ourselves, we owe it to the nation, to do something in a very practical sense to deal with the problem.

I think it will ensure safer communities and it will ensure that people have an opportunity to get out of a cycle, whether they want to or not. It is backed by reviews and it is backed by research that does recommend that a cashless debit card restricting the sale of alcohol, drugs and gambling is a good thing.

The debit card trial is to run for 12 months in the community of Ceduna in the south-west of South Australia. I have been there and I do not see it as a community very different to a lot of communities around Australia. I have no doubt that—in fact, I know—we have the same
issues in my electorate of Calare. Domestic violence is not peculiar to any part of Australia and it is caused, in the large part, by drug and alcohol abuse—it is no excuse for it, but it is a reason for it. Not for one second would I say that there is any excuse for those things. I say to the people of Ceduna: we are with you and we hope that by trialling it in your community not only you but the whole nation can be better off.

The recipients will receive a mainstream debit card which will be connected to Visa, MasterCard or the EFTPOS system. It excludes alcohol and gambling products. It is obviously not a cash card. Eighty per cent of a person's social security payment will be placed onto their card and the remainder will go into their bank account.

I think this is a trial for a common sense measure that will help individuals to use their money for the good of their family and for the good of society generally. I have always said that if a society has a problem like this the whole nation suffers for it. We all do. The effects are huge. The decision—or the non-decision—of an individual to continue their addiction impacts their family, their community and, certainly, the nation as a whole. We are all the poorer for it. Yes, kids go hungry if their parent or parents have spent their payment on alcohol or whatever. They will wait until the next fortnightly payment to buy those essentials, as their addictions make it difficult—and, in some cases, impossible—to put their child's needs first. Anything—and I mean anything—which improves the lot of children, whether it is in remote communities, or in Sydney or in my electorate of Calare, I think must be something that we have to take a common sense, practical approach to.

As everybody has said, this is a trial. If there are problems—and I am sure that some will come out—whether they are ones the member for Lingiari referred to or ones which others referred to, then let's look at how we can solve them. I think that not to try this is to deny that the problem exists, to deny the level of domestic violence and to deny the way some children in Australia have to survive—and I used to be part of a portfolio that looked at this, and it is not something that we would be proud of. I think that it is anything which can make a difference to those things—I am not going to go on any longer, Deputy Speaker. I just want to say that I do not believe that as a parliament, as a government and as a people we can ignore it and not do everything we can to deal with those issues. I am totally behind the fact that we are going to trial something which must be for the good of all Australians.

Ms O'NEIL (Hotham) (18:03): We have seen a lot of rough and tumble in this House in the last 24 hours—a lot of politicking and personalities coming to the fore of the political discussion. But I rise today to make a contribution on a matter before this House which is deadly serious. The bill before us is something that raises incredibly complex questions. Watching the discussion from back in my office, what I actually saw was a lot of people in this parliament who are trying to make a good contribution—a real contribution—that grapples with some tremendously difficult ethical, legal and practical questions, specifically in relation to the situation we see of alcohol and gambling abuse in remote and rural communities around this country, and in particular how that problem affects Indigenous Australians.

The Social Security Legislation Amendment (Debit Card Trial) Bill 2015 would institute a system that would essentially limit the amount of income that people who live in specific communities around Australia can spend on alcohol and gambling. The first community
would be Ceduna in South Australia. If the legislation passes the parliament that trial would begin next year and it would last for an additional year.

The genesis of this idea really comes from the report that was commissioned by the Abbott government, which requested that Andrew Forrest—whom many would know is a business leader in Australia—conduct a review of employment, specifically in its relation to Indigenous Australians. I am not sure of this person's expertise in Indigenous policy generally, but he has some runs on the board in terms of employment. He did produce a report that had a lot of ideas that were incredibly wide-ranging in scope. One of them has been picked up in the bill before us. Essentially, the scheme that the government is proposing would see people who are living in these specific communities and who are on working age payments—things like Newstart and disability support or carer pensions—be issued with a debit card that could not be used to purchase alcohol and gambling products. What the bill proposes is that 80 per cent of regular payments for people who are on regular payments, and 100 per cent of lump sum payments, would be put into this specific card that limits the use of the money.

I want to make it really plain to those listening how significant what is being proposed in this bill is. What the government is proposing is that people, just by virtue of living in this specific town, will have their right to spend their income as they choose curtailed in some way and that those rules would not be applied to other Australians. I think that it is absolutely incumbent on us to be upfront about what a morass of ethical issues is raised by the legislation before us—basic questions like: on what basis can government decide that one community is different to another?

I believe that social security is the right of Australians, living in a prosperous country as they do. But what type of principles should we be applying to the idea that government can put conditions on the payments that people receive? I think that right at the heart of the complexity of this issue is: what are the long-term impacts of policies which essentially take away people's choice? We know that a lot of the issues of Indigenous disadvantage that we see around Australia at their very heart lie in a place of powerlessness, so we really need to consider very carefully the types of policies that may reinforce these ideas.

Labor is not going to reject this bill on the basis of the issues that I have outlined and there are some very good reasons for that, which I will explain. But we would like to have a Senate inquiry into the bill. I think that is key, because there are some real missing pieces to the argument that have been put forward by the coalition here.

One specific and very obvious issue with the legislation before the House is that it attempts to manage alcohol and gambling, which are addictive diseases, by taking away people's right to use their income for these reasons but it has made no specific guarantees about service provision to help people come off those addictions. Coming off an alcohol addiction cannot be managed by an ordinary family. It would be incredibly unfair for us to put in place a scheme that will have that impact without putting in place additional supports for people who will be most affected. People need services to kick these habits and Labor wants to understand the specifics of what will be provided to these communities.

There are many other issues that I think need firsthand, on-the-record representations from the affected communities put into the public realm and discussed in the interests of this parliament because, as I say, some of the things that this bill proposes, frankly, are pretty
radical. One of the specifics of this scheme in how it mainly differs from the income management approach that Labor used when in government is that this scheme is not put in place by triggers. The Labor scheme had a series of indicators that you had to reach before you went into an income management scheme. The entire town of Ceduna will be placed under income management. Everyone who receives a government payment of the type that I have described will be captured. Of course, we need to provide the people who will be affected an appropriate, formal opportunity to put their view.

I note that the minister responsible for this area has visited the communities and I applaud him for that. He has spent time talking to community leaders. But I do not think that is good enough. We need to hear more and it needs to be on the public record.

Another point I would just make is that the bill by its name, in every aspect, is a trial. It will last for a year in Ceduna. Another critical missing piece of the puzzle here is how this trial will be evaluated. Deputy Speaker, you and I both know that there are different techniques you can use to evaluate trials and, depending on what outcome you want to see, you can design a process around that. That is not what we want to see. This is a serious policy proposal and we want to understand exactly how it will be evaluated and how the process will fall out as the trial continues.

There are significant reasons for us to consider the merits in this bill. I want to talk about some of the reasons why I think we need to look at what would otherwise be really untenable policies because of the severity of the situation that we are dealing with in some of these communities. I have not visited Ceduna, so I cannot profess at all to be well acquainted with the issues facing that community. But I have lived in a community that faces similar issues. A few years ago I spent nine months living in north-east Arnhem Land, in a small town that sits about halfway between Cairns and Darwin. It is one of the most unbelievably beautiful parts of the country. In terms of the physical environment the beautiful Top End was really paradise. It is surrounded by incredible Indigenous communities which are living quite in concert with the way that their ancestors have lived for thousands and thousands of years.

These are people who communicate with one another in their Indigenous languages. For many, English is their fifth or sixth language, something I think is not known to nearly enough Australians. The Top End is a beautiful place, but there are communities which are experiencing this incredible blight of violence. In many communities around the country it is absolutely of crisis proportions. It is real, vicious and, frankly, unimaginable to anyone who has not seen it up close.

While I lived in that part of Australia my partner, who was working as a doctor at the time, worked in the hospital that services all of the acute medical needs of the surrounding communities. It was, honestly, a very difficult personal experience seeing someone, day in and day out, coming home and having to manage incredible acts of violence in their everyday work, working in that hospital. They were extraordinary acts of violence. I will not go through the detail for those present in the House because it would not be appropriate. Things were happening in these communities that you would not hear of in many other parts of the country.

I want to make the point that it was not just Aboriginal people who were involved in these violent acts. That was not the source of the problem. It was a community that had been frayed and then ripped because of alcohol, gambling and related activities.
We hear a lot of good talk and positive words in this House about the commitment to tackling domestic violence. But if we are serious about this then the place that we have to begin is in these remote and rural communities. We know that Aboriginal women in this country are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised for domestic violence than non-Aboriginal women. So if we are looking for the epicentre of this crisis, this is where we will find it. While living in this incredible part of the country my partner and I saw that the violence that was so affecting the life of people living in these communities was joined by a common thread and that common thread was alcohol.

I want to make it really clear how pervasive the effects of this problem is in these communities and, without having visited them, I think a lot of well-meaning people would really question the need for legislation such as this. They would argue the ethical points and they would be right to raise issues. Without having visited this community I probably would have shared a lot of those concerns but, having seen it up close, it is really very problematic. I see this bill very much not as taking control away from those communities but as giving it back, because what we are saying is that the people who live in those communities have the right to live a life without violence and without fear of violence.

The theme of control, when we are talking about policies that so affect Aboriginal people, is a very important one, because we know that there is a history here of governments intervening without the willingness and cooperation of Aboriginal people. In the vast majority of instances when that has occurred, the policies have not worked. But what is essential for people at home who are interested in this policy area to understand is that this legislation—this notion, this concept—is coming to this parliament at the request of the leaders of this community. What we have here is a community of people who see a problem and have identified a solution that they want to trial because of the pervasiveness of this hideous issue, and they have brought it to this parliament. So I say to other political parties who may have a different emphasis on this issue: we have before us a united group of largely Indigenous—but not all Indigenous—leaders who are saying that this is a major problem, they want it to stop and this is the solution. What message does it send to these communities if the people in this parliament say, 'Thanks, but no thanks'? As members of parliament, one of the core things that we can do to improve Indigenous policy in this country is to provide people with a voice and then listen to them. That is very much what I see that we are doing in the bill before us. In various parts around Australia, when we provide these communities with the power to drive policy within their own community, we see some pretty promising results—in an area where, let us be frank, there is not a lot of promise to discuss.

One of the really important things about Indigenous policy that I have learnt in my life is that we cannot group Aboriginal people together in one collective. That is completely inaccurate, because Aboriginal people all over the country have wildly different life experiences and very different sets of needs and issues and opportunities and gifts to give the rest of the Australian community. We absolutely see that in the work that I do locally with Indigenous people. It is a completely different policy situation to the one that I experienced where I was up north. We have to listen to the leaders of these communities, because they are the ones that are on the ground and they are the ones that understand the specifics of their situation and the solutions to it. We see, for example, in the Cape York community not exactly the same time of trial, but Indigenous leaders are the ones who are trying to work with
their communities to improve behaviour. In those trials, we see significantly more success than we find in many alternative policy approaches.

I trust that the people involved in putting forward this legislation have come to it with really the best intentions, because, for all of the very difficult debates that we have across the chamber about most areas of public policy, when it comes to issues like this one we usually find a lot of common ground across the chamber. We have heard that in the speeches. We have heard some extremely powerful speeches from those on the other side about the concerns that they have, and I respect and acknowledge their willingness to try to tackle these issues. It is an incredibly complex area, a very complex piece of legislation, but one that deserves a proper look by a Senate committee. If the important issues and concerns that have been resolved by people on this side of the House are worked through, through that process, then I believe this is something that we should trial. I say that because we are hearing clear indications from the Indigenous leaders and the other leaders in these communities that this is what the community wants and needs.

Mr COULTON (Parkes—The Nationals Chief Whip) (18:19): I rise this evening to speak on the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Debit Card Trial) Bill 2015. This bill is legislation to enable a cashless debit card to be trialled in various locations around Australia. One of the reasons I am speaking tonight is that I have been quite heavily involved in this process. We have heard some contributions in this place over the last number of hours about this. I would just like to correct a few of the misconceptions that we have heard. I heard the member for Blair, I think, earlier on saying that he felt it was inappropriate if someone could not take their kids to the movies or pay for a school excursion or the like. That is exactly right. But this card would look just like anyone else's credit card. There would have to be some changes made. I am sure that in Ceduna they are looking at putting a card reader or an EFTPOS reader in the local schools and the like. There is nothing that you cannot do with this cashless card that anyone who carries a Visa card or MasterCard or something like that can do now, except you cannot use this card to get cash out of an ATM or to purchase alcohol or in a gambling facility. That is all that you cannot do with this card.

In the trial—certainly on the occasions that I have been involved in negotiations, and I will talk about that in a minute—possibly 20 per cent of the total welfare cheque would be in cash, which would enable people to go to the pub and have a beer or have a bet on the horses on a Saturday afternoon. It is my understanding, that, if you have a couple of people with three or four children of school age, their fortnightly cheque from Centrelink is about $1,700 or $1,800. If we allow 20 per cent cash, that is over $300 a fortnight that can be spent on alcohol and gambling. That still allows $1,400 or $1,500 attached to the card for purchasing essential services. That can be used at the supermarket, a clothing store or the service station to buy petrol. Without much change you could put that at the gate of the local footy club so you could tap your card and take your kids to the footy or whatever.

I think that is important to remember. The only way that this card will change the way you are living your life is if you are spending more than you should on alcohol and gambling. The sad reality is that, for many people who have these addictions—and probably more than alcohol; in many of my towns it is now methamphetamine, cannabis and the other mixture that is known as hillbilly heroin—if they are using all their cash on that, it is not unreasonable to have these restrictions in place.
We are a great country. If you are down on your luck and you find yourself unemployed, the rest of the country will pitch in and help you out with an allowance so that you can live your life with some dignity. If you have children and you find yourself in that situation, the rest of the community through the government chips in and gives you cash so that your children can go to school with food, be clothed and have some dignity and a chance at an education. You do not have the right to take all of that money and use it to feed an addiction to poker machines, online gambling, alcohol or illicit drugs. If we are talking about the rights of people, the rights of the people that should be of primary interest to us are those of the children—the children who are not old enough to make that decision, who find themselves in a home where the money that is intended to go for their welfare is used for other things.

I want to speak about Moree because Moree is a town in my electorate. I will say here tonight that, in discussions with Parliamentary Secretary Alan Tudge, the member for Aston, I thought Moree would be a good town for this trial. It was not because I thought Moree was a downtrodden community. It was not because I thought Moree was not a community with spirit and heart. That was the reason I thought Moree would be a good choice. The other reason was that the recipients of welfare in Moree are about fifty-fifty Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. The population is about 25 per cent Aboriginal and 75 per cent non-Aboriginal, but the welfare recipients are about fifty-fifty. I do not believe that we should have a welfare measure that just identifies and targets Aboriginal people on their own. The previous speaker spoke about this as if this were a card just for Aboriginal people, and maybe that was an oversight. This is a welfare card for those people who are on welfare.

I went to Moree with Parliamentary Secretary Tudge, and we had some discussions with community leaders, with some elders in the community and with some service providers and asked permission to do some investigations as to whether the community of Moree would be interested in hosting this trial. Initially we got a very positive response and, as a result of that, Parliamentary Secretary Tudge tasked the local officers from Prime Minister and cabinet to do further community consultation. As can sometimes happen in a country town, the rumour mill ran riot. A lot of misinformation was spread around: a lot of thought that this was targeting the Aboriginal community and a lot of thought that this was a racist action. What was also interesting and probably telling was that there was quite strong lobbying from the owners of the hotels in the town. To me, that was clearly an indication of why it would have been good to do a trial there. But right from the start we said that we would not impose this card on a community that did not want to be part of the trial. As a result of the groundswell of concern about this card, we decided to withdraw Moree from that trial. I think that is a lost opportunity and I feel that, in the eight years that I have represented these communities—I believe that, after Lingiari in the Northern Territory, I represent more Aboriginal people in this place than anyone else. It is a job that I take very seriously, and I have a lot of pride in that job.

I have a lot of western towns that have issues with welfare with non-Indigenous and Indigenous people. So I think it is a lost opportunity, but I can say that, when I was in Ceduna some months ago and was part of the Indigenous affairs committee of this parliament, meeting with community elders, the local council and service providers in Ceduna, I was very impressed with the resolve of that community. I cannot remember the names of these people that I met, but community members, members of the working party and identified leaders in
that area were very resolute in doing something to help their community. I was absolutely horrified on driving around the edge of Ceduna. The issue there is that there are dry communities away from Ceduna, out in the more remote areas, and many of the people from those areas come to Ceduna to drink.

I witnessed people lying out, sleeping rough in the grass. It was winter time; it was showery and miserable weather, and citizens of Australia in 2015 were sleeping on the ground—not a tarpaulin and not a bit of cover. They were lying on the grass, exposed. The sobering-up facilities in that town are full to capacity every night, and others have to take their chances elsewhere. So there is a great need. Substance abuse and gambling are a huge scourge in these more remote towns.

In my part of the world, methamphetamine is causing a great amount of havoc. But on a positive note, in a couple of weeks I have been asked to represent the minister and officially open the rehabilitation centre in Moree, that the federal government has funded through the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. It has been staffed, and has a capacity of 18 people—14 men and four women. At the moment I think we have four clients, but as that facility gets up to speed it will provide a great service.

One of the things with people who are battling addiction is that when they make that decision to seek help, to step off the treadmill they have found themselves on, it is vitally important that we have facilities and professional people that can be there on the spot to help them. We have to do more. There is a glaring gap in detoxification facilities. At the moment in my area, many people, if they have to go to detoxification, have to go to Lismore from the north of the state or to Orange if they are west of the Central West. We need to do more, and I know my state colleague, the member for Dubbo, Deputy Premier of New South Wales, Troy Grant, has made some announcements in this space, and we will see where that goes.

I do support this trial. I do recognise that it is a trial and I do welcome scrutiny that may follow this trial. But I will say this: if this trial has positive results I believe we need to have the courage and conviction to roll this out across other communities, to allow people to live their lives with dignity and to allow children to be protected from living in a house where the entire income is spent on alcohol, gambling and illicit substances. We can do something positive. People say to me, 'You've got to help our communities. You've got to help these children that are victims of drugs and alcohol and gambling.' When the time comes and someone offers a suggestion we need to make sure that we as step up a community. It cannot just be the government and it cannot just be the police; it has to be everyone at all levels of government and community. When the time comes we need people to step up and to do what is the right thing. I strongly support this legislation.

Mr COLEMAN (Banks) (18:33): The Social Security Legislation Amendment (Debit Card Trial) Bill 2015 is a very significant and substantial piece of legislation, and I am very pleased to be able to add my support to it in the parliament this evening. As the Prime Minister said in question time today, we are a nation with a generous social safety net that has been afforded by our wealth over the decades, and that is entirely appropriate. But it is very important that that social safety net operates in a manner which helps people address the difficulties they are facing and does not entrench, or in some cases make worse, those problems. Any mature government needs to be able to confront the very difficult issues in this area honestly, and that is what this legislation does.
It is a credit to its author, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, who I think has done a tremendous job in putting this important legislation together. If something is not working, you have to be able and willing to look at it with a fresh set of eyes. You cannot just repeat the problems of the past because they are the way things are. You have to be prepared to confront difficult problems honestly, and I believe the measures contained in this legislation have the potential to be a reform in the welfare space not only in Ceduna, where the initial trial will occur, but more broadly in Australia. I believe there is also the potential for this to be a model adopted in other nations around the world.

The problem is that in many communities in Australia we have embedded social problems, most typically represented by endemic levels of alcoholism. We have cycles where families are horribly affected by that alcoholism. We have children who grow up in that environment and we have communities that are devastated by that issue. It is a problem that has gone on for decades, and it is intergenerational. There is no denying it. There is no pretending it is not the case, and it is something which now needs to be acted upon. That is what this legislation does. This legislation lies within the broader social services portfolio and the social welfare system more generally, and I do believe that it is appropriate for us to have a general social safety net. But it is so important that that system works as effectively as it can for the people of Australia and indeed for the people who receive those benefits. There is a lot of unfinished business in this area.

In the 2014-15 budget, the budget forecast final federal spending of about $420 billion, but about $55 billion of that is GST payments, which automatically go through to the states. If you take that amount out, you are left with about $365 billion of spending. Of that $365 billion of spending, $149 billion is in social security and welfare. That is 41 per cent of all federal government spending. Let me just repeat that: 41 per cent of all federal government spending. It is absolutely incumbent on us to make sure that that spending is as effective and as helpful as possible.

Social security spending increased by 80 per cent in a decade, from $83 billion to $149 billion. It is about six times what we spend on defence; it is about 35 times what we spend on immigration; it is about 150 times what we spend on the ABC; and it is about 800 times what we spend on tourism. It is an extremely large amount, and that just underscores the need to take a thoughtful, strategic, intelligent approach to this area to make sure that we are investing money wisely, that we are spending that money to help people and that we are not doing things that embed cycles of dependence and intergenerational welfare.

As you know, Deputy Speaker, this card seeks to address substantial community problems, specifically as they pertain to alcoholism and gambling. The card will, of course, be launched in Ceduna, and it will be launched with the very wide embrace of the Ceduna community. It is important just to understand the gravity of the problem of alcoholism that we see in that town. There are about 4,400 people who live in Ceduna—4,425. In 2013-14, there were 4,667 admissions to the sobering-up facility in that town, so that is more than one admission per person on average across the year. That is quite a startling statistic. Imagine if that same ratio were the case in major towns and cities. It would be the equivalent of hundreds of thousands or millions of admissions to a sobering-up facility. Hospitalisations due to assault in Ceduna are 68 times the national average—68 times the national average—so something in Ceduna is
going terribly wrong; let us be frank. And Ceduna is not the only place in the nation where this is the case.

To its credit, the District Council of Ceduna has been quite forward-leaning on this issue and has really reached out to the federal government and sought its involvement to address this problem. In the thoughtful submission that the District Council of Ceduna put to the Senate inquiry on this matter, it lists many, many measures that that community has put in place over the years to try to address the problem of endemic alcoholism. It talks about the implementation of dry zones in the town, an alcohol management plan, more CCTV monitoring, opening a youth centre and increasing education programs, a youth audit study, more sport and recreation programs, the development of a transitional accommodation facility to provide safe short-term accommodation for transient visitors and people affected by alcoholism, lots of education programs and lots of restrictions on the availability of alcohol. It actually says 'a series of restrictions on the availability of alcohol—too numerous to mention'. So it is very clear that the people of Ceduna, led by their district council, have really, frankly, addressed this problem and sought to do something about it.

But the statistics, the awful human statistics which I mentioned to you before, the incidence of assault and the extraordinary rate of people being admitted to the sobering-up facility, say that it is not working. It is not working. What do you do when you have an intractable problem and attempts to fix the problem are not working? You try something else. You tackle the problem honestly, and you are willing to make decisions that, on their face, might be quite difficult but are required if you really want serious reform. Again, it is to the credit of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister that he has led this process so well.

The District Council of Ceduna, in their submission, say: Most other potential steps to improve this intractable problem have been tried or implemented.

The best option not yet tried for restricting the availability of drugs, gambling funds and alcohol is clearly the restriction of cash for those who are on benefits. It is clear that many sufferers of alcoholism are on welfare benefits partly because of their illness. Coupled with the steps already implemented we believe that the trial together with the appropriate support measures will help immensely. So there is a very, very high level of community support for this program.

Let us talk about the details and make sure that we are clear on what this is and, importantly, what it is not. As my colleague mentioned earlier, this is a system that applies to people on a broad range of social security benefits in the town of Ceduna. It is of course not based on whether someone is Indigenous or their ethnicity or anything of that nature; it is simply based on whether they are receiving one of a wide range of different social benefits. How it works is relatively simple. It is a 12-month trial—an important point. Again, let us be honest about that. When you have a 12-month trial, you are doing that because you believe that this is an important step and a potential solution, but you are also honest about the fact that we always learn things by actually trying them out in the real world. As this trial takes place, I am sure that there will be many learnings that will come from it, and I know that the government will look at those learnings. As we consider where to go potentially beyond that trial, I am sure that those learnings will be incorporated into any subsequent legislation. That is why you trial things, and that is what a mature government does. So it is a 12-month trial.
Basically what occurs is that people receive a cashless debit card, much like a Visa card or a MasterCard et cetera that many of us would have.

Basically what that card allows the recipient to do is to buy at Woolworths. There are two points: firstly, 80 per cent of the benefit is provided through credit from the card, and then there is 20 per cent which is effectively cash for other services that perhaps cannot be purchased via a card—small items and so on. Within the 80 per cent that is required to be purchased via the card, there are two important prohibitions within that usage. One is alcohol and the other is gambling. We know from the appalling statistics that I quoted earlier that there is a very significant problem with alcoholism in this community. It is a very sensible measure to say that you cannot, as a social welfare recipient, use a large proportion of that payment on alcohol or gambling. That is really the nub of this legislation. Twenty per cent is unrestricted, so of course there will be people who will use that 20 per cent to have a social drink or to place a bet on a Saturday afternoon or whatever, as the case may be. But that is a very different matter to an endemic expenditure of large proportions of income on alcohol and/or gambling. This trial will stop that from occurring, and that is a very important thing.

It is also important to note that the government has had the foresight to allow some flexibility in this system. The local authority will have the power to increase the 20 per cent—which is effectively the unrestricted amount of payment—in certain circumstances. For instance, if it can be shown that an individual or family needs to access more than 20 per cent cash for a legitimate purpose that is not alcohol or gambling related, they will be able to make a submission to the local authority, who will consider those factors and potentially increase the 20 per cent should it be appropriate. So again it is a sensible measure to allow some flexibility in particular circumstances.

So it is a 12-month trial. Twenty per cent of the spending is unrestricted. Eighty per cent is unrestricted but for two things: alcohol and gambling. So, whatever the products are that people would seek to purchase, they can do so unless they are alcohol or gambling related.

Some people might say that this is restricting the freedoms of the recipient. This is saying to the recipient, 'Well, you know, there are certain things you can and can't do.' When you think about it, the structure is actually quite broad, because it says you can effectively do a very wide range of things with that 80 per cent. It is just two things that you cannot do. So it is by no means a sort of income management structure. It is not purporting to budget for people. It will undoubtedly assist some people to conduct their own budgeting process, but the government is not saying that you should spend $10 on this or $20 on this. It is just saying, 'For the 80 per cent of your income, don't spend it on alcohol and don't spend it on gambling.' It is entirely appropriate that we do that.

This is a community with endemic levels of alcoholism and with a related endemic level of assault. We have to do everything we can to address these structural endemic problems in our society. That is what this legislation does. The trial will be very beneficial, and I am sure much will be learnt from it, and I very strongly commend the bill to the House.

Mr RAMSEY (Grey) (18:48): I rise to speak on the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Debit Card Trial) Bill 2015 and the introduction of the cashless credit card trial—nominally in the first instance in one of my towns, Ceduna. Every now and then we find a problem where all the participants know that we need a solution. The problem is so bad and compelling that we must be prepared to go the extra yard and find a solution. So it is with
Ceduna, in the far west of my electorate, 880 kilometres from Adelaide by road. It takes a little less in an aeroplane, but most people travel by road. Its regional population, including the outlying Indigenous centres included in this legislation, is about 4,500, of which in total about 25 per cent is Indigenous. So it is not an Indigenous community as such, even though some of the outliers are. The wider community, from the Indigenous communities to the mainstream community in Ceduna, have had enough. They have had enough of the alcohol addiction and abuse, enough of family violence, enough of wilful community damage, enough of harmful antisocial behaviour and how that impacts on community teachings, enough of the health ramifications—the people drinking themselves to death—and enough of the impacts that behaviour has on families, both immediate and in the intergenerational manner.

So Ceduna has been incredibly proactive over the years, over a long period. It already has significant alcohol restrictions. The council introduced some years ago, at ratepayers' expense, funded security patrols. This is called the canine patrol. They have dogs, which immediately met with great resistance from the human rights groups around Australia. But in fact those people have become the best friends of many of the Indigenous people visiting the town. They are the people that pick them up and take them back to their accommodation if there is accommodation available. The day engagement centre has a transient camp, training programs and all the normal things you expect in towns with a high Indigenous population. There is an arts centre which is funded. There are youth programs. More recently, we had the introduction of income management, including in a voluntary sense, which has proved quite popular. This is one of the things that help women in particular to deal with humbugging. They could say, 'Well, I don’t have any cash; I’ve only got my BasicsCard.' Then there have been a small number of people—it has been quite slow to get moving—that have been directed onto income management as a result of police and court orders that have happened around them.

Each time the community in Ceduna has moved to further address this problem we have initially seen a good result but, because alcoholics are enormously resourceful and find their way around almost any obstacle, eventually the effects erode. While you get some people off alcohol permanently with the programs that go with it, there is a core group who are committed to their drug, if you like. Sadly, in many cases these people come from outlying communities, they are bush people. Some come hundreds of kilometres. When they get in town you cannot get them home. They are disengaged from their individual health programs so sickness is a close companion.

Finally, a further option presented itself when Twiggy Forrest's report Creating parity into finding success for Indigenous training and employment came into being. I will come to the effects of that in a moment. It is worthwhile looking at some of the points in that report. It says, quite rightly, that the early years are critical for brain development. It says that Indigenous children are more than twice as likely to be developmentally delayed. There are lower birth weights and higher incidences of perinatal death and foetal alcohol spectrum disorder. Indeed, I am a member of the House Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs that recently tabled a report into the harmful use of alcohol in Indigenous communities that highlights so many of these points. The tragedy of FASD is alive and well, particularly in some of the remote communities, but of course it strikes closer to home for many of us.
I know these figures have been raised before in this debate, but in Ceduna in the 2013-14 year there were 4,667 admissions to the sobering up unit and the hospitalisation rate for assault was 68 times the national average. That is particularly bad but from my point of view it is typical. It is not a figure particular to Ceduna—that is just the place we have the figures for. That is why this trial could well have national ramifications in the longer term.

The larger Ceduna community encompasses the Indigenous communities of Yalata, Oak Valley, Koonibba and the Ceduna Aboriginal Corporation, the local council and the Scotdesco Indigenous community. They broadly represent the homeland communities around Ceduna. They have had enough of the violence, enough of the premature deaths, enough of the FASD and enough of the generational disadvantage and are prepared to do whatever it takes. They have tried everything else that has been on offer before and they are willing to do whatever it takes.

It was in this space that Andrew Forrest's report was lodged. I would like to thank Parliamentary Secretary Alan Tudge, who had already spent a long time developing a relationship with Ceduna. I accompany him on most visits and I visit Ceduna on a more regular basis. When we were introducing the BasicsCard we needed everybody on board to make that happen. The more visits you have the better you get to know people. Familiarity breeds trust. Alan Tudge in that space was able to suggest that we could take another step and they were receptive. Over months there were more meetings building more trust. Importantly, we asked the communities to contribute to the design of the project. As the first cab off the rank they got to help write the rules on how this might roll out around other communities around Australia. This outcome has been negotiated. It is about give and take. We all own it and we all approve of it.

It is important to note that Ceduna has a mixed population. It is not an Indigenous town as such. This trial affects everyone. It is blind to race. I think that is a very important message for this government to be able to hang its hat on—that we are not chasing Aboriginal people, we are not chasing the problem of alcoholism that is completely out of control in the community. We have alcoholics who will turn their back on every other service and will spend every dollar they can lay their hands on on alcohol. They are intent on destroying themselves. Unfortunately, they destroy not only themselves but their families as well.

I pay special tribute to the Mayor of Ceduna, Allan Suter. He is a very brave local mayor—and I mean that in the best possible way. He is brave enough to call it as he sees it. He is respected in his community on that basis, so he is able to provide the leadership needed in this case. It is so important that the Ceduna district council representing the wider, if you like, non-Indigenous community was able to make a call on that community's behalf.

I remember saying on the day we signed the document: 'Maybe this is the day that the world of welfare has changed. Maybe we will look back on this as a seminal moment in our history as saying, "Welfare is provided to you to provide for your family and yourself in an appropriate way. It is there so you buy the important things in life. It is not there to destroy you and your family. It must be managed in that way."'

Maybe this trial will fail. I do not know—that is the point of having a trial. Maybe we will sit down in 12 months' time and say: 'Nothing has changed. We just made a lot of extra work for ourselves.' Well we will not know until we try. I reckon there is enough meat around the
subject to say that this could work not only a bit but really well. It will not be a silver bullet. It will not fix every single problem because, as I said, the alcoholics are committed and ingenious. They will find ways to get alcohol, but it will be much harder and they will need the compliance of friends and family if they want to get there, and friends, families and community leaders are saying, 'We have had enough.'

What is it? It is a 12-month trial. Twenty per cent of welfare income will go into a normal account—and this trial does not affect aged pensions—and 80 per cent will go on a debit card. You cannot withdraw cash from that debit card, but you can buy anything with it except alcohol, gambling services and, because you cannot withdraw cash, it is virtually impossible to buy drugs. Most drug dealers do not actually run an EFTPOS machine—well, I have not come across one that does! So you can buy food, housing, clothing, household tools and devices, phone accounts and pay medical bills. You can buy anything, but you cannot buy alcohol, you cannot buy drugs and you cannot buy gambling services.

The 20 per cent allowance is quite significant. On most welfare payments, 20 per cent is a sizeable amount. It could be spent on things like tickets to the football perhaps, treats for kids that are less than a dollar or two, or on raffle tickets. Importantly, the debit card looks like every other debit card that we all have in our wallets. There is some stigma attached to the BasicsCard. It is quite distinctive. When you go into the supermarket and you handover your BasicsCard, you think: 'Everybody knows I am on welfare. Everybody knows that I have my income managed.' With this cashless debit card, no-one will know. It will look exactly the same as all others, for all intents and purposes.

Electronically, it will be different because it will not work at certain cash registers. It will not work at the bottle shop. It will not work on online gambling services. It will not work in the pokies room. For instance, the Ceduna hotel has a number of different tills and, depending on what the local committee decide, it may work in the restaurant. So people may be able to take their family there and perhaps even buy a beer with their restaurant meal. As yet, that is undecided. The point is that an alcoholic is unlikely to buy much alcohol at dining room prices, so there is a regulatory thing in there. We are looking for this to not impact on people who are doing the right thing; we are trying to get people who are doing the wrong thing on the road.

I would like to particularly mention the community heads who signed up to the agreement on the day: Mayor Allan Suter and CEO Geoff Moffatt from the Ceduna council; Michael Haynes, a long-term advocate of the Ceduna Aboriginal Corporation, and Peter Miller—both fine gentlemen; Corey McLennan and Kevina Ware from Koonibba, which is about 30 kilometres down the road and the home of the Koonibba football club—and I might get to that if I have time left at the end of my speech; from the Scotdesco Aboriginal corporation, Robert Larking and Bronwyn Stott; from the Yalata community, Greg Franks and the remarkable Mima Smart—a wonderful leader of that community, strong and forthright; from Oak Valley, Sharon Yendall and Roger Williams—Oak Valley is a fair way up the track, not very far from Maralinga.

I cannot tell you how proud I am of those communities and how pleased I was that those leaders were prepared to step up to the plate, and perhaps get some community ire, and say: 'This is what we need to do to stop our people dying. This is what we need to do to protect our children. We will do whatever it takes.' I was so proud of them. I am proud of Ceduna for
taking this on for Australia, for taking this on for all people around Australia, black and white, to see whether we can beat this scourge.

To celebrate the day, it was my 59th birthday, in fact—

Mr Frydenberg: You look younger.

Mr RAMSEY: Of course, looks can be deceiving. It was my 59th birthday and Alan Tudge and I celebrated by having a training run with the Koonibba football team. He is a little younger than me and I had not kicked a football for probably 10 years or more. We staggered around the field for a while and enjoyed our run with the boys. Unfortunately, they were unsuccessful in the grand final and Thevenard got up. It was great to be out there with the boys and celebrating this very significant moment for Ceduna, not just in Ceduna's history but in the affairs of the nation. We may look back on this as the page-turner.

WYATT ROY (Longman) (19:04): Can I particularly thank the member for Grey. He really has his heart in this issue. His community is well served to have him advocating on this issue. Mate, we need more people like you in this place.

If I could go to this issue in a very direct manner. One of the great tragedies of this country has been our inability to see significant progress in Closing the Gap. Despite the best of intentions from many people in government and in the community, we have not made the progress that we need to make as a country. Clearly, if we are realistic about this, simply accepting the status quo is not working. It is our obligation as policymakers to be prepared to try new things. If those things do not work, we can always try other policy measures. Simply having good intentions but saying, 'What's currently out there is not working, but we'll keep adding good intentions and no new policy objectives to this important initiative for our nation,' is not good enough.

It is a great honour to rise to talk about the new cashless welfare debit card and the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Debit Card Trial) Bill 2015. This is a very significant reform in a vital sector. This new cashless card will be trialled and the trial locations will be chosen on the basis of high-welfare dependence and high social harm indicators and openness from community leaders to participate in the trial. This will be a 12-month trial. I want to particularly commend the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Alan Tudge, a great mate of mine. This is a case study in effective policy development.

Mr Frydenberg interjecting—

WYATT ROY: I am very glad to see the Assistant Treasurer also adding his praise to Alan Tudge. He has done a very effective job in bringing people together. The fact that in this trial we have the overwhelming support of the Ceduna community coming behind this is a real testament to the work that he has done.

This is not an easy area of reform. This is not an easy thing to pull off. It is indeed a very significant change in approach in the way that we deal with the delivery of welfare but it is our obligation to get this right. This new reform is guided by some very simple principles, some fundamental principles about how we deliver welfare as a nation. The first thing is that welfare is there to protect the most vulnerable people in our community, to give assistance to those people who are most in need. This reform does exactly that but it still provides freedom of choice for people because, as a cashless debit card, you can purchase whatever you like but you simply cannot purchase items which inflict harm not only on yourself the individual but
on the collective. You cannot go out and buy drugs or alcohol and you cannot gamble your welfare payments away. This is money from the Australian taxpayers to the most vulnerable people in our community to say: we are here to help when you need that vital assistance but we are not going to allow you to use other people's money to purchase things that will harm you and harm the community that you live in.

For me, I think this is an incredibly important reform and one that is long overdue. The fact that we have the opportunity here as a country to give this an effective shot with a community right behind this change, I think, is a real opportunity to make real progress on those noble goals of Closing the Gap, which are so important. For me, I think this is a great opportunity, one that we must not let slip through our fingers. I hope that this bill has very significant support in the parliament in both houses because the reality is, if at the end of this 12-month trial it does not work, we can go back to the drawing board. We can try something else. But surely there is enough cause to give this a shot and, hopefully, change the lives of so many people for the better because that is the obligation of all people in this House. I commend this bill very strongly to House.

Mr TUDGE (Aston—Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister) (19:09): I rise to sum up on the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Debit Card Trial) Bill 2015. I thank all of the speakers who have spoken on this particular bill, both the Labor members and the coalition members for their very thoughtful contributions. I thank also the Labor Party for constructively engaging with the government over the development of this bill over the course of the last few months and I am pleased to have their support in this House for it.

I think this piece of legislation could be a watershed bill in how we distribute welfare in this country. The bill enables a trial to occur in several locations in Australia whereby instead of delivering cash into a welfare recipient's account, 80 per cent of their welfare dollars will be placed into an account which is only accessible by an ordinary bank debit card—a Visa debit card or a MasterCard debit card. This card will be able to be used anywhere to purchase anything but it simply will not work at the bottle shop and it will not work at the gambling houses. And because your cash is limited, it means you will not be able to purchase illicit drugs in that process.

The legislation enables this to be trialled for 12 months. It enables it to be trialled in three locations covering up to 10,000 people. The people in the trial site covered will be any person whose income support is predominantly a Centrelink payment so it includes people on Newstart, on the disability support pension and on carers' payments among others. An additional feature of this trial bill will be that it will enable the government to establish a local panel in each of the trial sites and that panel will have real statutory power to make adjustments to people's cards should they choose to make an application.

I said that this would be trialled in up to three locations covering at most 10,000 people. We have already announced that the first trial site will be in the Ceduna region on the west coast of South Australia. It covers five or six smaller communities including the township of Ceduna. Over the last few months, I, along with government officials, have been negotiating with the community leaders on the ground there about what a trial might look like. How would be constituted? What will be the time frame? What will be the attributes of this trial? It was absolutely a codesigned process with those community leaders in Ceduna to come up with what is now a very precise trial for that community starting in February of next year.
I would like to commend the community leaders on the ground there in Ceduna for, I suppose, having the courage to step up to work so cooperatively with the government over the course of this process and design what will be a very effective trial starting next year. We hope collectively, the community leaders and the government, that this will have a demonstrable impact on the welfare fuelled alcohol, drug and gambling abuse, which, unfortunately, is rife in that community. If I can perhaps quote some of the aspirations from some of the community leaders in Ceduna in what they see that might come about from this. I will start with Mima Smart, who is a local elder in the Yalata Aboriginal community. She says that:

There are a lot of people who have died and a lot of people ending up in hospital because their life was destroyed by alcohol. Instead of being in Ceduna drinking, people will now go home to be with their families and teach them culture.

I look at the statement which the community heads group put out when we announced that Ceduna would be a trial location. In this they say:

As local leaders we want to champion the cause for the betterment of our people, and we believe this will benefit the region as a whole.

They say that:

At the heart of this reform, is a change that is being shaped specifically to meet our local needs. It has been a true collaboration to ensure that we can give our mob and our Communities every chance to create real and genuine change in their lives.

Finally, they say:

…it is our belief, today's decision is a landmark decision considering that we are the first trial site amongst a possible 3 Australia wide. We have grasped this initiative; we have helped shape this initiative; and we are confident that this initiative is for the betterment of all people within our region.

That was the statement put out by the community heads group in the Ceduna region, which consists of the leaders of each of the six communities which will be affected.

I also commend Allan Suter, the Mayor of Ceduna, who I think has also shown very strong leadership in his community, working cooperatively with the Indigenous leaders in the area. The work that they have done is also to be commended. We are also in advanced discussions in the East Kimberley region. My hope is that we will be able to announce all or some of the East Kimberley as the second trial site in the not too distant future.

Ian Trust and his leadership group have perhaps been the most vocal leaders in the country calling for the introduction of this card. Ian Trust, for those who do not know, is a very substantial Indigenous leader in the East Kimberley, and I consider him one of the most substantial Indigenous leaders in the nation today. He has been leading a reform effort, and in his view that reform effort should include the introduction of this card. We are listening to him, we are working very closely with him and his leadership group, as well as consulting more broadly. I will perhaps read a couple of quotes from him, Desmond Hill and Ted Hall—three very key leaders in the East Kimberley region, particularly based in Kununurra. They write:

We acknowledge that agreeing to the East Kimberley being a trial site for the restricted debit card may seem to some a rather drastic step. However, it is our view that continuing to deliver the same programs we have delivered for the past forty years will do nothing for our people and, besides wasting more time...
and money, will condemn our children and future generations to a life of poverty and despair. As leaders in the East Kimberley, we cannot accept this.

They have come out very positively towards working with us as well. As I said, we have some more work to do but we are hopeful that we can announce all or some of the East Kimberley as our second trial site.

Let me address a few of the critiques which the Labor Party raised in some of their contributions. I said at the get-go that I appreciated their support for this bill. I appreciate the constructive way that they have engaged with me over the last few months as we were developing up this trial. There were really four things which were raised, particularly by the shadow ministers Shayne Neumann and Jenny Macklin. The first was that they stated the legislation allows the trial to go for two years, whereas we have always said the trial will just go for one. I can reassure the members opposite that the trial will last just 12 months unless of course there is a demonstrable improvement and there is a desire for the trial to continue beyond that. The firm intent is that this is a 12-month trial in each particular location.

The second critique, and this is perhaps their most substantial one, was that there are no additional supports to accompany the introduction of the debit card in the trial locations. I would like to point out to those members who raised that point that there will be additional supports. We are working on those additional supports as we speak. Those additional supports will particularly include financial management and financial counselling. They will include additional drug and alcohol counselling or assistance to help people get off that addiction and they will include some mental health assistance as well. Again, we are negotiating with the local community leaders as to what makes sense in those communities to complement the introduction of the card. I am hopeful that when the opposition see those supports being put in place that they will also agree that those supports will make a difference and are indeed a good complement to the card.

The third critique was that there was no detail in terms of the evaluation. We are working on that at the moment. I can assure the opposition that there will be a detailed evaluation process which will be undertaken. It will be an independent evaluation, and by and large we will be tracking the main harm indicators in the community as well as taking some qualitative assessments.

Finally, their critique was that there is no detail on the operation of the card. With respect, we are still working through that with the financial services provider that we are contracting with to deliver the card. I can assure the opposition that we are taking this very seriously and it will not be that dissimilar to how the BasicsCard was rolled out under Jenny Macklin's leadership several years ago.

I conclude my summation of this bill by mentioning a few thank yous. Firstly, I thank Andrew Forrest as he was the one who initially proposed this idea to us in his Creating parity report. It is a very good report, and the introduction of a cashless debit card was indeed the centrepiece recommendation. We have not adopted exactly what he recommended. He recommended that 100 per cent of payments be placed onto the card. We have settled on 80 per cent, in part because that is what was agreed with community leaders on the ground. I thank him for putting this idea to us, for the work that he did and for the overall work which he does for Aboriginal people across the country.
Secondly, I thank the community leaders on the ground, particularly in Ceduna and the East Kimberley. In the East Kimberley I mentioned three names—Ian Trust, Desmond Hill and Ted Hall—particularly, but they lead a broader group of leaders. They have been very strong and have engaged with us very cooperatively. In the Ceduna region there are a number of leaders who have come together and helped co-design this trial. I thank them for their leadership, particularly Corey McLennan and Michael Haynes. I also thank the government officials who have worked on this and have worked quite tirelessly over the last few months. I know they will continue to work tirelessly over the next few months and during the implementation. In particular, I thank Ros Baxter, Kai Cantwell and Caroline Edwards as well as Marnie Wettenthal on the ground in Ceduna.

Finally, I thank my colleagues. I particularly thank Wyatt Roy and Andrew Southcott for leading their two respective coalition committees that have been deeply engaged in this process, in terms of designing this quite radical trial in some respects. I thank them for their work. Our hope is that this trial will be successful, that it will have a demonstrable impact on the very significant harm that is caused by welfare fuelled alcohol and drug and gambling abuse. It is sometimes tragic what we see on the ground. It is tragic that the damage caused is often funded and paid for by the welfare dollar.

We hope that this card and overall package will enable those communities to become healthier, to reduce that welfare fuelled alcohol, drug and gambling abuse and, in the process, that women and children can be safer, the community can be safer and more people, overall, can lead better and healthier lives. Thank you, again, for the contributions from all members of this parliament, and I commend the bill.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Mr TUDGE (Aston—Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister) (19:25): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

BILLS

Omnibus Repeal Day (Autumn 2015) Bill 2015


Statute Law Revision Bill (No. 2) 2015

Cognate debate.

Debate resumed on the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr ENTSCH (Leichhardt) (19:26): Dev says the English language requirements are punishing for multicultural employers. Today I say to Dev, 'We have heard you.' This government is reforming the 457 visa program by streamlining the processing of sponsorship, nomination and visa applications; reforming sponsorship requirements to reduce the time and
cost to businesses; increasing the sponsorship approval period from 12 to 18 months for start-up businesses; and providing greater flexibility in relation to English-language testing and skill requirements. These measures are good for business, good for employers and good for the country, saving $29.9 million per year in compliance fees.

Tourism is an industry that Leichhardt strongly relies on and there are huge benefits, looking ahead. Firstly, we can expect more tourists now that visitors from half-a-dozen new countries can apply for their subclass 600 Visitor visas electronically. Visitors from the Philippines, Kenya, South Africa, Bosnia and Herzegovina can now go to the Australian immigration website and apply online. Secondly, we know that Chinese visitors are a major contributor to the tourism sector. In the last financial year Australia welcomed more than 700,000 visitors. We want to make it even easier for them to visit. We are giving Chinese business visitors access to a single visa that will allow them to visit Australia multiple times over a three-year period.

China is among eight countries to trial the SmartGate passport processing system along with eligible citizens of Ireland, Canada, Switzerland, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and Japan. This SmartGate passport system is already available to eligible travellers from Australia, New Zealand, the UK and the USA. It substantially reduces queue waiting times as travellers enter Australia to work or holiday and greatly enhances the 'welcome' experience.

Tourism Tropical North Queensland has praised the federal government's initiatives to cut red tape. CEO Alex de Waal said it will greatly enhance Australia's ability to attract tourists. He said it was wonderful to see the federal government proactively investing in tourism growth; however, he cautioned that still more needs to be done. Alex said that Australia's competitors are finding new ways to remove barriers and attract guests, so Australia needs to continue to innovate by aggressively tackling barriers to tourism growth in this country. I wholly support Alex's views here, and I can promise him that this government will not be resting on its laurels.

Finally, we have removed provisions in the Aged Care Act 1997 that forced providers to notify the Department of Social Services within 28 days of any changes to key employees. We have removed some certification requirements from the Building Code of Australia that relate to aged-care facilities. If the requirement is duplicated in state building regulations, there is no need for federal government oversight.

We have streamlined the forms for the Aged Care Approvals Round, reducing the size of application forms by half. One project this will assist in Leichhardt is the Mossman District Nursing Home. For 20 years, members of the Mossman District Nursing Home Inc. committee have been trying to build themselves a nursing home. They have been doing an outstanding job in their efforts. Over the years they have been successful, first of all, in having the local hospital converted into a multipurpose facility, which allowed them to get access to eight nursing home beds. They then went ahead and were able to successfully organise a plot of land, thanks to council support, and they have been seeking additional bed places through our annual Aged Care Approvals Round. Since 2011, the committee has been completing very comprehensive annual applications for these bed places. The applications are a massive endeavour and very time consuming, costing upwards of $30,000 in consultants' fees on each occasion. I am pleased to say that the committee formed a partnership with the...
Salvation Army Aged Care Plus, and this organisation has been able to drive the more recent ACAR applications. Nevertheless, as the president of the committee, Marj Norris, told me:

Anything the Government can do to reduce the burden of these applications for community, non-profit organisations is very welcome news.

After these 20 years of effort, in the last round Marj and her team, with the support of the Salvation Army Aged Care Plus, successfully attained another 42 places in the 2014 ACAR. Only a matter of weeks ago, the Douglas Shire Council agreed to transfer freehold on the land that they had reserved for this facility to the Salvation Army. So we are now looking to the next round to get about $6 million, with the Salvation Army putting in a similar amount, so that they can build a facility. After 20 years of effort, there is a real possibility of Mossman attaining their aged-care facility. I will certainly be supporting them in their efforts and I can tell you that there is not a more worthy community. For the years that they have been working on that project, I think they deserve all the credit they get and the success that they are able to achieve.

We know how frustrating it is to have to update personal information at a multitude of agencies—sitting on hold on the phone or queuing up to be served. The new myGov website takes advantage of the technology we have available today and links together Medicare, the tax office, Centrelink, Australian JobSearch, our eHealth records, Child Support, the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The extra features mean that every Australian can update their important details in one place. Cameron Murphy, a resident of Kewarra Beach, told my electorate officers how time consuming it is to have to go into a Medicare office to change his personal information. At a national level, this move reduces $5.4 million in annual compliance costs across the country.

In conclusion, today's $305 million cut in red tape builds on the $2.1 billion reduction as a result of decisions we have made since October last year. The previous government created around 21,000 new regulations, further clogging up the pores of our system. With the passing of this legislation, the coalition will have repealed more than 10,300 legislative instruments and 2,700 acts of parliament, relieving $2.45 billion of unnecessary expenditure for Aussie families, organisations and businesses. That red tape has been building up like a boil since Australia's government began in 1901. Now we are lancing that boil, getting rid of the pain and the pressure, and working to build a robust economy that will support growth and prosperity into the future. I certainly commend the bill to the House.

Mr DREYFUS (Isaacs—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (19:34): We have seen some extraordinary events in this place over the last two days. In an act of desperation, the Liberal Party last night tore down the member for Warringah, the man who has led them through almost four years of opposition and two years of government. The Liberal Party has changed its leader and has changed its style, but we saw in question time today that this Liberal government is not going to change its policies. The new Prime Minister has not yet revealed a sliver of difference in policy substance between himself and the member for Warringah, whom he so unceremoniously deposed on Monday night. The new Prime Minister supports all of the unfair budget cuts that he voted for in 2014 and 2015. The new Prime Minister will not allow a free vote on marriage equality. The new Prime Minister supports all of this government's failed climate change policy. We stand ready to work with the new Prime
Minister on these and on other issues, but first the new Prime Minister needs to show that he is ready to deliver on what Australians thought that he believed in.

Proceedings in this chamber today have an air of the surreal about them. We have heard some lofty rhetoric from the new Prime Minister, but in this place this evening we are still condemned, it seems, to trudge through more of this government's discredited policy agenda.

I will speak to two of the three cognate bills before the House this evening: the Amending Acts 1980 to 1989 Repeal Bill 2015 and the Statute Law Revision Bill (No. 2) 2015. The first, the amending acts bill, repeals 870 Commonwealth acts spanning from 1980 to 1989 which amended or repealed other pieces of legislation. As these amendments or repeals have already occurred, the operation of these acts is spent. In repealing these acts, this bill will have no actual effect on the operation of any law. I repeat: this amending acts bill has not one iota of legal effect—and yet three times in this parliament the government has introduced a bill like this. They did not deal with all of the amending acts on the statute book in one go. No, they wanted to string it out. And so we are forced to trample back here time after time to deal with these bills which, I repeat, have no legal effect.

In early 2014, as part of the Liberal government's first 'repeal day' stunt, they passed a bill dealing with amending acts passed between 1901 and 1969. But now they have slowed down the pace, now they are asking the parliament to go through this charade decade by decade. Earlier this year the parliament passed a bill dealing with amending acts between 1970 and 1979. And now the eighties are upon us. No doubt, when the government holds its next 'repeal day' stunt they will move on to the 1990s. That will certainly be a sight to see—government members railing heroically against the dead hand of Howard government regulation. Each time the government piles on speakers. Speaking to the last bill in this place, in October last year, the member for Bass actually boasted of the huge number of speakers on the government side—on a bill like this one. On that occasion the government consumed an entire parliamentary sitting day debating a bill which, by the government's own admission, has no legal effect whatsoever.

The parliament has procedures for dealing with non-urgent, non-controversial legislation. When the last bill came before this place the opposition sought to have it referred to the Federation Chamber—surely, the appropriate place—but the government refused. And so they had the House of Representatives, the highest legislative chamber in this country, spend an entire day debating the repeal of inoperative acts from decades past. It is hard to believe that we are again being asked to consume what should be scarce parliamentary time for important pieces of legislation debating bills like this. I will repeat it again: this bill has no real legal effect because when an amending act comes into force it ends another act of parliament and its work is done. The only possible effect of this bill is to remove a number of lines of titles of acts from the Commonwealth statute book—acts that no-one would ever think to refer to or need to refer to because we now have a consolidation process where all acts of parliament, after being amended, are consolidated. This is the kind of trivia, this is the kind of stunt, that this government has resorted to, pretending they have some sort of policy agenda when in fact they have none.

The second bill that I wish to speak to, the Statute Law Revision Bill (No. 2) 2015, is the third of this kind of bill introduced by the Liberal government in this parliament. The parliament has passed such bills with regularity since the first of them was introduced to the
House of Representatives by Sir John Latham, as Attorney-General, in 1934. I have commented in the past on the first of the Liberal government's statute law revision bills, but for the government to seek to dress up a statute law revision bill as some kind of vast act of deregulation is simply absurd. It is not in any way a matter of deregulation, it is not in any way a matter of removing red tape; it is a matter of housekeeping. These bills correct drafting errors, update cross-references and remove spent or obsolete provisions. Of course, these bills serve a worthy purpose: they maintain the tidiness of the statute book. This is an ongoing task for this and other parliaments. This is not bold regulatory reform, it is routine work undertaken by all modern governments. Among other things—and this will give all those in the chamber some idea of the importance of this bill—this bill corrects the spelling of the word 'division' in the Sex Discrimination Act, which presently lacks its third 'I'; re-letters a section of the Personal Property Securities Act, which currently contains two paragraphs 'B'; removes a misplaced quotation mark in the Federal Circuit Court of Australia Act; and corrects the spelling of 'of' in the Surveillance Devices Act, evidently a particularly typo ridden statute that was also amended by the government in both of its previous statute law revision bills. The bill inserts gender-neutral language into two acts. It makes clear in relevant legislation predating ACT and Northern Territory self-government that the legislation binds the territories. This does not change the law. The ACT and Northern Territory self-government acts already provide that acts which expressly bind each of the states also bind the territories.

All of this is worthy. Lest it be suggested by those opposite that I am perhaps saying that any of this is not worthy of action by the parliament, of course it is all worthy. But none of it is groundbreaking. And this bill, as with the amending acts bill, is not in any sense deregulation. Neither of these bills will reduce in any measurable way the regulatory burden on any Australian business. That the government would again try to dress these bills up into a grand political gesture—as it has done on previous occasions—shows this government's complete lack of substance.

On Monday afternoon, as he made his public pitch for high office, the now Prime Minister indulged in some particularly lofty rhetoric—even by his standards. He told us that what this country needed was economic leadership. When we dealt with the last iteration of these kinds of bills, in October 2014, government members told the House that they were delivering economic leadership. They told us that these bills, which by the government's own admission are of no real legal effect, represented a bold reform agenda. They said some quite extraordinary things. The member for Macquarie described the government's charade as 'an unprecedented initiative'. The member for Deakin said the government was 'taking a giant pair of scissors' to red tape. The member for Grey, most incredibly, described the passage of the last set of bills as 'an Empire Strikes Back moment'.

Mr Frydenberg interjecting—

Mr DREYFUS: I hear the member for Kooyong baying on the other side of the chamber, continuing with the pretence that there is some serious deregulation and continuing with his false and an unsubstantiated figure of the suppose savings achieved by this kind of legislation.

Mr Frydenberg interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Vasta): Order! The member for Isaacs has the call.
Mr DREYFUS: Well, we are back dealing with yet another set of these bills. The same members, and many more besides, are back, including the Assistant Treasurer, spouting nonsense about the supposed economic effects of these pieces of legislation. The Liberal government is back once again going through the motions.

I would invite members opposite in their speeches today to explain to the House just how the repeal last year of amending acts passed between 1970 and 1979 has affected individuals and businesses in their electorates. I want to hear just how much money has been saved by repealing legislation that has not been in force for as much as 45 years. Before we vote on yet another bill of this kind, let them explain what the effect of the last one was. They will not, of course, because even they know what a charade and what a farce these bills are. Is this really the kind of economic leadership the Liberals are offering the Australian people—the repeal of long dead statutes, the correction of typos, the renumbering of regulations? We are supposed to be in the sunlit uplands of the Turnbull prime ministership, but here we are still wading through the detritus of this failed, discredited Liberal government.

Ms MARINO (Forrest—Government Whip) (19:46): The Omnibus Repeal Day (Autumn 2015) Bill 2015 is a whole-of-government initiative to amend or repeal legislation across seven portfolios. The bill brings forward a range of measures to reduce the regulatory burden for businesses, families, individuals and the community sector that are not the subject of individual stand-alone bills. The bill also includes measures that repeal redundant and spent acts and provisions in commonwealth acts and complements the measures included in the Statute Law Revision Bill (No.1) 2015 and the Amending Acts 1980 to 1989 Repeal Bill 2015. In total, this bill, the Statute Law Revision Bill (No.1) 2015 and the Amending Acts 1980 to 1989 Repeal Bill 2015 will repeal 890 commonwealth acts. Repeal of these acts helps to ensure that regulation is easily accessible, continues to deliver on policy outcomes and only remains in force for as long as necessary.

Making regulation easily accessible means that business, individuals and community organisations spend less time trawling through regulations and dealing with compliance. This is especially relevant for small business. I look back to the small business campaign Too Big to Ignore. It said:

At every level of government, regulation is suffocating small business. The costs and time involved in complying with those regulations is bad enough, and the unnecessary duplication makes it even worse. Let's cut the red tape and give small business a break.

The government continues to do exactly that with our continuous deregulation agenda. The reasons are definitive. It is very clear that small businesses do not have the same administrative resources as larger businesses. A small business with just one owner, a single operator, or perhaps a couple running a business finds that every additional compliance requirement simply adds to the challenges of trying to work in, as well as work on, their business. Every hour spent on compliance—every wasted minute—is time away from customers, time away from innovation and time away from actually operating their business.

The 2013 Productivity Commission report said:
For small business, supplying information to the regulator can be the most burdensome aspect of complying with regulation.

... data requests should be the minimum necessary to allow the regulator to perform its function effectively, and, as far as possible, be tailored around data that is already collected by business.

Many of the over 12,000 small businesses in my electorate tell me repeatedly that it is the cumulative burden of local, state and federal regulations—the layer upon layer of regulation—that literally ties their hands and their profits. If they have workers, it consumes the otherwise productive time of these employees. If you have done this sort of work yourself, you will know that it is time consuming and often repetitive, and dealing with what is required by each level of government is complex. This adds to the cost of running the business and adding to the frustration of owners and employees both.

In 2013, the Productivity Commission estimated that reducing the burden of unnecessary regulation could potentially generate an additional $12 billion in gross domestic product each year. Respondents to a recent ACCI survey said that regulation prevented their businesses from growing, with some spending 11 hours a week or more on compliance. What really worried me was that over half of the businesses surveyed said that they cannot pass on the increased cost to consumers, so they have to absorb the cost of compliance themselves. For almost 30 per cent of businesses in the survey, the cost ranged from $10,000 to $50,000 a year. Frequently, depending on the type of small business, many small businesses are actually price takers, with perishable products in their supply and value chains and in their markets—for example, dairy farmers and horticultural growers. These businesses have no choice but to absorb these costs themselves. They literally cannot pass them on.

In the survey, I read that the commonwealth agencies that businesses found complicated to deal with were the ATO, the Department of Employment and the Department of Health. State regulatory agencies businesses found complicated to deal with were local government, the safety regulator and industrial relations. A simple example is that 34 per cent of the businesses in the survey were providing the same or similar information to government agencies.

It is no surprise that 57 per cent of the businesses would have a reduced red-tape burden if government agencies shared information.

A recent Deloitte survey, Get out of your own way: unleashing productivity, encouraged businesses not only to calculate the costs of compliance with government regulations but also to calculate the costs and constraints of self-imposed rules—those that perhaps have been around forever in the business and never looked at independently, objectively. These are the rules that add to unproductive working hours and are also a major cost to business. One of the issues I was pleased to see covered in the survey is the very real issue of businesses managing information security. Information security is a pressing issue facing business. In the survey, 54 per cent of those who responded said that their boards understand cyber risk, but nearly 40 per cent were actually neutral on the question of how well cyber risks were being managed within their business. Deloitte said that most organisations are focused on prevention as opposed to detection, noting that currently:

The average cost of a data breach per Australian organisation is more than $2.5 million per year … and rising.

And:
Financial losses, intellectual property theft, reputational damage, fraud and legal exposure are all at risk when it comes to cyber and information security. Vigilance and resilience all need the full attention of executives and company boards. This is yet another reason for business to be freed from red tape to be able to focus on the practical issues impacting directly on their businesses.

Schedule 1 will repeal seven redundant acts administered in the agricultural portfolio, abolish the Australian Landcare Council and make minor consequential amendments to update references in four additional acts. It is important that we minimise the regulatory burden on our nation's farmers and food manufacturers. It is also vital that we maintain our reputation for producing high-quality, safe food that is the envy of the rest of the world and sought after by the rest of the world. This is, without question, our greatest advantage in the international food marketplace and it is how Australian families can have confidence in the quality of the food they consume. The gross value of Australia's farm production is worth an estimated $47.9 billion a year, with an export value of farm commodities of around $38 billion. What we do know—and I know it from my electorate—is that agriculture keeps so many rural and regional communities alive. And although the nation may no longer ride on the back of the sheep industry, agriculture is still the lifeblood of the bulk of the Australian landmass.

Schedule 2 will amend and repeal provisions in the acts administered in the environment portfolio, making minor technical amendments to streamline regulatory arrangements. And of course the Holy Grail of environmental management is to make good decisions about environmental approvals rapidly. We want to protect the environment and also stimulate development and the economy to create jobs and to support communities. Now, some might consider that achieving both of those in a timely manner is impossible, but that is the ideal that we should always be aiming for. Minimising red tape in environmental decision making should never put the environment itself at risk, but changes can be made that do not increase environmental risk.

Schedule 3 will make minor amendments to and repeal provisions in one act administered in the health portfolio. Health administration—as you know, Mr Deputy Speaker Vasta—is always an involved and very technical exercise, and anything we can do to simplify the process should be welcomed. Health is often the most difficult of portfolios, because the entire population at all times has a vested interest in health policy. It is therefore a portfolio in which removing self-interest is all but impossible. It is also a portfolio that has an ever-increasing expectation of outcome and thereby an ever-increasing demand whilst retaining a far too commonly held belief in entitlement. That is, as a community we are demanding constantly improving health outcomes at no personal cost. And of course those selling health outcomes, whether they are drug companies, health firms or medical professionals, have ready-made supporters for ever-increasing demands on public expenditure.

It has always been quite easy for any opposition to make cheap political points when some section of the community may not be having their expectations met. In health, fixing this is no easy task. But limiting the growth of health expenditure will be vital to the economic wellbeing of Australia and thus, by default, the general wellbeing of the future populations that we are demanding pay for our health outcomes of today.
Schedule 4 will repeal redundant legislation in the Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio. Schedule 5 makes minor amendments and repeals provisions in acts administered in the social services portfolio. It is always hard to enact change in social services, but for the sake of future generations this work is essential. The *Intergenerational report* has highlighted the growing demand for welfare in Australia. In 1961, US President John F Kennedy said, 'Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.' Somehow in Australia, along with the large group who need some assistance in retirement or in poor health, we still have a section who believes that our country owes us a living. Let us not as a parliament join them in asking future generations to pay for the welfare of the current one. That is what we have seen through the accumulation of debt that we saw under the previous Labor government.

Schedule 6 will repeal redundant acts and provisions in the Treasury portfolio. The greatest threat to the standard of life in Australia is the risk of our own economic complacency. The economic prosperity that Australia has enjoyed has come at a time of massive global expansion, especially in Asia. That is especially so in my home state of Western Australia, and the figures are plain. According to the World Bank, from 1995 to 2005 annual economic growth in China was running at 10 per cent. The figure for the past decade is lower but still a massive 7.7 per cent. In the same period, Australia's annual economic growth was recorded by the World Bank at two per cent and three per cent. But in the past five years, since 2008, the World Bank has recorded European Union growth at 0.5 per cent, minus 4.4 per cent, 2.1 per cent, 1.8 per cent, minus four per cent and 0.1 per cent, which says that European growth is stagnant. Countries like Greece have not seen positive growth in decades. The US has seen a return to growth, but it is still modest.

So what has driven the high growth in the 1990s and early 2000s, and how have governments basically responded to the slowing of growth? It has been by debt, as we have seen in this country with the previous Labor government. The media outlet *The Economist* runs a very useful debt clock on their website that I recommend members have a look at. It identifies total government gross debt globally at over US$35 trillion. A quarter of that total, $15 trillion, belongs to the US, 87 per cent of GDP, at a staggering $46,000 per American. Germany is similar; it has 85 per cent, as does Canada. Countries with bigger issues as a percentage of GDP are France, Italy, Ireland, Portugal and Greece at 150 per cent.

We know that Australia's gross debt is currently listed at 27 per cent of GDP, with $425 billion in gross debt and nearly $245 billion in net debt predicted as the outcome for this financial year. But debt is manageable if you can pay it back. It is foolish in the extreme to simply compare debt levels like some schoolyard measuring game. Acceptable debt is that which you can repay, and to repay it you must have budget surpluses That is exactly what is the intent of this government. I recommend the *Intergenerational report*. It is a wake-up call for everyone. We are committed to reducing that debt and deficit.

**Mr Champion** (Wakefield) (20:01): It is a great pleasure to be speaking on the colt from Kooyong's bill, the Omnibus Repeal Day (Autumn 2015) Bill 2015, which includes such great achievements as the repeal of the Dairy Adjustment Act 1974. We saw the colt from Kooyong sitting here with Mr Tudge, who reminds me of Thumper in George's Orwell's *Animal Farm*—he is off to the knackery next.

**Mr Ewen Jones:** It is Boxer!
Mr CHAMPION: It is Boxer, is it? I thought it was Thumper. But thanks for correcting me.

Mr Ewen Jones: Thumper is the rabbit in Bambi.

Mr CHAMPION: Thumper is a rabbit! It has been a very humorous and topical 24 hours. I had asked one of my colleagues whether it was Thumper. I said, 'What's that horse's name?' And he said it was Thumper, but it is Boxer. It is Boxer who is off to the knackery. We know this very important piece of legislation, the omnibus repeal legislation, will perhaps stand as a testimony to the colt from Kooyong's ministerial career. He has gone all quiet; he is on the phone. They have not just repealed the Dairy Adjustment Act 1974, which was standing in the way of every business in the country. We know what a terrible and onerous regulatory burden the Dairy Adjustment Act 1974 was! That was stopping so many businesses! I could not walk down the centre of the Munno Para Shopping Centre or the Elizabeth Shopping Centre without someone stopping me and saying: 'You know Nick, I'd open a small business but for the Dairy Adjustment Act 1974. It's standing in my way.' And I would say to them: 'Don't worry. The colt from Kooyong is onto it. It's going to be split up into many repeal day bills. They'll be spread out along the year, but I'm sure the Dairy Adjustment Act 1974 will be in there and you'll be off and running.'

We know what they really repealed yesterday. They repealed a prime minister. We started off the day with Prime Minister Abbott—

Mr Frydenberg interjecting—

Mr CHAMPION: The colt from Kooyong could not help himself, could he? I dangled the hook in the water and out he came, just like a big fish. You know you will have to give up all of that rhetoric about leadership now, because all of you promised the Australian people—this was the great promise—adult government and stability. We heard you going on and on every time I went on AM Agenda with Kelly O'Dwyer, who I think is getting a promotion—maybe to the colt from Kooyong's job. That would be a bit sad, wouldn't it? She has her eyes on you, mate. I used to go on these programs, and they would just lay into you about leadership instability. They elevated it to such a level and then continued to talk about it—on and on and on. And then we roll up and what have they done? They have necked poor old Mr Abbott and replaced him—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Vasta): Order! The member for Wakefield will withdraw.

Mr CHAMPION: I am happy to withdraw.

Mr Danby: They've repealed him!

Mr CHAMPION: They have repealed the Prime Minister, the member for Warringah. We do not know where he has gone. He was not here for question time and he had sort of gone missing there for a long time. The press had to send a helicopter up to find his car and follow him around. What a spectacle! What a spectacle from these people who promised us stability. I remember being here and vividly hearing the Shakespeare that was launched at us, like Macbeth. We used to hear about Lady Macbeth and all the rest of it.

I have a quote from Hamlet that might suit the new Prime Minister:

That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain; …
And be a villain. That was from Hamlet.

Mr Ewen Jones: One of your best, Nick!

Mr CHAMPION: I was saving that up! I have a fan up there, from Townsville. He has been very helpful to me.

Mr Ewen Jones interjecting—

Mr CHAMPION: At least he has a sense of humour!

Mr Ewen Jones: Et tu, Brute?

Mr CHAMPION: I had a bit of Julius Caesar, but I am saving that for another time! I am saving that for another repeal day speech. We know they will come along. I am sure this government's grand achievement at getting rid of the Dairy Adjustment Act 1974 does not end there! There are more redundant acts to be repealed. They will free Australia from this regulation! But having repealed a Prime Minister—

Mr Danby: What about all the blokes who are going to be repealed on Thursday?

Mr CHAMPION: Well, I am getting to that!

Mr Frydenberg: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This is a significant, substantive debate about an important bill and deregulation. So far, all the member for Wakefield has done for all the Australians listening to this broadcast is nothing but taint the reputation of the former Prime Minister.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Vasta): I call the member for Wakefield back to the bill.

Mr CHAMPION: To be fair to the Assistant Treasurer—the colt from Kooyong—he is also getting rid of five acts from the Treasury portfolio, all of which are spent and redundant. When I was in the Salisbury town centre the other day, a would-be small businessman came up to me and said, 'Nick, I would have started a small business if it wasn't for the International Monetary Agreements Act 1959. That's standing in my way.'

We know they have repealed the Prime Minister; it is a sore point, so I will not labour it that much. But if only we could repeal the effects and policies of this Prime Minister. I have seen them in my own electorate, because they turned their backs on a billion dollars of investment from the United States of America in the car industry. They just turned their backs on it. We know the consequence of it: 50,000 jobs. And many people are saying that this will be the cause of recession-like conditions in my state and in the state of Victoria.

We know that submarines featured so strongly in the failure of this Prime Minister. If only we could repeal his commitments to the Japanese prime minister, perhaps they are one of the things that will be repealed. According to The Advertiser, the member for Sturt is going to be the defence minister. And, of course, the member for Melbourne Ports reminded me that on Thursday so many of the current frontbench—and this is a farce, when we have people sitting here who are ministers—

Mr Danby: Dead men walking.

Mr CHAMPION: Dead men walking, on the green mile. That might be one that we roll out for question time, I think. If only we could repeal the cuts to GPs—the cuts to the Medicare benefits schedule. If only we could repeal this pseudo-GP tax, which is going to hack into every GP clinic in the country.
Mr Danby: What about the total destruction of the automotive industry?

Mr CHAMPION: If only we could repeal these things. There is the $80 billion worth of cuts to health and education—to doctors and nurses, and to teachers. If only we could repeal the low wage growth and the smashed business confidence. If only we could repeal the fact that they have doubled the deficit and pushed unemployment up.

Mr Danby interjecting—

Mr CHAMPION: And now, as the member for Melbourne Ports so kindly points out, the Australian dollar, which was at US$1.08, is now at US$0.60. There is all of this going on.

Of course, we know about some of the other things the new Prime Minister has repealed. He repealed his commitment to the republic. He repealed his commitment to marriage equality. He repealed his commitment to climate change. These are the things that were repealed in the quest to get the crown. He has repealed his commitment to water reform in this country by giving the River Murray to Barnaby Joyce and the National Party.

This is the greatest act of vandalism to John Howard's legitimate commitment and reforms in this area—the greatest act of vandalism to that legacy that one could see—giving the River Murray to the irrigators. We know the effect of that downstream in Adelaide. We know the effect of that. The river's mouth is almost closed up as it is, and we are heading towards drought-like conditions. It has been a very dry winter, and we are headed for a very long, hot summer. And we have a Prime Minister who was water minister when Howard handed down his reforms, and what have they done? They have given the River Murray to Barnaby Joyce. And if anyone thinks that is going to be popular in South Australia or with Australians who care about the environment you have another thing coming.

We know these things are repealed temporarily; they are a cobbled-together solution for a cobbled-together government. And we know that they are likely to be repealed themselves at some point, just like the Dairy Adjustment Act and the International Monetary Agreements Act 1959—these redundant acts—as will the redundant convictions of this new Prime Minister, with his cobbled-together, ramshackle and divided government. We know that these commitments given to the right wing of his party will be repealed in due course, when the subterranean conviction of this Prime Minister resurfaces later. We know it cannot be dormant for long, given his ego. He thinks he is smarter than everyone else he has ever met in his life. We know the consequences of that: it will be civil war in the Liberal Party.

The public may well be tempted to vote for Mr Turnbull. But if they vote for Mr Turnbull, they will get civil war in this government—a delayed civil war. It is delayed by his repealing his convictions to the republic, to marriage equality and to climate change. But that state of affairs cannot last and eventually there will be civil war in the Liberal Party and in the government. People may well vote for Mr Turnbull and get someone else. They may well get Scott Morrison, because we now know that the Liberal Party is capable of anything! They are capable of removing a sitting Prime Minister.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Wakefield will refer to members by their titles and not by their names.

Mr CHAMPION: The member for Warringah and the member for Wentworth—they are who we are talking about.
But that is the future of this cobbled-together, ramshackle arrangement that has been made. If people vote for this Prime Minister they may well get someone else down the track, such is the ruthlessness of this government. Such is the ruthlessness and the skittishness and the chaotic nature of its backbench. They are capable of anything. If they are capable of getting rid of Tony Abbott they are capable of getting rid of Malcolm Turnbull.

Mr CHAMPION: If they are capable of getting rid of the member for Warringah as Prime Minister they are capable of getting rid of the member for Wentworth.

Mr Ewen Jones: I'm going for deputy next time!

Mr CHAMPION: Next time, my friend from Townsville is running for deputy. And he would be a very popular deputy; I think he should put his hat in the ring! We know the defence minister put his hat in the ring—that was hardly a sign of good grace. Apparently—and you would not believe it—he went on Radio National and said it was because he wanted to work with the Prime Minister. You could not write a script like this for The Thick of It. You could not write a script like this.

I thought I had seen some farce in this place. I have been known to comment on that—fearlessly—in my own party. But let me tell you: the one thing that the Abbott government promised was an adult government, and stability and caution. They are the bywords of conservatism. And what have people got? Instability, chaos, confusion and division, and that is what they will get if they vote Liberal again.

Mr COLEMAN (Banks) (20:16): It is good to speak on this most important legislation, the Omnibus Repeal Day (Autumn 2015) Bill 2015, touching as it does on a very big difference between a government which is about less regulation—getting out of the way, letting Australians get on with their lives and not seeking to impose government in every corner of Australian life—and an opposition bereft of ideas and, indeed, judging government not by the quality of legislation but by its volume.

I looked around in preparation to speak on this matter and there were some really fascinating comments by very senior members of the previous government, who were in a rather self-congratulatory mood around 2013. They sought to comment not so much on the calibre of legislation that had been passed by the previous government but rather its volume. Senior members of the previous government, now opposite, were getting very excited and are pointing to the fact that they passed hundreds of pieces of legislation as if that were some sort of wonderful testament to their ability in good governance. The member for Grayndler was very excited one day. He said, 'We've now passed 307 pieces of legislation through the House of Representatives.' The member for Blaxland, my neighbour in south-western Sydney, said: Despite all the negativity … this parliament has passed 482 pieces of legislation …

What an extraordinary reflection that is on the previous government. It was not about the calibre of the legislation but actually about the volume.

There may have been 482 pieces of legislation, but within those 482 pieces of legislation there was some really bad stuff. There was some really bad legislation in those 482 pieces, so
it probably would have been sensible for those opposite to say, 'Let's not focus so much on the 482 number. Let's actually make sure that the legislation we pass is good for the country.' Good for the country—to me, that is the key point.

Within the 482 pieces of legislation there was of course the carbon tax bill—that was one of the 482, and not one to be proud of. There was the mining tax legislation—that was one of the 482 pieces of legislation and, again, not one to be proud of. It really is a very significant divide, that those opposite and their colleagues in public sector academia would seek to focus on the volume of legislation rather than its quality. As we know, there are many occasions on which governments both in recent history from those opposite and historically, going back decades, have passed legislation which might have been acclaimed at the time but which was actually incredibly destructive to the good will and economic success of their nations.

One of the most important areas to think about—and it is very topical at the moment—is free trade. Mr Deputy Speaker, think about what we are actually doing with free trade, because free trade—in a sense—is the ultimate act of deregulation. Free trade is a very big act of deregulation. What has happened over a period going back many decades is that governments around the world have sought to make trade between nations more difficult. That is the bottom line. Governments around the world have sought to make trade between themselves and other nations more difficult. That is what they have done. When you put a tariff on an item you make it more expensive for the other country to buy and that means they buy less. If you seek to impose tariffs on incoming goods and services—what do the other nations do? They sort of turn around and say, 'We don't like that very much. We're going to do the same thing to you.' You might think, 'We want to protect this particular category and we're going to whack a 20 per cent tariff on it.' But with negotiations being what they are and humans being what they are, other countries say, 'You do that to us and we're going to put a 20 per cent tariff on you.' And what is the ultimate result? Higher prices for consumers, fewer things being traded and lower standards of living.

If you look back over the last century, I think it is fair to say that there has probably been no pattern of government regulation across the globe which has been more destructive to the wealth and living standards of nations than the imposition of artificial tariff barriers. It was a terrible idea when it started back in the early 20th century, and it remains a terrible idea today.

If we go back to 1930, in response to the Great Depression in the United States there was a view that said, 'If we really just put a whole bunch of tariffs on incoming products that will make things a whole lot better.' That was of course the Smoot-Hawley legislation. Of course, what happened was that the United States suffered retaliation from other nations and that contributed significantly to the appalling economic circumstances that the world suffered in the 1930s.

Around the time of World War II, nations started to realise that this was counterproductive and gradually dismantled trade barriers. But there are still very big trade barriers today. What is the biggest opportunity here for Australia in the entire space of deregulation? It is to deregulate and reduce the trade barriers with our largest trading partner, China. That is the single biggest deregulatory opportunity that faces this government and our nation.

We know that there has been a massive increase in trade with China, despite the fact that we still have significant barriers, significant tariffs on Australian producers and significant complexities in getting into those markets. It really is very worthwhile just to reflect a little on
how quickly trade with China has grown, what the opportunities are and the absolute wanton destruction of those opposite and their discredited allies in the CFMEU and other places who would seek to stand in the way of this fantastic opportunity for ordinary Australians.

If you go back to 1998-99, not that long ago—about 15 years—Australia's trade with New Zealand was larger than its trade with China. That is an extraordinary statistic. In 1998-99 there was two-way trade in goods and services, worth $11 billion, between Australia and China. And trade with New Zealand was worth $13 billion. So we had a bigger trading relationship with that very small nation New Zealand—great friends, though, they are—than with this enormous place with more than one billion people living in it.

Things changed over time and, by 2003-04, China was our third largest trading partner but still a long way behind Japan and the US. By 2008-09 China had become our biggest trading partner, at $83 billion, just a little bit bigger than Japan. But by 2013-14—the year for which we have the most recent figures—the relationship was worth $160 billion, it was two to one in Australia's favour in the sense we exported twice as much as we brought in, the relationship was twice as big as that of our second-biggest trading partner, Japan, and accounted for more than 24 per cent of our entire world trade in goods and services. So one in every four trade dollars of our nation, across the entire world, is with China. This is a massive economic partner. What did this government do?

Under the experienced leadership of the Minister for Trade and Investment we took negotiations, which had gone nowhere under those opposite and which had sat idle for six years after being started by the Howard government, and we got a deal done. We got a deal done, which is the best deal that China has done with any developed nation. It is a phenomenal opportunity. It is estimated by the Centre for International Economics to add $4½ thousand to GDP for the average household so that is, effectively, $4½ thousand of wealth per household in Australia. The various free trade agreements will create 178,000 jobs and are expected to lead to huge increases in the export of our services and goods into China.

It is absolutely self-evident that if you care about Australia, if you care about the future, you back this agreement—you really do. If you are going to put politics aside on anything, and say: 'This is in the interests of our nation. We're not going to be petty about this and seek to divide and confuse and scare, we're going to do the right thing by the nation.' If those opposite were going to do that on one thing, this is the one to do it on because there is nothing more significant than this China-Australia Free Trade Agreement for the economic future of our country.

But those opposite would seek to maintain a regulated environment, with tariffs between our nations, that is wealth destructive and that will hurt Australian families and thousands of Australian businesses that want to do business with China. It is a terrible reflection on those opposite and it absolutely demonstrates their lack of fitness to govern and, in particular, the lack of leadership of the Leader of the Opposition, who, should he purport to be up to the job of Prime Minister, would surely put politics aside on this most important area.

I mention that important issue because we are talking about deregulation today and, under the leadership of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, we have built on the many acts of deregulation that have already occurred under the government over the past two years. One of the most noteworthy acts of deregulation has been the establishment of a one-stop shop for environmental approvals. Previously, if you had a major project, environmental
approvals are required. That is appropriate and we need to ensure that environmental issues are protected. But you basically had to talk to a whole bunch of people—state authorities, local authorities and federal authorities. It was very complex, time wasting, value destructive and no good for anyone. So we said: 'Let's not do that anymore. Let's have a one-stop shop for environmental approvals. Still assess the environmental issues, still ensure appropriate compliance is there but take out a whole lot of irrelevant time-wasting activity.' And as a direct consequence of the establishment of that one-stop shop under this government there has been $1 trillion worth of approvals for major projects. And that is trillion with a 't'—$1 trillion is a lot. That is $1,000 billion of environmental approvals, a very significant development.

There are so many other changes as well in these deregulatory measures. The 457 visa program plays an important role in filling skills shortages. We should never walk away from that factor; it does have a role to play. Streamlining the process for 457 visas has resulted in compliance savings of about $30 million.

If you went to the ATO website a couple of years ago it would, frankly, not have been a very pleasant experience. It was very complicated and very difficult to navigate and work out what you needed to do. By streamlining that site, by making it more effective, we have produced annual compliance savings of close to $50 million in terms of that lost time and effort. The MyGov site, similar to the theme of the one-stop shop, is a very useful development. In the education area, the NAPLAN national system is a very popular and sensible education policy which ensures a degree of consistency across the nation. We have made the assessment platform for that a lot simpler by making it an online tool, with compliance savings of about $10 million there.

So we have had a whole range of deregulatory measures. The reason we do this is that we believe in it. We absolutely believe—in the marrow of our bones, in our DNA and absolutely everywhere—that government should be limited. Government should act when it needs to, but government should not act for the sake of it. It should not purport that it has the solution to every problem, because it does not. No government in history has had the answer to every problem and no government will. We should be absolutely clear that the power to build this nation ultimately resides with the Australian people. Our job is to create the fair rules of play and to get government out of the way so as to allow Australians to be their best. The free trade agreement with China is a fantastic example of that philosophy, and it is an indictment of those opposite that they seek to divide and confuse on this issue. They should get behind this very important legislation and, indeed, all of the measures in this omnibus bill that we discuss this evening.

Mr CRAIG KELLY (Hughes) (20:31): I am pleased to rise to speak on the Omnibus Repeal Day (Autumn 2015) Bill 2015, the Amending Acts 1980 to 1989 Repeal Bill 2015 and the Statute Law Revision Bill (No. 2) 2015. With the announcement of this legislation, the government has come up with total deregulatory savings since September 2013 of $2.45 billion. This is a significant achievement. It is one that is real. It has a positive impact on business, community organisations and families.

For the first time in Australia's history, a federal government is undertaking a thorough and accurate stocktake of all federal regulatory costs and is consistently measuring and reducing the cost of government red tape for Australian businesses, organisations, families and individuals. For the very first time, a federal government has, with a very high degree of
accuracy, publicly reported to parliament a downturn in the total amount and cost of federal regulation. Australia now has its most precise, comprehensive and transparent program to reverse the growing costs of red tape in the Australian economy. The coalition's goal is simple. It is to make life easier for Australians and to make life easier for businesses to decide to invest and to create more jobs. After all, we must never forget that governments do not create jobs; it is successful private sector businesses that create jobs. Our job is to give them the opportunity and a clear, level playing field. Often when we interfere with that, all we do is destroy jobs.

Deputy Speaker, I can give you an example of that. We are now seeing for the first time in a while a clear distinction between the states of New South Wales and Victoria. In Victoria we have a rather left-wing government with rather socialist ideals that believes in central planning and more red tape and more regulation for businesses. In New South Wales we have a government that believes in deregulation. We can do a lot here federally, but we still are a Federation and we still have state governments, so it is very interesting to look at the ABS statistics when they come out every month and do a bit of a comparison—almost a state-of-origin comparison—in relation to job creation. We may in New South Wales be defeated by Queensland, our northern neighbours, when it comes to State of Origin rugby league, but the state-of-origin competition in job creation between New South Wales and Victoria tells a very different story.

The ABS figures that came out just a week ago show that, since the start of this year, in New South Wales there has been a total of 122,000 new full-time jobs created. That is not a bad effort for the state of New South Wales: 122,000 full-time jobs since the start of this year. In comparison, let us have a look at Victoria. How many jobs, Deputy Speaker, do you think that they might have created during that time? You might think that, if New South Wales had 122,000, maybe Victoria created 100,000. You would be wrong. With 80,000 you would be wrong. With 60,000 you would be wrong. Maybe 50,000? You would think that, if New South Wales created 122,000 new full-time jobs, maybe the state of Victoria could have created 50,000. Deputy Speaker, if you guessed that, you would be wrong. You would have to go lower. If you guessed a duck egg, if you guessed that, since the start of this year, there had not been one single new net full-time job created in Victoria, you would be wrong. In fact, the number has gone backwards. They have lost 4,800 jobs, compared to New South Wales gaining 122,000. When it comes to the state-of-origin contest in job creation, New South Wales is putting the central-planning left-wing government of Victoria to shame. This should be a stark and clear warning, because the people that control the strings of that government in Victoria are the same people that control the strings of the Labor Party in Canberra. It is a clear and stark warning of the threat to job creation that the Labor Party pose.

An important element of this government's red tape commitment is dedicating parliamentary sitting days each year for repeal of regulation. These repeal days are for the purpose of repealing counterproductive, unnecessary or redundant legislation and consequently removing associated regulations. I would like to give an example of a piece of counterproductive and unnecessary legislation that we have repealed: the carbon tax. The idea of the carbon tax, if I remember the debates here, is that it was actually going to reduce pollution. That was what they told us. If they could pump up electricity prices, they somehow thought that that would reduce pollution.
As an example of unintended consequences and bad central planning, let me explain to you how that made air pollution significantly worse for residents in Sydney—particularly Western Sydney. As you put up the price of electricity and make it harder and more costly for people to turn their electric or gas heater on during cold winter nights in Western Sydney, people look for alternatives. One of those alternatives that people have in Western Sydney is simply to burn wood. You can get wood and burn it in a fireplace, and I think that, for the first time that I can remember, during the previous winter and the one before, I heard on Sydney radio firms advertising to sell firewood. Any petrol station that you go to in Western Sydney has piles of firewood packed up in bags for sale. The anecdotal evidence is quite clear: as you put up electricity prices, people look for alternatives to keep their houses warm and so burn wood.

We have a specific issue with air pollution in Western Sydney. The topographical nature of Western Sydney is that the air gets trapped in there and can recirculate, so we can have levels of air pollution for both coarse PM10 and fine PM2.5 particulate matter above the recommended standards from the World Health Organisation. This is a significant issue because particulate matter pollution actually kills people. Already I have seen some estimates of over 1,000 deaths in Australia because of air particulate pollution.

So what happens? The biggest single factor in fine particulate pollution in Western Sydney—around 45 per cent of it—is wood fires. What have we seen as the carbon tax put electricity prices up? We have seen an increase in the amount of wood being sold, an increase in the amount of wood being burnt and, the statistics from our air monitoring stations tell us, a significant increase in air pollution in Western Sydney.

Another example of what happens when you get a government that becomes overcentralised and tries to control things, of course, was the old Soviet Union. This week marks the 26th anniversary of probably one of the most significant events in world economic history. It occurred in September 1989 when Boris Yeltsin, then an up-and-coming member of the Soviet Politburo, made his first trip to the USA. When previous Russian leaders had gone to America, they had been taken on tours of American supermarkets to show them the produce and how a free market system where you reduce red tape actually produces more goods and services for the average person, but other Soviet leaders thought this was all put on for show and so simply did not believe what their eyes told them. In this case back in September 1989, Boris Yeltsin was driving around Houston and made an unscheduled stop. He was with his cars and said to call into a Randalls supermarket at random. One of the speculations is that he may perhaps have wanted to buy a bottle of alcohol. But he went into a typical, everyday Western supermarket.

He said in his autobiography:

When I saw those shelves crammed with hundreds, thousands of cans, cartons and goods of every possible sort, I felt quite frankly sick with despair for the Soviet people. That such a potentially super-rich country as ours has been brought to a state of such poverty! It is terrible to think of it.

There is the most famous picture of Yeltsin in that supermarket, looking over the produce in the frozen food section with his hands up in the air, simply saying, 'I cannot believe this.'

In fact a lot was made of this. There was a book called *Down with Big Brother: the Fall of the Soviet Empire* which recorded quite a bit of this unique event in history. I would like to quote from it. It says:
A turning point in Yeltsin’s intellectual development occurred during his first visit to the United States in September 1989, more specifically his first visit to an American supermarket, in Houston, Texas. The sight of aisle after aisle of shelves neatly stacked with every conceivable type of foodstuff and household item, each in a dozen varieties, both amazed and depressed him.

It was impressive precisely because of its ordinariness. A cornucopia of consumer goods beyond the imagination of most Soviets was within the reach of ordinary citizens without standing in line for hours. Lev Sukhanov actually wrote of this in his book, *Three Years with Yeltsin*. He said:

I think it is quite likely that the last prop of Yeltsin's Bolshevik consciousness finally collapsed after Houston. His decision to leave the party and join the struggle for supreme power in Russia may have ripened irrevocably at that moment of mental confusion.

The book, *Down with big brother: The fall of the Soviet Empire*, says of Sukhanov's book:

Sukhanov devotes an entire chapter … to describing the wonders of the Houston supermarket. He records Yeltsin's amazement at being told that the store stocked 30,000 separate items. (The average Soviet store stocked fewer than 100 and many of these were usually "unavailable.") Every aisle was an eye-opener for the visitors from Moscow. Scarcehly had they recovered from the shock of the cheese section, where they saw "red cheese, brown cheese, and lemon-orange cheese," than they were "literally shaken" by the quality of produce in the vegetable section.

On the plane, travelling from Houston to Miami, Yeltsin seemed lost in his thoughts for a long time. He clutched his head in his hands. Eventually he broke his silence. "They had to fool the people," he told Sukhanov.

This is what happens when government employs red tape on the business community. It simply means that our business community cannot be as efficient as it otherwise would be. We need to realise that we rely on the private sector in this country to drive the economy. We rely on that entrepreneurial spirit, the spirit of Australians getting out there, having a go and starting their own businesses. But far too many times we have governments employing red tape, adding costs and lowering our living standards. I can remember years ago when my father built a small factory, and some bureaucrat sitting in some building decided that for that building they would need to have four showers. That was over 40 years ago, and today I do not think anyone has actually ever used one of those four showers. The coalition is doing everything it can, determined to reduce red tape in this economy. It is important. We want to free the hands of our entrepreneurs—free them to get out and to create jobs for this country.

Mr FLETCHER (Bradfield—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Communications) (20:46): I am pleased to rise to speak on the Omnibus Repeal Day (Autumn 2015) Bill 2015. This is an important bill which will have a significant impact on reducing red tape across a range of portfolio areas. In the time available to me I would like to highlight firstly that unnecessary red tape is a serious problem facing our nation and our economy. Secondly, I would like to emphasise the determination of the Turnbull government to reduce red tape. Thirdly, I want to speak about the work being done in the communications portfolio to reduce red tape.

Let me start with the first proposition that we have a serious problem with red tape in our economy. If you compare Australia's performance against other nations in the world, in 2014 we ranked 124th out of 148 countries for the burden of government regulation in the world...
competitiveness index. The simple fact is that the cost of doing business in Australia relative to other nations is too high. For example, the Productivity Commission estimates that regulatory compliance costs could amount to as much as four per cent of Australia's GDP. That is a staggering number.

Let me pause to acknowledge the outstanding work done when the coalition was in opposition by our red tape reduction task force, chaired by Senator Arthur Sinodinos, with deputy chairs, the member for Higgins and Senator David Bushby. In particular, I would like to quote from something that Senator Sinodinos said in a speech in 2012:

Unnecessary red tape is a contributing factor to Australia’s productivity challenge. The Productivity Commission estimates that reducing red tape will boost national GDP by $12 billion a year. Across industry, it’s believed red tape accounts on average for four per cent of business costs.

One of the defining characteristics of the problem we face with red tape is the fact that red tape tends inexorably to grow. If government does not take decisive action it is an unfortunate reality that red tape is ever expanding. Reporting obligations which are in place, which often have been put there for all of the best reasons, tend to grow and grow and grow. That is why it is necessary for government to take conscious and deliberate action, pushing in the other direction with a view to reducing red tape. That is why we came to government with a commitment to have two repeal days a year. On those days we have a systematic and continuing focus on the growth of regulation and whether there are opportunities to remove regulation which has outlived its usefulness or where the costs exceed the benefits. And while we target our specific legislative efforts around those days to which we have committed, we have a broader, ongoing focus throughout the year on areas where we can reduce regulation.

A specific factor which this government has inherited is the fact that we succeeded the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd government, the government which showed an extraordinary enthusiasm for adding to the regulatory burden which lay upon the Australian economy. The Rudd-Gillard-Rudd government added over 21,000 new regulations and repealed 105, notwithstanding the promise made by former Prime Minister Rudd in 2007 that his government would have a one-regulation-in, one-regulation-out policy. I confirm that that was Mr Rudd in his first incarnation. We might call him 'Rudd the first' in that scenario. But the promise of 'Rudd the first' was never honoured, and in the brief—

_Mr Champion interjecting—_

_The SPEAKER:_ Order! The member for Wakefield!

_Mr FLETCHER:_ and undistinguished tenure of 'Rudd the second', he never quite got around to delivering on that promise.

There is ample evidence of the pressure that this incremental regulatory burden was imposing on participants in the Australian economy. The October 2012 National Red Tape Survey was conducted by the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. This was a survey of 870 businesses across all states and territories, which found that 73 per cent of businesses believed that the overall regulatory compliance burden had increased in the previous two years and that 60 per cent of businesses spent more than $5,000 per annum directly on costs related to regulatory requirements.

There is a very long list of regulatory burdens that were in place at the time that the previous government came to an end, burdens which had been incrementally imposed on
Australian business thanks to the work of the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd government. To pull out a few examples: the national childcare law of 180 pages was supplemented with 345 pages of regulations and 1,149 pages of guidelines. In Indigenous service delivery at the time that the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd government left office, there were more than 200 Indigenous related programs administered by 17 Commonwealth agencies. Each program had its own application form and processes. In the resources sector, one particular project required 4,000 meetings before approval was granted, and ultimately 12,000 state and 300 Commonwealth conditions were placed on that project. Under the previous government, there was a relentlessly enthusiastic set of regulators who added substantial new regulatory burdens to Australian business on a continuing basis every day they turned up for work.

On this side of the House, we approach these issues with a very different perspective. We want to carefully look at the laws and regulations that are in place and ask: are they still fit for purpose? Are they still delivering benefits which exceed their costs? That brings me to the second proposition that I want to put today: the determination of the Turnbull government to reduce red tape, to have a process which acts as a corrective to the institutional factors which drive red tape to increase. That is why we came to government with a commitment to repeal $1 billion worth of red tape per year. As part of this commitment, the government dedicates two parliamentary sitting days as repeal days each year. I am particularly pleased to be in the chamber with my good friend and colleague the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, who has responsibility for the deregulation agenda.

In March of this year, the government announced that the total deregulatory savings since September 2013 had reached $2.45 billion, a very significant achievement and one that is having a real and positive impact on businesses, community organisations and families. On the third repeal day, in March of this year, the government had made decisions to decrease the regulatory cost burden by some $2.45 billion, and to date over $1.5 billion of those measures have been implemented, with some $880 million yet to be implemented.

Let me take a moment to touch on some of the key measures in the bill which is before the House this evening. The bill amends or repeals 14 acts across a range of portfolios, some of which are spent and redundant and have remained on Commonwealth statute books long beyond the date of fulfilling their purpose. Other acts contain provisions that have been superseded by other legislation that took effect years ago. Also included in the omnibus bill before the House this evening are a range of amendments to legislation which will reduce complexity and reduce compliance costs.

In particular, there is a measure that will result in over $41 million of deregulatory savings. The proposed amendments to the Health and Other Services (Compensation) Act 1995 will remove the requirement for compensation recipients to separately submit a statutory declaration when submitting a claim for benefits provided under Commonwealth programs for Medicare, nursing home services, residential care services and home care services. Presently, there is a requirement for a statutory declaration to be signed and witnessed for every compensation claim. This results in a process that could take several hours per claim in correspondence and in phone calls through legal representatives to obtain a valid declaration. It is already an offence in these cases to provide false or misleading information to the Commonwealth, so having separate statutory declarations is unnecessary.
The result of the amendment contained in the bill before the House this evening will be to reduce the regulatory burden on both compensation payers and around 50,000 claimants per year and allow automation of certain compensation recovery procedures by the government. Compensation recipients will save time by being able to declare that the information provided is true and correct, using existing forms. The legislation that is affected by this bill is the responsibility of the Department of Health, but the services are delivered by the Department of Human Services. I want to acknowledge that here we are seeing a collaboration between different departments and portfolios on cross-portfolio reforms to reduce red tape.

Another example worth highlighting is the Meat Export Charge Act 1984 and the Meat Inspection Arrangements Act 1964, both of which are now redundant. The inspection of meat and meat products for export was overhauled in 2011. The Commonwealth no longer employs any domestic state meat inspectors, and cost-recovery arrangements are now set out under the Australian Export Meat Inspection System, with fees being collected under other Commonwealth legislation.

In the brief time available to me before we conclude this debate this evening, I want to come briefly to the third point I want to make, which is the active program of deregulation measures that have been pursued in the Communications portfolio under the guidance and stewardship, until very recently, of the former Minister for Communications, the member for Wentworth, now of course the Prime Minister. The Communications portfolio has achieved significant deregulatory reform since the coalition came to government. In 2014, cumulative annual savings of over $94 million and a removal of some 3,400 pages of unnecessary regulation were achieved within the Communications portfolio.

There is continuing work to reduce the regulatory burden in communications, and I want to note particularly a decision taken recently to repeal the legacy retail price controls. These formerly applied to the retail prices that Telstra charges, but, following independent analysis obtained from the centre for independent economics, the government concluded that the price control regime no longer had any impact on the prices Telstra actually charged—in other words, they were below those that would have been required by regulation—so the regulation has been removed. That is one of the many ways in which we are lightening the regulatory burden in the Communications portfolio.

More broadly, across every aspect of government, the Turnbull government is working to reduce the regulatory burden on business. This is a very important part of the government’s economic agenda, with a view to reducing the burden on business, increasing efficiency, increasing productivity and letting business get on and generate the prosperity which is so important for jobs and for Australians.

Debate interrupted.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott)** (20:59): It being almost 9 pm, I propose the question:

That the House do now adjourn.

**Middle East**

**Mr LAURIE FERGUSON** (Werriwa) (20:59): A recent UN report indicated a very dire future for Gaza. It noted the area could be uninhabitable in less than five years on current
economic and population trends in the de-development of the strip, which has rendered their economic wellbeing worse than the level of two decades previously. The Gaza Strip, currently home to 1.8 million Palestinians, is expected to grow in population to 2.1 million by 2020. The report notes that Gaza's inhabitants rely on coastal aquifers as their main source of freshwater, but it has found that 95 per cent of this water is not safe to drink. Food insecurity has affected a massive 72 per cent of households, with half the population of Gaza receiving some form of food aid. The direct losses of the three Israeli military operations that took place between 2008 and 2014, excluding the people killed, was equal to three times the size of Gaza's local gross domestic product. This meant that the 2014 war displaced half a million people and left parts of Gaza destroyed.

The report says that these wars have 'effectively eliminated what was left of the middle class, sending almost all of the population into destitution and dependence on international humanitarian aid'. It notes that high unemployment on a long-term basis leads to the loss of skills. With slow reconstruction after wars and little access to outside markets, the capacity to produce things or even purify water in Gaza erodes. Vance Culbert of the Norwegian Refugee Council pointed out that the blockade of building materials is crippling even where capital is available to rebuild, with 22 years required to repair the outstanding damage from previous conflicts and 76 years to rebuild the overall housing shortage in Gaza.

Of course, that is only part of the picture of the situation of the Palestinian people. The seizure of lands—originally, up to 1979, under a sometimes credible claim of military needs of the Israeli authorities—has afterwards led to seizures for supposedly state land. Plia Albeck, previously head of the Civil Affairs Department of Israel's State Attorney's Office, an organisation involved in this field, has estimated that 90 per cent of the settlements are on such designated state land.

Of course, that is interconnected with the treatment of children. The organisation Military Court Watch, led by an Australian lawyer, has shown a causative link between Israel's detention and mistreatment of Palestinian children and its policy of building settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, including occupied East Jerusalem. A submission that Military Court Watch lodged with the UN special rapporteur on torture found:

[T]he ill-treatment of children who come in contact with the military detention system appears to be widespread, systematic and institutionalized …

It said:

… since martial law was imposed in the West Bank 48 years ago, some 95,000 children have been detained of which 59,000 are likely to have been subjected to some form of physical violence.

Military Court Watch points out that the Israeli military secures the immediate territory around the settlements as well as the extended network of roads used to link them to each other and to Israel. This 'strategy of mass intimidation and collective punishment' has an all too predictable effect. In all 200 cases of minors detained by the Israeli military, the one thing each child had in common is that he or she lives within a few kilometres of Israeli settlement or a road used by settlers.

We are talking about rocks being thrown, and this is an instance of what goes on:

On May 17, 750 olive saplings were uprooted and savagely destroyed, undoubtedly by settlers, on Palestinian land east of the Etzion settlements in the south Hebron hills. The land is privately owned by the Abu Shanab family. Destruction of Palestinian olive trees is a routine event in the south Hebron
hills; I have seen the results myself, near the village of Twaneh and elsewhere. One needs to bear in mind that many Palestinian herders and small-scale farmers subsist largely, even primarily, on olives, and the ancient trees themselves are often treated as beloved members of the family.

These are comments by David Shulman in The New York Review of Books of 1 June 2015. So I put on the record continuing concern at the treatment of the Palestinian people. It is of course internationally leading to a wider criticism of the methods being utilised on an international scale, and I commend these issues to the House.

**Swan Electorate: Lathlain Precinct Redevelopment**

Mr IRONS (Swan) (21:04): I want to rec

This sparked enthusiastic applause, and The Prime Minister then continued:

This has been a glint in your eye Steve since … 2010. I know this ground is a ground that's been special to you and is still special to you because your son Jarrad plays here most weeks. And it's obviously going to be a continuing special place not just to the Perth Football Club but henceforth to the West Coast Eagles and all the other community groups that will be able to make the most of this area once this development goes ahead. There will be another oval here, there will be extensive community facilities here, there will be an SAS rehabilitation facility here, so yes it will be a great AFL facility, it will be a great sports facility but it will be an important facility for the whole community.

I then responded to the Prime Minister's words and I said the following:

Well, the Eagles have landed in Lathlain. Finally.

After 29 years of soaring everywhere around West Australia and a brief hiatus at Subiaco, they've finally found a home which will be here for at least the next 100 years. So congratulations and Prime Minister thank you and thank you to the Federal Government and the taxpayers for the $10 million which has been able to enable this facility and this project to go ahead. It was a long beaten path to the Prime Minister's Office over quite a few years but he listened, he heard and with his support for this project which is so important we were able to deliver the funding which will help get this project up and running and started.
So Trevor [Nisbett], the time we first talked about this back in 2009 it was a dream then but now it's an actual reality so it's fantastic.

The PM would probably be the most popular West Coast Eagles man in Western Australia tonight, so he should take advantage of that. As I said, this was Tony's fourth visit to the site. I am actually very proud of what Tony does. He gets out in the community. To actually come to see this site and facility before he made the decision was a great fillip. It gave me and other people the opportunity to explain how important this site or development is to the community.

The government supported it because of the West Coast Eagles' focus on the community, and that is a very important part of this development. It was really important that Perth Football Club was not excluded from the focus of the redevelopment. All through the period of time I spoke with Trevor on this we made sure that Perth Football Club would not be left out in the cold.

This was a fantastic day for my electorate and I look forward to continuing to update the House as the development gets underway.

Over the last four years many people have been involved in getting this funding together. I would like to thank the member for Brand, the member for Fremantle, the member for Maribyrnong and several other members from the opposite side who wrote to the Prime Minister in support of this development because it is such a great development for the community. Many aspects of this $65 million infrastructure redevelopment in a lower SES area in my electorate will give enormous benefit to the community. It will also house the Wirrpanda Foundation, which does extremely good work with young Indigenous people in my electorate and all parts of Western Australia. I thank Tony Abbott, the former Prime Minister, for making the decision to fund this community based development that will house the West Coast Eagles for the next 100 years. It has been a bonus to the community and my electorate. Once again I thank the former Prime Minister.

**Turnbull Government**

Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (21:09): Today it became official: Tony Abbott, the member for Warringah, is no longer our Prime Minister. For many people right around the country this is very welcome news. It is welcome news because the country now has a chance for a new direction. Australia deserves better than the degrading, offensive and damaging politics that we experienced under the former Prime Minister's leadership. It started almost on election eve when he made the promise, which many people saw through straight away but many people believe, that there would be no cuts to health or education, no changes to the pension and no attacks on the SBS on the ABC. Almost every one of those promises lasted barely a few months before it was broken.

Then came the infamous first budget. In that first budget we saw the true colours of the Liberal-National coalition. What became very apparent was that the Liberal-National coalition when they got elected had confused people voting against Labor with people voting for them. They just presumed that there was a whole agenda of redistribution of wealth away from everyday Australians upwards to their mates who helped them get elected that they could just pull out of the bottom drawer and plonk on the table in the first budget and people would swallow it.

We saw higher education subjected to the whims of the market and you would have been graduating with $100,000 of debt just for the privilege of going to university. We saw them say: 'We are not going to take on the likes of Gina Rinehart and ask them to pay a little more.'
We are quite happy to continue to give her tax breaks, but we are going to try to balance the budget by asking everyday Australians to pay more to see the doctor.' On and on it went and they crossed the line. People right around the country, including here in parliament, stood up and said: 'No, there is an egalitarian heart that beats in Australia and we want Australia to be a place where everyone can get a good education and where everyone can go to the doctor no matter how much they earn.' People in this parliament and people in the community stared them down.

But of course that was not the end of the attacks. We saw the attack on the renewable energy target. Again this government promised that they would not touch that. One of the first things they did was come out and say, 'We have actually got too much solar power in this country and too much renewable energy and we want to wind it back.' Every other country sees growth in their solar power and renewable energy as a sign of success, but this government said, 'We want to wind it back.' Well, they were stared down and beaten by the community and beaten by people in the parliament.

The now Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, has said he will respect the public's intelligence and seek to lead by persuading and engage in debate about complex issues. This is a good start. It is not what we are used to. The test will be whether that extends to the things that matter most. Things like real action on climate change. We know that, if every country in the world signed up to the kind of measly pollution cuts that this government is proposing, we would warm the world by over four degrees. Scientists are saying that if you do that you will have a planet that will not be recognisable.

We will find out whether the courage to respect the public's intelligence and lead by persuading extends to equal marriage for all couples, to releasing children who are locked up in detention or to strengthening the social safety net in this country. Sadly, the early signs are that we Greens are going to have our work cut out for us in keeping this government and this new Prime Minister accountable because when I asked the Prime Minister about climate change in question time today the first thing he did was rush to defend the Abbott government's woeful position on climate change and when he was asked about equal marriage he rushed to defend Tony Abbott's position on equal marriage. So far, in the short period of time we have had, the signs are not good. The Prime Minister still does have a chance to impress. The Prime Minister still does have a chance to shift debate in this country. The Prime Minister still does have the chance to live up to that promise of leading by persuasion and respecting the public's intelligence. We will be watching with great anticipation.

What is also clear is that, regardless of who is Prime Minister, there will be a place in this parliament for the Greens for continuing to stand up for a sustainable, equal and caring Australia. We will continue to stand up for equal marriage. We will continue to stand up for the action on climate change that the science requires. We will always keep up the fight for the Australia that many people around this country believe in.

**Competition Policy**

*Mr CRAIG KELLY* (Hughes) (21:14): There is a debate currently going on this in this country about the best way to repair our broken competition laws and much of it has been around what has been promoted as an effects test. I would like to argue tonight that what is being called an 'effects test' is actually a misleading name. In fact, what is being called an 'effects test' is actually no more than a Trojan Horse and something that is actually a classic
bait-and-switch, but, if adopted, it would be contrary to the interests of those who believe in our free and competitive enterprise system.

The current provisions of section 46, which apply to misuse of market power, are that a corporation has a substantial degree of power in the market. That is the first hurdle. The second hurdle is they should not take advantage of that power. The third hurdle is it has to be for the purpose of eliminating or substantially damaging a competitor, preventing entry of a person into a market, or deterring or preventing a person from engaging in competitive conduct.

What is being proposed is not just an effects test; it is actually four separate changes. Firstly, there is the deletion of the take advantage test. There is an effects test but not the one that has been debated for years. There is the addition of a substantial lessening competition test. Most of all, there is the deletion of all the provisions we have to act against predatory pricing, under what is called the effects test that is being wiped out.

Regarding the deletion of the effects test, this seems to be mostly a furphy. It has been argued that the Cement Australia case, a predatory buying case involving fly-ash, which is used in the manufacture of cement, is an example of why the effects test must be limited. But this overlooks the fact of the 2008 amendments. In fact, if you look at the commentary on this case by the renowned legal firm Clayton Utz, they note that even though that case failed because Cement Australia did not take advantage of its market power, they note in this case that the courts did not need to consider the changes made to the law in 2008 which made it easier to take advantage of the take advantage test. They said:

Properly understood, the Cement Australia decision is not cause for major concerns over reform of section 46, because it was considered under the old form of the legislation that has since been significantly amended to capture a wider scope of conduct.

So it is possible the section 46 part of the Cement Australia case might have turned out differently if the 2008 amendments had applied …

We have those 2008 amendments and there simply has not been a case to test them in the courts. The idea that this is simply changing the word 'purpose' to 'effect' is almost a red herring, because we have a section in our competition law, section 46(7), which gives the court's the ability to infer purpose from the conduct.

In the ACCC's own submission to the Harper review, they noted not a single case had determined on their inability to prove the purpose. But what they are doing is adding a substantial lessening of competition test, which makes it harder to prove.

Let me give an example. Say, we have a Woolworths at one end of town and a Coles at the other end of town and a small business in the middle. If that small business gets wiped out by anticompetitive conduct, under the substantial lessening of competition test that does not apply. In theory, because you have a Woolworths at one end of town and a Coles at the other, there has been no substantial lessening of competition with that small business being wiped
out. So for small businesses, putting that additional test in simply makes the act completely useless to them.

Thirdly, and most concerning of all, are the so-called amendments sneaking through under the so-called effects test, removing the two provisions that we have on predatory pricing. Predatory pricing only occurs because you have a smaller, pesky competitor that you want to get rid of. Do not take my word for it; Justice McHugh in the Boral case noted how ill-drawn the previous section was. He said:

Conduct that is predatory in economic terms and anti-competitive may not be captured by s 46 simply because the predator does not have substantial market power when it sets out on its course to deter or injure competitors.

... ... ...

Section 46 is ill drawn to deal with claims of predatory pricing under these conditions. So back in 2007, that ill-drawn provision was fixed by changing the substantial degree of market power test to a substantial share of the market test. Now, what is being proposed is to eliminate that. These are retrograde steps and I cannot and will not support them.

Broadband

Mr MITCHELL (McEwen—Second Deputy Speaker) (21:19): I rise to speak about communications issues faced by my communities in McEwen. Access to the NBN was meant to be a priority for regional and rural areas. This has not been the experience in McEwen. In fact, the way that the NBN rollout is happening, or, should I say, not happening, means that my constituents are marginalised by the coalition government. There are areas in McEwen that still have not been included in the NBN rollout plans out to 2020. This is despite the Liberal government's election promise that the NBN would be rolled out in three years. After two years, we are no further ahead than what we were and the responsible minister has resigned. And it is no wonder he resigned. This is the minister who doubled the cost for a slower, second rate NBN.

With this coalition government, it does not matter who leads it, because regional and rural areas are intentionally being left behind. In today's economy, businesses cannot grow without access to internet technologies. And if they cannot grow, they leave. A successful business in Gisborne in my electorate has recently left the area. This is because business needs effective broadband to operate and to be competitive. There is no NBN on the horizon for Gisborne and the existing broadband quality is so poor that they have no other option but to leave the area—no option.

The small businesses in my electorate of McEwen contribute around $823 million to the Australian economy. With improved access to internet technologies, an additional $99 million could be unlocked over the next few years. The industries in my electorate that would benefit from improved access to internet technologies are education and training, health, real estate, finance and insurance services, agriculture, manufacturing, retail trade, transport, postal and warehousing, and arts and recreation services. We need our local businesses to thrive and we need to provide the infrastructure to do so. And when the infrastructure is provided, it needs to be looked after. It needs to be upgraded to account for population changes and increasing demand over time.
McEwen's reputation for being a great place for families has spread and when you see what the electorate has to offer, why wouldn't it. The ABS shows that McEwen has the highest ranking of dwellings being purchased and we are listed in the top 10 electorates with young people aged up to 15. We need to make sure that we give these young people the best educational opportunities we can through access to quality broadband both at school and at home. This means that growth areas like McEwen should be able to rely on existing communications infrastructure being regularly upgraded to cope with the increased demand for use and coverage. But with responsibility for infrastructure and its upgrade being left to commercial decisions by carriers with no concern for the community, it is no wonder that residents from my electorate have made innumerable complaints to the TIO.

Craigieburn in Hume Council and Doreen-Mernda in the City of Whittlesea fall within my electorate and both are listed in the top 10 complaints to the Telecommunications Ombudsman. In the last four years, Doreen has had the second-highest number of recorded complaints per postcode to the Telecommunications Ombudsman in Victoria about these issues and is the fourth-highest in Australia. With the support of the coalition government, the telecommunications carriers ride roughshod over the regional and remote communities. With no community consultation, the carriers put up base stations in places like Kilmore and turned them on with no concern that they blasted out the fortuitous television coverage that residents in this community need. Where is the balance, the consultation, the engagement with the community?

As much as McEwen needs its existing communications infrastructure to be upgraded, it also needs to address the mobile black spots. Yesterday, I listened to the member for Durack congratulate the government on the 200-plus base stations that are being rolled out in her electorate under round 1 of the coalition's Mobile Black Spot Program. Out of the 70-odd locations that my office submitted, do you know how many base stations are being funded under this program in McEwen, the place where the Ash Wednesday and more recent Black Saturday bush fires happened? Two, a paltry two. We will receive two base stations under the program in Reedy Creek and St Andrew's. Our communities across McEwen met all criteria for the funding: rural communities and major transport corridors that are prone to natural disasters. We still have 70-odd mobile black spots in McEwen with the most affected areas being in places like Beveridge, Bulla, Darraweit Guim, Gisborne South, Lancefield, Pyalong, Reedy Creek, Romsey, Seymour, Sunbury, Trawool and Wollert to name a few.

Mobile black spots are a serious issue in our communities and they require a serious response from government, not a build-up of expectations for our residents that will see the majority of communities miss out. But this is what Australians in my electorate of McEwen can expect from the coalition government—no matter who leads it. Australians know that Malcolm Turnbull signed his name to the same cuts and broken promises of the last two years. He supports the same unfairness; the same attack on jobs, on families, on schools, on hospitals and on regional communities. He sold his values to get Tony Abbott's job. This is the Minister who resigned from his portfolio before his lacklustre performance could be judged by the Australian public.

**Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption**

*Mr LAMING* (Bowman) (21:25): The suburb of Cornubia, once a part of Bowman, is one of two suburbs that have been redistributed out of Bowman but we still have a very strong
community connection to this fine suburb. It found itself in the national media this week because it was at the centre of the royal commission into union corruption, which opened in my fine city of Brisbane this week. The question was whether trades and supplies had been used to build the home of a former Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union Queensland boss.

We have all heard of kickbacks. There is a reason why we do not hear about them very often any more. It is because there are always victims involved. A kickback that is given from a major construction firm to a union can only hurt the worker whether they are unionised or not. Because any deal where a surplus is basically shared with a union is surplus that cannot be shared with the worker; it is fairly simple. And cutting favourable deals that allow union representatives to personally profit, secretly without the worker knowing, is at the heart of the deception that can be many cases it union membership that gives you nothing in return.

On Monday, the commission heard in Brisbane about the house of the former CFMEU Queensland boss—and I will not name him tonight—who was secretly obtaining building trades services and supplies while having them billed to a Springfield shopping centre development—of course that also has implications for the tax returns of those building the shopping centre. The commission intends to investigate whether this individual fraudulently benefited from kickbacks provided by the major construction firm that was doing an enterprise employment deal with that union.

The union representative bought the house on a semirural block and paid a small fortune for it. But then between 2012 and 2014, while this individual was BLF secretary, went on to construct a second dwelling on that property. I just want to compare and contrast this dwelling, Mr Deputy Speaker Scott, with your house or the homes of many of us here in the chamber that are still here at 28 minutes past nine. It had 2.1 metre ceilings, four king-size bedrooms, four bathrooms, reverse cycle air conditioning, polished concrete flooring, walk-in wardrobes, walk-in pantries, a second butler's kitchen on top of the kitchen, a three-car garage and a 12-metre saltwater swimming pool.

This is not the life of a worker on a minimum wage; this is a life, potentially, of someone taking kickbacks in a secret deal with a construction firm. I hope that the royal and commission will investigate this further because on Monday the commission heard that an executive from this firm had specifically said to a tiler, 'I want you to go and do tiling work for this individual.' It turned out to be to the value of $50,000—that is a lot of tiling in anyone's language. It was either very expensive Italian tiles or many square metres of it.

Last week the property that was advertised the sale, this house will be relieved, has been withdrawn from sale. This is why we have to examine these elements. I am not gaining cheap shots from criticising union heavies. Quite the contrary, I am concerned about the impact it has on workers. It is one thing to negotiate a deal which may or may not leave a worker worse off—we have tests to identify whether that is the case—but it is completely unacceptable to any reasonable person that workers should be in the dark while these kinds of transactions are potentially taking place. It is very important this union royal commission continues to investigate these examples. This is one very close to home for my electorate and I commend the work of the commission.

House adjourned at 21:30
NOTICES

The following notices were given:

Mr Zappia to move:

That this House:

(1) notes that as at:
   (a) 31 March 2015 there were over 106,000 primary Temporary Work (Skilled) (subclass 457) visa holders in Australia;
   (b) 31 December 2014 there were over 160,000 Working Holiday (subclass 417) and Work and Holiday (subclass 462) visa holders in Australia; and
   (c) 30 June 2014 there were an estimated 62,100 unlawful non-citizens in Australia;

(2) further notes that:
   (a) in August 2015 there were around 780,000 Australians who were unemployed and that 280,000 of those were aged 15 to 24; and
   (b) the Senate is currently conducting an inquiry, the completion date of which was recently extended to February 2016, into the impact of Australia's temporary work visa programs on the Australian labour market and on the temporary work visa holders;

(3) ensures that genuine labour market testing be applied to temporary work visas; and

(4) calls on the Government to ensure that the Department of Immigration and Border Protection has sufficient resources to properly ensure compliance with Australian visa conditions.

Ms L. M. Chesters to move:

That this House:

(1) notes:
   (a) the ongoing media reports and Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) findings into the exploitation of Working Holiday visa (subclass 417) holders, Temporary Work (Skilled) visa (subclass 457) holders and international students;
   (b) nationwide monitoring by the FWO has uncovered suspected exploitation in 20 per cent of 560 migrant Temporary Work (Skilled) visa (subclass 457) worker cases examined between October 2014 and January 2015;
   (c) the FWO said 'migrant workers complaints of mistreatment had soared in recent years, and sponsorship breaches were often deliberate acts of exploitation by unscrupulous employers';
   (d) exploitation by employers has been identified in various industries including but not limited to construction, hospitality, cleaning, food processing, agriculture, the marketing and promotions sector, privately owned childcare centres and kindergartens, shopping trolley collectors and postal service contractors;
   (e) many of these workers are low paid and low skilled, and are on Temporary Work (Skilled) visas (subclass 457), Working Holiday visas (subclass 417) or student visas; and
   (f) this unconscionable conduct is widespread and is creating a sub class of workers that does not just hurt the employees; it puts at risk the pay and working conditions of all Australians;

(2) acknowledges the:
   (a) recent hard work of the FWO to monitor, investigate, and expose potential breaches of the work visa program and Australian workplace laws; and
   (b) proactive role the Australian union movement has played to highlight and expose unconscionable conduct by some employers and industries exploiting temporary visa workers;
(3) condemns the Government's:
   (a) inaction to immediately address and implement the findings of recent FWO reports in relation to
       this matter; and
   (b) recent moves to relax regulations for bringing in temporary visa workers, instead of toughening
       the rules; and
(4) calls on the Government to:
   (a) immediately strengthen the work visa safeguards it has deliberately relaxed to make it easier for
       companies to hire overseas workers; and
   (b) ensure that Australia's work visa program has robust safeguards in place to protect all workers
       and is not being used as a back door avenue to source cheap labour.

Ms Claydon to move:
That this House:
(1) notes that:
   (a) National Carers Week runs from 11 to 17 October 2015 to recognise and celebrate the
       outstanding contribution unpaid carers make to our nation;
   (b) carers in Australia make an enormous contribution to our communities and our national
       economy;
   (c) in 2015, it is estimated that nearly 2.9 million Australians will provide more than 1.9 billion
       hours of informal and unpaid care; and
   (d) the replacement value of informal care would be $60.3 billion, equivalent to 3.8 per cent of gross
       domestic product and 60 per cent of the health and social work industry budget; and
(2) congratulates Carers Australia for its strong advocacy and support for those providing care and
    support to family members and friends who have a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, terminal
    illness and alcohol or other drug issue, or who are frail aged.

Mr Danby to move:
That this House calls on the Minister for Foreign Affairs to debate in Parliament:
(1) the merits of the Government's changing policy toward Iran, including the rationale and likely
    consequences of:
    (a) signing an intelligence sharing agreement with Iran, given Iran's financial, military and
        intelligence support of regional militias, including some proscribed by the Australian Parliament; and
    (b) allowing Iran to establish consulates or 'cultural centres' in Melbourne and Sydney, given the
        history of terrorism-supporting activities from similar Iranian outposts around the world; and
(2) any move to amend Australia's autonomous sanctions in regard to Iran before such a decision is
    taken.
QUESTIONS IN WRITING

Employment: Legal Services and Credit Card
(Question No. 1033)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister representing the Minister for Employment, in writing, on 17 August 2015:

What sum did the Minister's department spend in 2014–15 on (a) legal services, and (b) credit cards.

Mr Pyne: The Minister for Employment has provided the following answer to the honourable Member's question:

In the 2014–15 Financial year the Department of Employment paid:

(a) $16.345 million on legal services (comprised $13.529 million on internal legal services and $2.816 million on external legal services).

(b) The Department finalised credit card transactions to the value of $4,939,403 in 2014–2015.

It is noted that the Department provides credit cards for official travel purposes. The Department incurred no fees or charges for the administration of the credit card service by the provider. Questions on the arrangements and associated costs with Diners Club for the provision of credit cards are covered by the Whole of Australian Government (WoAG) contract managed by the Department of Finance and should be directed to that department.

Social Services: Lost and Stolen Equipment
(Question No. 1178)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Social Services, in writing, on 17 August 2015:

In 2014–15, what sum was spent on replacing lost, stolen or misplaced equipment of departmental staff, and what goods were replaced.

Mr Morrison: the answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

In 2014–15, $2,596 was spent to replace an iPad Air and Dell E6630 laptop that was lost, stolen or misplaced by departmental staff.

Social Services: Lost and Stolen Equipment
(Question Nos 1206 and 1207)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Social Services and the Minister representing the Assistant Minister for Social Services in writing, on 17 August 2015:

In 2014–15, what sum was spent on replacing lost, stolen or misplaced equipment of Ministerial staff, and what goods were replaced.

Mr Morrison: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

Below is the sum spent on replacing lost, stolen or misplaced equipment for Ministerial Staff in 2014-15:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Goods replaced</th>
<th>Sum spent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minister Morrison's Office</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister Fifield's Office</td>
<td>Dell E7240 Laptop</td>
<td>$1647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary Fierravanti-Wells' Office</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Employment: Travel for Departmental Staff  
(Question No. 1225)

Mr Conroy asked Minister representing the Minister for Employment, in writing, on 17 August 2015:

(1) In 2014–15, what sum was spent on (a) domestic travel, and (b) international travel, for departmental staff. (2) Of this, (a) on what dates, and to what locations, did the Minister travel, (b) how many departmental staff accompanied the Minister on this travel, and (c) for what purpose was the travel.

Mr Pyne: The Minister for Employment has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

(1) In 2014–2015 the Department of Employment spent

(a) $4,084,841 on domestic travel for departmental staff; and
(b) $392,256 on international travel for departmental staff.

(2) (a) Official travel by Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries and their staff are met by the Department of Finance (DoF). Any questions regarding those costs or arrangements should be referred to DoF.

Social Services: Training for Ministerial Staff  
(Question Nos 1310 and 1311)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Social Services and the Minister Representing the Assistant Minister for Social Services in writing on 17 August 2015:

In 2014-15, (a) what sum was spent on training for Ministerial staff, (b) on what date(s), and at what location(s), did the training occur, and (c) what outcomes were achieved.

Mr Morrison: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

In 2014-15 there was no expenditure incurred by the Department of Social Services on training for Ministerial staff.