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SITTING DAYS—2019

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FORTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—FIRST PERIOD

Governor-General
His Excellency General the Hon. David John Hurley, AC, DSC, FTSE (Retd)

House of Representatives Office Holders
Speaker—Hon. Anthony David Hawthorn Smith MP
Deputy Speaker—Mr Kevin John Hogan MP
Second Deputy Speaker—Mr Robert George Mitchell MP
Members of the Speaker's Panel—Hon. Kevin James Andrews MP, Mr Ian Reginald Goodenough MP, Mr Ross Xavier Vasta MP, Hon. Dr John Joseph McVeigh MP, Mrs Lucy Elizabeth Wicks MP, Hon. Sharon Leah Bird MP, Ms Sharon Catherine Claydon MP, Ms Maria Vamvakou MP, Mr Steven Georganas MP, Hon. Dr David Arthur Gillespie MP, Mr Trent Moir Zimmerman MP
Leader of the House—Hon. Christian Porter MP
Deputy Leader of the House—Hon. Darren Chester MP
Manager of Opposition Business—Hon. Anthony Stephen Burke MP
Deputy Manager of Opposition Business—Hon. Mark Butler MP

Party Leaders and Whips
Liberal Party of Australia
Leader—Hon. Scott John Morrison MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Joshua Anthony Frydenberg MP
Chief Government Whip—Mr Albertus Johannes van Manen MP
Government Whips—Mr Rowan Eric Ramsey MP and Ms Nicolle Flint MP

The Nationals
Leader—Hon. Michael Francis McCormack MP
Deputy Leader—Senator Hon. Bridget McKenzie
Chief Whip—Hon Damian Kevin Drum MP
Deputy Whip—Mr Kenneth Desmond O'Dowd MP

Australian Labor Party
Leader—Hon. Anthony Albanese MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Richard Marles MP
Chief Opposition Whip—Mr Christopher Patrick Hayes MP
Opposition Whips—Ms Joanne Catherine Ryan MP and Ms Anne Maree Stanley MP

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<td>Goldstein, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wood, Mr Jason Peter</td>
<td>La Trobe, VIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wyatt, Hon. Kenneth George, AM</td>
<td>Hasluck, WA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Young, Mr Terry James</td>
<td>Longman, QLD</td>
<td>LNP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zappia, Mr Antonio</td>
<td>Makin, SA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Division</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zimmerman, Mr Trent Moir</td>
<td>North Sydney, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PARTY ABBREVIATIONS**

AG—Australian Greens; ALP—Australian Labor Party; CA—Centre Alliance; IND—Independent; KAP—Katter’s Australia Party; LNP—Liberal National Party; LP—Liberal Party of Australia; NATS—The Nationals;

**Heads of Parliamentary Departments**

Clerk of the Senate—R Pye
Clerk of the House of Representatives—D Elder
Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—R Stefanic
Parliamentary Budget Officer—J Wilkinson
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prime Minister</td>
<td>The Hon. Scott Morrison MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for the Public Service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Women</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Marise Payne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Cabinet</td>
<td>The Hon. Greg Hunt MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Indigenous Australians</td>
<td>The Hon. Ken Wyatt AM MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister and Cabinet</td>
<td>The Hon. Ben Morton MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development</td>
<td>The Hon. Michael McCormack MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Water Resources, Drought, Rural Finance, Natural Disaster and Emergency Management</td>
<td>The Hon. David Littleproud MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure</td>
<td>The Hon. Alan Tudge MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Regional Services, Decentralisation and Local Government</td>
<td>The Hon. Mark Coulton MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Road Safety and Freight Transport</td>
<td>The Hon. Scott Buchholz MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister</td>
<td>The Hon. Andrew Gee MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Regional Development and Territories</td>
<td>The Hon. Nola Marino MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>The Hon. Josh Frydenberg MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Treasurer</td>
<td>The Hon. Michael Sukkar MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Housing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Superannuation, Financial Services and Financial Technology</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Jane Hume</td>
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<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Finance</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Mathias Cormann</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Vice-President of the Executive Council)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Leader of the Government in the Senate)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Finance, Charities and Electoral Matters</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Zed Seselja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Agriculture</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Bridget McKenzie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Forestry and Fisheries</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Jonathon Duniam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Marise Payne</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for International Development and the Pacific</td>
<td>The Hon. Alex Hawke MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Trade and Investment Minister</td>
<td>The Hon. Mark Coulton MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Regional Tourism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attorney-General</td>
<td>The Hon. Christian Porter MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Title</td>
<td>Minister</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Industrial Relations</td>
<td>The Hon. Christian Porter MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Customs, Community Safety and Multicultural Affairs</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>The Hon. Angus Taylor MP</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>The Hon. Trevor Evans MP</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Defence Minister</td>
<td>The Hon. Alex Hawke MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Deputy 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>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Community Housing, Homelessness and Community Services</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. The title of a department does not necessarily reflect the title of a minister in all cases. Ministers are sworn to administer the portfolio in which they are listed under the ‘Minister’ column and may also be sworn to administer other portfolios in which they are not listed. Assistant Ministers in italics are designated as Parliamentary Secretaries under the *Ministers of State Act 1952.*
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<td>The Hon. Anthony Albanese MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Senator Jenny McAllister</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Deputy Leader of the Opposition</strong></td>
<td>The Hon. Richard Marles MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Defence</td>
<td>The Hon. Shayne Neumann MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister Assisting for Defence</td>
<td>Pat Conroy MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Defence Industry</td>
<td>Matt Keogh MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Defence</td>
<td>The Hon. Dr Mike Kelly AM MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Leader of the Opposition in the Senate</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Penny Wong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>Pat Conroy MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister to the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate</td>
<td>Senator Jenny McAllister</td>
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<td>Senator the Hon. Kristina Keneally</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Home Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Immigration and Citizenship</td>
<td>The Hon. Tony Burke MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Minister for Industrial Relations</strong></td>
<td>The Hon. Bill Shorten MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for the Arts</td>
<td>Emma McBride MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Government Services</td>
<td>Emma McBride MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Carers</td>
<td>Gemma Punter MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Minister for Education and Training</strong></td>
<td>The Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Education and Training</td>
<td>Graham Perrett MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Skills</td>
<td>Ged Kearney MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Treasurer</strong></td>
<td>Dr Jim Chalmers MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Stephen Jones MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>The Hon. Dr Andrew Leigh MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Charity</td>
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<tr>
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<td>The Hon. Mark Butler MP</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development</strong></td>
<td>The Hon. Catherine King MP</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Attorney-General</td>
<td>The Hon. Mark Dreyfus QC MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Constitutional Reform</td>
<td>The Hon. Matt Thistlethwaite MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for the Republic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Communications</td>
<td>Michelle Rowland MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Communications</td>
<td>Tim Watts MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Finance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manager of Opposition Business in the Senate</td>
<td>Sen Kimberley Kitching</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>
<td>Shadow Minister for Innovation, Technology and the Future of Work</td>
<td>Clare O'Neil MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister Assisting for Small and Family Business</td>
<td>Matt Keogh MP</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Terri Butler MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for the Environment</td>
<td>Josh Wilson MP</td>
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Tuesday, 30 July 2019

The SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Smith) took the chair at 12:00, made an acknowledgement of country and read prayers.

COMMITTEES
National Broadband Network - Joint Standing Membership

The SPEAKER (12:01): I have received a message from the Senate informing the House that Senator Griff has been appointed a member of the Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network.

BILLS
Timor Sea Maritime Boundaries Treaty Consequential Amendments Bill 2019
Treasury Laws Amendment (Timor Sea Maritime Boundaries Treaty) Bill 2019
Passenger Movement Charge Amendment (Timor Sea Maritime Boundaries Treaty) Bill 2019

Returned from Senate
Messages received from the Senate returning the bills without amendment.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL’S SPEECH
Address-in-Reply

Consideration resumed of the motion:
That the following Address in Reply to the speech of His Excellency the Governor-General be agreed to:
May it please Your Excellency:

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

The SPEAKER (12:02): Before I call the honourable member for Gilmore I remind the House that this is the honourable member's first speech. I ask the House to extend to her the usual courtesies.

Mrs PHILLIPS (Gilmore) (12:02): I acknowledge that we're gathered here today on Ngunawal country. I acknowledge all the First Nations people on the New South Wales South Coast and the many tribes, groups and clans that make up the Yuin and Dharawal nations. I pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging and acknowledge the presence of Uncle Tom Moore, a respected elder in our community, who has joined us here in the gallery today. I thank our local Aboriginal elders that I have met over many years through work and community. I am profoundly grateful for knowing you and what you continue to do in our community each day.

At a National Sorry Day reconciliation walk in May I joined with hundreds of locals on the walk from Nowra to the Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home. This home played a heartbreaking role in the stolen generation. The community came together, from babies to adults, to listen, to learn and to heal with former residents and their families. As the member for Gilmore I will continue to walk with you on our journey to reconciliation.

Gilmore is named after the great progressive Dame Mary Gilmore. Featured on the $10 note, Mary Gilmore was a legendary poet and author. She was instrumental in advocating better rights for workers, Aboriginal people and women, and, amongst many feats, fighting for the age pension. I hope there's a part of Mary Gilmore inside all of us in this chamber—to have the courage to stand up for what's right, to defend our most marginalised and to reduce disadvantage so we can all live in a better place and world.

In 1957, my great-aunt Hazel first used a tape recorder when she undertook voluntary work for the Talking Book Service for the Blind. She persuaded Dame Mary Gilmore to make some introductory comments about her book Old Days, Old Ways. Over the years, there were further recordings with Mary Gilmore. Over 27 years Hazel recorded the life stories of 1,290 Australians. Today, I take great comfort that those recordings of life stories are preserved just down the road in the National Library.

Libraries from local to national, like all our civic institutions, from the ABC to our local galleries, are places of inquiry, reason, knowledge, learning and story. They're places of inspiration and imagination, and we ought properly fund them and respect them for the role they play in our democracy.

I stand here today as a proud mum. I'm proud I attended my local public primary school in Terara. I'm proud that I attended my local public high school, Nowra High School. I'm proud that I've been a part of my local...
community my whole life, working with local schools, at HMAS Albatross, at our local university and as a TAFE teacher.

My dad and mum are not alive today, but I grew up with strong women. My mum was a Strong—I say Strong by name but stronger by nature. I never really knew how strong she was until I became a mum. My nan had told me that she had torn up her own manuscripts when she was told she could not accept a job with The Sydney Morning Herald. My mum had trained at our local TAFE, or then 'tech', in dressmaking and millinery, but her work in a shop in Nowra ended when she married. They both taught me the value of a good education and that it is essential for women to have equal opportunity.

We've come a long way since then, but there is still so much more to do. My dad, like many, died of heart disease far too young at just 55 years of age. I was 21 at the time. But, as a young teenager, I stood in the kitchen in my family's home in our dairy farm on the New South Wales South Coast and listened to my father. He was standing listening to the radio and he said, 'I don't know how people go into politics without life experience.' Well, that was enough to turn me away from politics! Some years later I was woken in the middle of the night by my father in distress saying loudly, 'I'm going to sell the farm.' Thankfully, that did not happen, but those words haunted me and still do.

I decided from that moment that some day I would help people like my dad. I studied economics to try and work out how the world worked. I went on and worked mainly as a TAFE teacher, married and had four children. However, it was my TAFE students and what they taught me about how the world worked that have led me here.

I draw inspiration from Mary Gilmore. I will always fight for what is right and for the disadvantaged. I see her ethos reflected in my own community in people helping the homeless, our veterans groups, our passionate climate change activists, our surf lifesavers, our rural firefighters, our Meals on Wheels volunteers, refugee activists and teachers and nurses; they all give so much and make our lives better. Today, I honour and thank all voluntary groups and all those caring professionals that taught me that most valuable lesson of all: solidarity or mateship, whatever you call it. It's lending a hand when it's needed; it's standing together in strength; it's working together, not against each other; and it's a generosity of heart. It's the way my father would drive around the local area, a dairy farmer, with me alongside while he would stop and talk with everyone and offer a hand to anyone who needed help. He taught me these values.

With nothing to do with politics and at 39 years of age with four young children aged nine, eight, six and five, I found out that my local council wanted to close Nowra's community swimming pool. I learnt that elected representatives can get it wrong, especially when they stop listening. It's how I accidentally entered politics: a farmer's daughter, TAFE teacher, mother of four, masters student and campaigner to save the local pool. I'm pleased to say the community won that battle. The new Nowra Aquatic Park was opened in 2015, and it's a credit to everyone involved and to Shoalhaven council. In the space of a single campaign, I came to understand the importance of not being a bystander, of lending a hand and standing together with my community. But it will always be a reminder for me that in whatever we do, in whatever decisions we make or policies we aim to bring in, community and people are paramount.

For the benefit of the House: Gilmore is a long coastal strip on the New South Wales South Coast from Minnamurra in the north to Tuross Head in the south. It is around a four-hour drive. It covers three local government areas: Kiama, Shoalhaven and Eurobodalla. It has over 100 villages and towns and even more beaches, bays, rivers and parks. It is the most visited holiday area in New South Wales, and it is easy to see why. Our towns and villages have a friendly country charm, with small family businesses and dedicated volunteer organisations which really are the lifeblood of our community. We are home to world-class primary producers—our incredible dairies, wineries and fisheries, and the best oysters you can find. It is very exciting to witness the growth of a small-scale artisan food industry, with sustainable food production and farmers markets that showcase our producers.

Arthur Boyd's nationally important art collection also has its home on the South Coast, at Bundanon and Riversdale. I look forward to the new world-class art gallery being built at Riversdale, with $22 million in federal funding, and seeing this project flourish and the exciting tourism and jobs that will come to our region.

Gilmore is an area that people visit and want to move to. Many retire here—from Wollongong, Sydney and Canberra—or move here working with Defence. Our large defence presence in Gilmore centres around the Navy's only air station—HMAS Albatross, based at Nowra—and, nearby, the Navy's officer training college, HMAS Creswell. The defence industry is strong and growing. As a former worker in Navy aviation at HMAS Albatross, I want to see our defence industry grow. The defence sector provides so many local jobs and provides small businesses with opportunities for skilled work. We need to grow it locally. The private and community sector is
home to some exciting growth opportunities too, particularly with the renewable energy sector, which needs greater certainty from government.

Gilmore has one of the highest numbers of age pensioners in Australia. Our community is a better place because of them, and we warmly welcome new retirees. As our population ages, we need to grow the number of local aged-care and health-service workers. We need to gear up in trades and construction and ensure tradies get the protection they need from shonky operators. Many people, like my husband, are self-employed tradies or work in family or small to medium-sized businesses. For many, it is tough but rewarding, and I recognise the financial risks and pressure that self-employed people are under.

But with our area's natural beauty come many challenges. Two-thirds of people in the Batemans Bay and Moruya areas have to travel out of the area for hospital treatment. This can mean a trip of two to three hours each way. There is no public transport, so there are worrying consequences as a result. Mental health treatment is a major concern not only impacting individuals and families but also placing strain on local hospitals and services. That's why I was happy during the campaign to see the government match Labor's commitment to a full headspace for Batemans Bay. But we need to get much further. We need to get on with a new Eurobodalla hospital. But we also need to make sure that we have mental health inpatient beds as well. At Shoalhaven hospital, which has suffered from bed block and the cancellation of elective surgeries, acute mental health services are needed.

I hear story after story from pensioners about the need for more public dental care. Many local pensioners told me about their extraordinary wait—two years—for dentures. That is a common story. We have a responsibility to our elderly and disadvantaged. Too often, it is an 'out of sight, out of mind' mentality. That's simply not good enough. Having a pensioner wait two years for a double knee replacement in their local public hospital is not good enough. Having a pensioner wait years to access support to stay in their home is simply not good enough. An aged-care system that is so understaffed that aged-care workers can't provide the care they so long to provide is not good enough. The lack of emergency, short-term and affordable housing is simply not good enough. Where are our priorities if we don't look after our elderly and disadvantaged?

Parts of my electorate have the lowest workforce participation rate in Australia—around 47 per cent. That's 20 per cent below the national rate. So many people have given up looking for work. The rate of Newstart is about $40 a day, and it doesn't cover the costs of living, let alone the costs of looking for work. Sometimes the cost of getting to a job interview is more than the daily rate of Newstart. We need to re-engage those that have given up. The government must lift the rate of Newstart to equip people for work. The government must invest in TAFE to train and re-skill our jobseekers in aged care, health services, trades, hospitality and other growth industries. The government should bring forward the investment in the Princes Highway, which will help to create new jobs and stimulate jobs growth in sectors like hospitality, construction and primary production. We can do better as a country, and we must. The greatest investment we can make is in our people, so we can begin to reduce the systemic disadvantage in our region.

And the government must focus on our dairy industry. When local dairy farmer Rob protested to Prime Minister Scott Morrison in Nowra during the recent election campaign, he shouted out: 'Prime Minister, it's cheaper to wash your car in milk than it is in water!' Well, farmer Rob is exactly right. Where have we gone wrong in society when our dairy farmers can't get a fair farm-gate price for their milk? When you put milk in your tea or coffee, right here in Parliament House or around the country, know that dairy farmers are selling their cows to survive, and that the fresh-milk market is critically at risk. At what precise point will the government act?

The government should turn its attention away from nuclear energy proposals. Let me make this very clear to those on the other side of this House: if you pursue any plans for nuclear energy, our community will fight this every day. Accidents happen. Natural disasters happen. The risks it poses to human health are profound—let alone the risks to the reputation of our primary producers and the hospitality and tourism industries that thrive on our environment. I will never accept a nuclear power plant being built in our community.

I of course have many I need to thank. Firstly, to my husband, Glenn: thank you. Apart from you being the best husband and dad, I often think how lucky I am to have married a carpenter! Carpentry has taught me more about politics than I would ever have realised: strong foundations; determination; doing a job right the first time; nail after nail, door after door. To my four beautiful children—fast growing into young adults—Henry, Sophie, Bart and Huey: I couldn't be more proud of you. Thank you for who you are. Thank you to my dear big brother David and sister-in-law Sue, here today, my dear brothers and all my family.

I'd also like to thank my incredible team of supporters and volunteers. In the gallery, we have a huge number of people here, which is fantastic! We have a big busload of supporters that have travelled from the South Coast. More supporters again have travelled from all over Gilmore, and from Sydney and Canberra. I'm a little
overwhelmed. I owe a great debt of gratitude to everyone that helped with our campaign. Thank you for never losing your faith over many years.

To Simon Zulian, our campaign director, who led the most amazing, smart, inspiring local campaign: thank you. To Gwen Price, who has been there from the beginning over many years—an absolute gem, and with so much wisdom—thank you. To our army of dedicated volunteers, branch members and supporters that have been out there with me every day: thank you. Our red-shirt army became quite famous around our towns and villages. Whether it was at the markets, at street stalls or the red-shirt coffee club—you were everywhere. Know that you have kept me going every day, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart. To Amy, Zack, Amy, John, Rose, Georgia, Briony and Erin: your expertise was pivotal. To our volunteer coordinators, Stuart, Imogen, Pat and Geoff, Tom and Rick, Deb, Gillian, Ellie and Helen: thank you.

Thank you to Young Labor; you provided such critical support and energy to our campaign. To Callum, Courtney, David, Josh and Jonah, Labor's national secretariat, thank you. To Labor's leadership team and to New South Wales Labor, Kaila, Rose and George: thank you. In this chamber, to Stephen Jones, a good friend and mentor: thank you. To Senator Jenny McAllister, thank you.

At the start of the campaign I said: this is not a sprint; it's a marathon. And what a marathon it's turned out to be. That marathon involved knocking on tens of thousands of doors and an army of around 100 shadow ministerial visits in Gilmore. Thank you to Bill, Tanya, Anthony, Richard, Kristina and every shadow minister and MP that came to Gilmore; it means so much to me.

Thank you to the best Labor neighbours I could ask for. For the first time in decades, the map is now red from Helensburgh to the Victorian border. I thank the community and public sector workers and your union. Your support was incredible. You brought the campaign new energy and life as we knocked on doors. I thank the nurses, teachers, early childhood educators, cleaners, maritime workers, service workers, health and aged-care workers, manufacturing workers and more. Thank you for all you did. I sincerely thank Unions Shoalhaven, the South Coast Labor Council and ACTU, who have advocated for local workers' rights over decades and continue to fight for workers, to change the unfair workplace rules and to protect penalty rates and better services, including local transport. Thank you.

There was just a little bit of national media interest in Gilmore during this election campaign. I was sometimes asked by media about the so-called 'star candidates' during the election. But I say here to this parliament that the stars are the people of Gilmore, the people who opened their doors and shared their often harrowing stories; people disillusioned with politicians; people choosing putting food on the table or fixing their cars; people waiting years for surgery or dental. To each and every person I met who told me their story: you are the stars. I will always work for you. To all the people of Gilmore, whether you voted for me or not, I want you to know that I'm humbled, thankful and resolute. My job is to work hard for you and for our whole community. It is the greatest honour of my life to serve and represent you in the parliament. Expect to see and hear a lot from me, because I think the most important part of my job is listening to you. Every day that I'm here I will work with you.

To conclude, when I was growing up, over the back fence was a very large rustic tin hay shed. In many ways, it reminds me of this chamber. But this particular hay shed had lots of rectangular bales of hay, with a chook shed attached. Like any family with kids and friends, we sure had fun. We built giant forts with the bales of hay. There were kids, farm dogs and chooks. We tried to avoid the tiger snakes as much as possible. We would even find rotten eggs and corn cobs in the hay, and hurl them from one side of the fort to the other. Life in the country is good, but it also can be tough. We in this chamber should always fight for our regional areas. In the spirit of Dame Mary Gilmore, may we progress.

Mr CHESTER (Gippsland—Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel and Deputy Leader of the House) (12:25): On behalf of the government, I congratulate the member for Gilmore on her inaugural speech and look forward to working with her and her community as we seek to deliver the veterans wellbeing centre which was announced for her electorate during the campaign.

Debate adjourned.

COMMITTEES

Crown Casino Committee
Appointment

Mr WILKIE (Clark) (12:26): I seek leave to move a motion relating to the establishment of a Joint Select Committee into Crown Casino in the terms circulated in my name.

Leave not granted.

Mr WILKIE: I move:
That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the Member for Clark from moving the following motion forthwith—That:

(1) a Joint Select Committee into Crown Casino be appointed to inquire into and report on public allegations involving Crown Casino, with particular reference to:

(a) accusations of Crown Casino's links to organised crime, money laundering, improper activity by consular officials, tampering with poker machines, and domestic violence and drug trafficking on Crown property, including:

(i) the allegations raised in the House of Representatives on 18 October 2017 by the Member for Clark (the then-Member for Denison) concerning Crown Casino;

(ii) the Member for Clark's referral to the Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission on 24 July 2019 of the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation and the Victorian Police; and

(iii) reports by Nine newspapers and 60 Minutes in July 2019 concerning alleged criminal activity and misconduct involving Crown Casino;

(b) the actions taken or omissions made by state and federal agencies in responding to these allegations, and in particular

the actions of the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation and the Victoria Police;

(c) the relationship between Crown Casino and governments, including the role of former members of state and federal parliaments; and

(d) any related matters;

(2) the committee may report from time to time but make an interim report by 30 October 2019 and a final report by 28 February 2020;

(3) the committee consist of 16 members, three Members of the House of Representatives to be nominated by the Chief Government Whip, three members of the House of Representatives to be nominated by the Chief Opposition Whip, two Members of the House of Representatives to be nominated by the Member for Clark, three Senators to be nominated by the Leader of the Government in the Senate; three Senators to be nominated by the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, one Senator to be nominated by the Leader of the Australian Greens, and one Senator from Centre Alliance;

(4) participating members may be appointed to the committee, may participate in hearings of evidence and deliberations of the committee, and have all the rights of members of the committee, but may not vote on any questions before the committee;

The entire motion goes for some two pages, but, just so everyone understands exactly what's going on here, I will read section (1) of the motion:

(1) a Joint Select Committee into Crown Casino be appointed to inquire into and report on public allegations involving Crown Casino, with particular reference to:

(a) accusations of Crown Casino's links to organised crime, money laundering, improper activity by consular officials, tampering with poker machines, and domestic violence and drug trafficking on Crown property, including:

(i) the allegations raised in the House of Representatives on 18 October 2017 by the Member for Clark (the then-Member for Denison) concerning Crown Casino;

(ii) the Member for Clark's referral to the Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission on 24 July 2019 of the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation and the Victorian Police; and

(iii) reports by Nine newspapers and 60 Minutes in July 2019 concerning alleged criminal activity and misconduct involving Crown Casino;

(b) the actions taken or omissions made by state and federal agencies in responding to these allegations, and in particular

the actions of the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation and the Victoria Police;

(c) the relationship between Crown Casino and governments, including the role of former members of state and federal parliaments; and

(d) any related matters;

There is clearly an urgent need for standing orders to be suspended for the parliament to deal with this matter. Just in the last couple of days, the allegations that have been made concerning Crown have been nothing short of breathtaking—allegations such as the casino's links with organised crime and the Chinese ruling elite; the fact that wanted international criminals are flying in and out of Australia on private jets to gamble at Crown Casino; allegations of money laundering; allegations of sweetheart deals with consular officials to facilitate hundreds of visas for Crown patrons every year; and allegations of the moonlighting of Australian officials working for foreign nationals and crime figures.

These are breathtaking allegations and of such importance that there is a pressing need for the parliament to suspend standing orders and to debate the motion to establish a committee of inquiry into Crown. There is especially urgent need for a parliamentary inquiry, and in fact a joint select parliamentary inquiry, because these matters and allegations now are outside of the remit of any one regulatory or justice agency. In fact, they're multijurisdictional, involving both Victorian and federal matters. They're multiagency; the allegations go to the performance of Victoria Police, the VCGLR, the Australian Federal Police, AUSTRAC, the department of...
transport, Border Force and ASIO. The allegations are multinational, involving, as they do, not just events and people here in Australia but events overseas and foreign nationals. There is clearly an urgent need for standing orders to be suspended for this parliament to debate the merits and, indeed, to set up a joint select committee to investigate these matters. I would add that the allegations that we know of so far are just the tip of the iceberg.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Clark can just resume his seat for a second. The Leader of the House.

**Mr Porter:** I wasn't here when the member commenced his motion. It may assist him to know that the government will give leave for the motion.

**The SPEAKER:** What the Leader of the House is saying, Member for Clark, is: whilst you've been moving a suspension of standing orders to allow you to debate the motion, the government has now given you leave to debate the motion. I think, in the remaining time, you don't need to argue for a suspension of standing orders; you can just talk to your motion. The Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr Albanese:** Point of order: I think, with respect, you might find that either the suspension can be formally seconded and put or the member for Clark might wish to seek leave to move the following motion and do it that way, otherwise we are going to take a lot more time.

**The SPEAKER:** In other words, Member for Clark: go right back to where you were at the very start, where you were seeking leave.

**Mr Wilkie:** by leave—I move:

That:

(1) a Joint Select Committee into Crown Casino be appointed to inquire into and report on public allegations involving Crown Casino, with particular reference to:

(a) accusations of Crown Casino's links to organised crime, money laundering, improper activity by consular officials, tampering with poker machines, and domestic violence and drug trafficking on Crown property, including:

(i) the allegations raised in the House of Representatives on 18 October 2017 by the Member for Clark (the then-Member for Denison) concerning Crown Casino;

(ii) the Member for Clark's referral to the Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission on 24 July 2019 of the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation and the Victorian Police; and

(iii) reports by Nine newspapers and 60 Minutes in July 2019 concerning alleged criminal activity and misconduct involving Crown Casino;

(b) the actions taken or omissions made by state and federal agencies in responding to these allegations, and in particular the actions of the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation and the Victoria Police;

(c) the relationship between Crown Casino and governments, including the role of former members of state and federal parliaments; and

(d) any related matters;

(2) the committee may report from time to time but make an interim report by 30 October 2019 and a final report by 28 February 2020;

(3) the committee consist of 16 members, three Members of the House of Representatives to be nominated by the Chief Government Whip, three members of the House of Representatives to be nominated by the Chief Opposition Whip, two Members of the House of Representatives to be nominated by the Member for Clark, three Senators to be nominated by the Leader of the Government in the Senate; three Senators to be nominated by the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, one Senator to be nominated by the Leader of the Australian Greens, and one Senator from Centre Alliance;

(4) participating members may be appointed to the committee, may participate in hearings of evidence and deliberations of the committee, and have all the rights of members of the committee, but may not vote on any questions before the committee;

(5) three members of the committee constitute a quorum of the committee, provided that in a deliberative meeting the quorum shall include one Government member of either House and one non-Government member of either House;

(6) every nomination of a member of the committee be notified in writing to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

(7) the members of the committee hold office as a joint select committee until the House of Representatives is dissolved or expires by effluxion of time;

(8) the committee may proceed to the dispatch of business notwithstanding that not all members have been duly nominated and appointed and notwithstanding any vacancy;

(9) the committee elect a chair and a deputy chair;

(10) the deputy chair act as chair when the chair is absent from a meeting of the committee or the position of chair is temporarily vacant;

(11) in the event of an equality of voting, the chair, or the deputy chair when acting as chair, have a casting vote;
(12) the committee have power to appoint subcommittees consisting of three or more of its members, and to refer to any such subcommittee any of the matters which the committee is empowered to consider;

(13) the committee and any subcommittee have power to send for and examine persons and documents, to move from place to place, to sit in public or in private, and to report from time to time its proceedings and the evidence taken and such interim recommendations as it may deem fit;

(14) the committee be provided with all necessary staff, facilities and resources and be empowered to appoint persons with specialist knowledge for the purposes of the committee with the approval of the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

(15) the committee be empowered to print from day to day such papers and evidence as may be ordered by it, and a daily Hansard be published of such proceedings as take place in public;

(16) the committee have power to adjourn from time to time and to meet during any adjournment of the Senate and the House of Representatives; and

(17) a message be sent to the Senate acquainting it of this resolution and requesting that it concur and take action accordingly.

I will start from the top and not miss this rare opportunity! I will not read out the whole motion because it does go to two pages, and a lot of it is about the detail of establishing the committee and how the committee will operate. I will take the opportunity, though, to again read section (1), which goes to the substantive matter here—that is, that the parliament is being asked to establish a joint select committee into Crown Casino to inquire into and report on public allegations involving Crown Casino, with particular reference to:

(a) accusations of Crown Casino's links to organised crime, money laundering, improper activity by consular officials, tampering with poker machines, and domestic violence and drug trafficking on Crown property, including:

(i) the allegations raised in the House of Representatives on 18 October 2017 by the Member for Clark (the then-Member for Denison) concerning Crown Casino;

(ii) the Member for Clark's referral to the Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission on 24 July 2019 of the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation and the Victorian Police; and

(iii) reports by Nine newspapers and 60 Minutes in July 2019 concerning alleged criminal activity and misconduct involving Crown Casino;

(b) the actions taken or omissions made by state and federal agencies in responding to these allegations, and in particular the actions of the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation and the Victoria Police;

(c) the relationship between Crown Casino and governments, including the role of former members of state and federal parliaments; and

(d) any related matters;

The allegations in recent days have been breathtaking, and I would hope that they alone would be enough cause for this parliament to realise the value in establishing a joint select parliamentary inquiry into Crown Casino and associated matters.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would remind you of some of the allegations that have been made in the media just in the last couple of days, such as links between Crown Casino and organised crime in China and the Chinese ruling elite; allegations of wanted international criminals flying in and out of Australia routinely on private jet aircraft, simply to gamble at Crown Casino; allegations of money laundering on a grand scale; allegations of sweetheart deals with consular officials to facilitate hundreds of visas for Crown patrons—perhaps as many as a few hundred a year; and allegations of the moonlighting of Australian officials who are working for foreign nationals and crime figures. These are remarkable allegations and, surely, they alone are cause for this parliament to constitute a joint select parliamentary committee to investigate the matters.

People might say, 'Well, aren't there existing regulatory agencies and justice bodies?' But we have a unique situation here, where the allegations, when viewed holistically, are multijurisdictional, because they involve allegations in Victoria, to do with Victorian companies and regulatory bodies—the Victoria Police—and also any number of federal agencies. They are multiagency; the allegations go to the performance and conduct of Victoria Police, the VCGLR, the Federal Police, AUSTRAC, the department of transport, Border Force and ASIO. And, of course, the allegations are multinational, because they go to Australian nationals and the conduct of Australian companies in Australia; Australian nationals overseas; Australian companies operating overseas; Chinese nationals in their own country and what they get up to, and their organised crime; and those Chinese nationals coming to Australia.

Clearly, the allegations that are now swirling around us are well beyond the remit of any one body. That is why we need to constitute a joint select parliamentary committee that can look into these matters and can look across jurisdictions, across countries and across agencies—one that has the power to summon witnesses and can provide an opportunity for witnesses to give their testimony safely and with privilege. That committee would also, no
doubt, hear many other allegations. I can reveal today the testimony of yet another whistleblower, who my investigative team has met and interviewed. I have a recording of that interview. He was once a driver for Crown Casino. He routinely transported foreign nationals between Crown Casino and the Melbourne jet base through the notorious access gate 24. He recounts that there were no Border Force checks. Foreign nationals were getting off with up to 15 bags for a short stay, stopping only on the way to the casino to pick up a sex worker.

I have here a work ticket for this gentleman. He is bona fide; I can vouch for him. I will give some of the quotes from this latest whistleblower, from the transcript of his interview with my team. On breaking the law, this new whistleblower said: 'Crown is Crown. No-one touches Crown. You know, there is no law at Crown. You literally get what you want and you do what you want. Money talks. Even if it's illegal you can get whatever you want at Crown.' This latest whistleblower said about drugs: 'You could see everything from coke, pills to MDMA. You see everything; there is no "no". Whatever you want you will get.'

On delivering drugs in his Crown limousine, this latest whistleblower said: 'Everything goes straight in the boot. You don't touch it; the host comes out, chucks it straight in the boot, tells you where to go. You drop it off and that's your job done. As long as you don't ask questions of what's in it and you don't touch the package, the packages go in and out of Crown all the time.' And on that notorious pickup from the airport, this latest whistleblower—and this is all new—said: 'If I'm travelling—this is travelling personally—I go through checks. I've got to get my bags checked; I've got to get checked by different people. I've got to get Customs checks. If you're a high roller you are literally getting off the jet, Crown's private jet, and straight into a bunch of nice cars and you're rolling straight out there. No checks, no bag checks, no Customs checks—nothing. At the time you are picking up two guys, and they've got 15 suitcases and you're like: "What's going on here? What are they bringing?" And no-one knows anything, because Crown is a world of its own.'

On violence, this latest whistleblower told my team: 'You see women being degraded, women being abused, women slapped around—things like that. If you saw someone being slapped around you literally become numb to it, and you see it a lot.' That is the testimony of just one whistleblower. By now in this place I have relayed the testimony of new whistleblowers, and I add all of those testimonies to the remarkable allegations in the newspapers and on the television in recent days.

There is clearly a need for everyone in this place to understand we have a multijurisdictional, multiagency, multinational problem, and Crown Casino is at the centre of it. We cannot leave it to the regulatory agencies to deal with this alone. They have proven incapable of it or unwilling to do it. That's why, just last week, I wrote to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission requesting it to investigate the peculiar power Crown Casino has over the VCGLR, Victoria Police and, potentially, Victorian politicians. What I did last week was obviously not something to be done lightly, but I was compelled to do so because the VCGLR and Victoria Police failed to investigate, at least properly, the raft of allegations I revealed in parliament on 18 October 2017, which were all backed up by witness statements and video evidence. In essence, that evidence exposed domestic violence in the hotel part of the casino, money laundering, drug use and trafficking, rigging of poker machines, supply of so-called picks to allow gamblers to illegally make poker machines run continuously and the issuing of multiple loyalty cards to allow poker machine users to illegally operate multiple machines simultaneously.

In response, the VCGLR took six months to find that Crown had indeed modified poker machines illegally but awarded only a laughably tiny fine. When Crown initially denied that allegation, it misled the community, shareholders and the stock market. Alarmingly, the VCGLR took 15 months to find that multiple loyalty cards were being issued to individual players but that the practice, in the VCGLR's opinion, was not illegal. Perhaps most remarkably, it took VCGLR 17 months to investigate the supply of picks and to find that it was, indeed, an improper practice but that no punitive measures would be imposed. In other words, what my staff could find out by simply walking into the casino on any day of the week, it took the VCGLR 17 months to investigate and come to a conclusion on, and then it did not award any punishment.

This is the bottom line. Crucially, these delays pushed back the VCGLR's findings until after Crown's five-year licence review, even though the findings were material to the review process. I put it to you that these very deliberate, conniving delays also ensured the findings were not made public before the 2018 Victorian state election, thus protecting the Premier and the gaming minister from scrutiny over this issue during the campaign.

As for Victoria Police, they simply refused to properly investigate any of the allegations, raising the question: does Victoria Police seriously believe that allegations of domestic violence or the selling of drugs should be beyond investigation when they are alleged to have occurred in Crown? Not irrelevant is that I now know of three police officers, two currently serving, who have openly said to my staff that, in Victoria, Crown is regarded as like the Vatican, an independent sovereign state all its own where the laws of Victoria and the laws of the Commonwealth do not apply. Surely when you've got serving police officers in Victoria referring to Crown
Casino as the Vatican, it's time for this place to take action. It's beyond time now for this place to establish a joint parliamentary inquiry to investigate these matters.

In closing, the allegations about Crown and those who have dealings with Crown really go to the heart of justice and governance in this country. We know that former politicians like Helen Coonan, Karl Bitar and Stephen Conroy have all been on Crown's payroll. And the allegation now is that Crown has basically corrupted the Liberal Party and the Labor Party. I say to the government and to the alternative government at this point in time: how you deal with these allegations will be the test of your parties and of the integrity of your parties. If you don't agree, either by supporting this motion or agreeing to some other even more effective response to these Crown allegations, then you will simply show the Australian community that you've been bought by Crown and you don't care about these sorts of allegations.

These allegations cannot go unaddressed. I look forward to hearing from the Attorney-General what the government's response will be. I'm very grateful to the Attorney-General for having given me leave to speak for this extra bit of time and to have my say. I'm delighted that the member for Mayo will second this motion and offer a few comments.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Rob Mitchell): I thank the member for Clark. I just remind the member that when you refer to 'you' you're referring to me as the chair. Be mindful when making statements that you're not referring or reflecting on the chair of this place, especially because I hate gambling. Is the motion seconded?

Ms SHARKIE (Mayo) (12:46): It is a privilege to second this motion. I listened intently to question time yesterday expecting the opposition to ask a question of the government around the very serious allegations aired on Sunday evening on 60 Minutes in relation to operations at Crown casinos and resorts. Not one single question was asked by the opposition. Nothing. Despite allegations of government officials connected in cosy relationships with Crown staff, including allegations of fast-tracking and assistance with hundreds of visa applications and allegations of money laundering, not one single question was asked by the opposition.

For those not familiar with the allegations aired, whistleblower Jenny Jiang was one of 19 Crown employees arrested by the Chinese government because the promotion of gambling is banned in China. Those employees were arrested, imprisoned and felt abandoned by Crown. It is hard to know which is the most concerning of the allegations aired. Is it the allegation of money being washed through Crown Casino? Is it the allegation of Crown's connections to Macau junkets and known triad syndicates? Is it the allegation of connections to known drug-trafficking syndicates? Is it the allegation of Crown's contractual relationship with Simon Pan brothels in bringing high-roller customers to gamble at the casino since 2011—brothels, according to the County Court of Victoria, that has been raided more than once by the AFP, with reports that at least two women have been rescued from sex trafficking there. Is it the allegations against Crown of providing enticements, such as designer items and jet flights to Australia, to gamblers or allegations of providing high rollers with lucky money—free money—to gamble with?

Or should it be the serious allegation that former head of the Border Force Roman Quaedvlieg was contacted by a number of members of parliament, including ministers, seeking to fast-track Crown junket arrangements? Should that be the one of most concern? Further, it's alleged that serving Australian Border Force officer Andrew Ure moonlighted to provide security for an international criminal fugitive, Tom Zhou, for bringing Chinese high rollers into Australia. Or is it the serious allegation of Australian consular officers assisting in the facilitation of hundreds of visas, with leaked Crown documents allegedly stating, 'Where we may have hundreds of millions of dollars of turnover at stake, in those situations the consulate is very understanding and will do everything they can'? Not one question from the opposition. Nothing. Absolute silence.

We should all be asking, after the airing of such serious allegations, whether Australia's largest gambling empire should have a licence to operate casinos in this country. Are they fit and proper? One would question, with the allegations that have been raised. Are there connections to Crown casinos involving drug trafficking, human trafficking, money laundering or organised crime? We should be asking what role Australian consulates have played in facilitating visas. Should those visas have been issued? Did the issuing of those visas cause harm or potential danger to Australians?

Were the high rollers, who were allegedly issued with fast-tracked visas, people of bad character?

I ask every member in this parliament: where are your collective national security concerns now? Goodness knows we seem to wave through every piece of national security legislation in this place. Do we care? We must care. We must take action. The hypocrisy of our border security regime is unbelievable. On the one hand, we have a government that wants to stop a handful of desperately ill men and women who have been found to be refugees from temporarily transferring to Australia for medical treatment and, on the other, we have a government willing to roll out the welcome mat to those with deep pockets and, potentially, deep connections to the triad!
We have a time line of allegations that spans both Labor's and the current government's time in government. Australians know that both the major parties benefit from donations from the gambling industry and that they have no reservations in accepting money from those who would seek to profit from an industry whose sole aim is to ensure people remain in the clutches of addiction no matter what the social and economic cost may be. Neither party has come to this issue with clean hands, but they have a chance to redeem themselves today with this motion. How can any member in this place not want a joint select committee inquiry into the serious allegations that have been raised? How can any member in this place not support this motion? If the House does not support this motion then the only conclusion that the public could draw is that the major parties are indeed beholden to the gambling industry.

Every day in this place—every single day—we are given yet another reason why we need a federal integrity commission right now. We need one that is well funded and that is not kicked further down the road. We need it now. I commend this motion from the member for Clark. Isn't it unbelievable that it's the crossbench that has to bring this to the parliament? I commend this motion to the House. I urge every member in this place to read the motion, vote with their own conscience and not be blindly held by their party's addiction to the gambling industry.

Mr PORTER ( Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (12:52): I thank the members for speaking to the motion. The government does not intend to support the motion. I'll explain why in detail.

Obviously it's the case that the Australian government takes all allegations of illegal activity very seriously. Everyone must abide by the Australian law. That's particularly the case for any members of our law enforcement, immigration or customs authorities. They, of course, as part of the broader Australian law enforcement community, hold very privileged positions and, as such, are expected to uphold the highest standards of integrity and professionalism at all times. A strong integrity and professional standards culture is fundamental to public confidence in their work and the Australian government's work.

I have considered the allegations that have been raised in the media, particularly as they touch upon allegations which are either directly or tangentially relatable to Commonwealth officers. It's my view that sufficient concerns have been raised to at least warrant further investigations.

I might note for the benefit of the members that were speaking to this motion that saying that there are sufficient concerns to warrant me, as the Attorney-General, to refer this matter for consideration under section 18 of the Law Enforcement Integrity Commissioner Act 2006 is not to say that I have before me, or that is otherwise available, any obvious evidence that supports allegations against law enforcement, immigration or customs authorities. Rather, it's the case that section 18 of the Law Enforcement Integrity Commissioner Act might be called a precautionary referral provision—and I already enacted that provision earlier today.

I can inform the House that I have already referred this matter— these allegations—to the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity, ACLEI, under section 18 of the Law Enforcement Integrity Commissioner Act 2006. Under that referral provision, it is now open for ACLEI to decide whether or not to launch an investigation. If they determine not to, that would be a matter that they would need to inform me about as to what it was that they considered was appropriate. If it was 'no further action' then they would need to advise me of that. Obviously that's advice that I would relay publicly.

I might say to members who have supported this motion and spoken in favour of it that ACLEI is a very appropriate—in fact the most appropriate—body to consider the allegations. They have very significant investigatory powers, stronger than those of a parliamentary committee, including the ability to apply for search warrants and issue notices that attract a criminal penalty if not complied with. I would note that ACLEI also has the ability to hold hearings, exercise coercive powers and seize evidence. It is highly experienced in these types of investigations and indeed in considering prima facie allegations to determine whether or not a full investigation is necessary. It's better resourced to quickly and effectively consider the need for an investigation and to conduct that investigation into any alleged corruption if that is required.

In addition to the observation that ACLEI is clearly the best placed body to consider these allegations I also offer the observation that a parliamentary committee of the type you now seek to have formed is totally ill-equipped to deal with an inquiry of the nature you envisage or that may be required in a matter of this type. I also offer the observation that it would be significantly detrimental to have some form of parliamentary inquiry running parallel to a potential ACLEI inquiry. Significant legal issues and risks could very likely arise for any witnesses called before both hearings. In fact a parliamentary committee inquiry would likely cause enormous difficulties to the efficacious running of ACLEI's inquiry if they determine to undertake one.

I'd also note that, if ACLEI uncovered any conduct by any other public service officers outside those determined in its remit as law enforcement officers, or by civilians or employees of a commercial organisation.
who don't fall within ACLEI's jurisdiction, ACLEI can refer information and allegations to the AFP for further investigation. I note that, as these allegations have earlier today already been referred to ACLEI under the section of the act I've nominated, it would not be appropriate to comment any further on the substance of the allegations.

I would say, though, that I think the member for Mayo’s comment—that anything other than support for the motion before the House reveals the major parties are somehow beholden to the gambling industry—is a frankly absurd contention to put. This has now been referred to ACLEI, as I have noted. I think that is the appropriate course of action. I also note for the benefit of the House that I did advise the member for Clark of the fact that I had already sent this matter to ACLEI, as I am able to under section 18 of the Law Enforcement Integrity Commissioner Act. My observation is that it was probably the better course to withdraw the motion in those circumstances but it is up to the member for Clark to determine what he considers is the appropriate course. With the matter having been referred to ACLEI, the body appropriately placed to investigate it, pursuing a motion to set up a parallel parliamentary committee is wrongheaded. It would discourage and withdraw efficacy from the ACLEI investigation, but if the motion is not going to be withdrawn it would be the government's view that it should be opposed, and we'll oppose it on the basis that this has already been referred to the appropriate authority.

Mr DREYFUS (Isaacs—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (12:58): The opposition will be opposing this motion as well on the basis that the government has referred this matter to the Law Enforcement Integrity Commissioner under section 18 of the Law Enforcement Integrity Commissioner Act. We think that the government has taken an appropriate course and thank the government for taking this course. An inquiry by the Law Enforcement Integrity Commissioner is likely to be much more effective, with all respect to my colleagues in this House or the other place, than a parliamentary committee attempting to inquire into this matter with very broad terms of reference, limited resources and a limited time in which to undertake that inquiry.

Under the Law Enforcement Integrity Commissioner Act, in effect, ACLEI has the powers of a standing royal commission. For those unfamiliar with the existence of ACLEI, or of the Law Enforcement Integrity Commissioner, it's a body that, as the name suggests, exists to look at corruption in law enforcement. It's a body that exists to ensure integrity in law enforcement, and I'm looking forward to that inquiry being undertaken. As the Attorney-General has reminded the House, if wrongdoing or corruption is uncovered by others—not police officers and not law enforcement agencies but by others—ACLEI can refer the matters of corruption that it uncovers in relation to those others to the Australian Federal Police for further investigation and inquiry and, if necessary, prosecution.

I join with the Attorney-General in suggesting that the comments that have been made by those crossbench members who are putting forward this motion—to the effect that voting against this motion in some way amounts to turning a blind eye or that voting against this motion in some way amounts to support for wrongdoing and support for corruption—are entirely wrong. I reject that on behalf of the opposition and prospectively on behalf of all members of the House who are going to vote against this motion. I would simply make the point that there's a range of ways in which allegations of corruption can be investigated and dealt with.

Of course, these are shocking allegations of corruption that have come to light in the reports in The Age and the Sydney Morning Herald and on Channel Nine and 60 Minutes in the last few days. Of course, they should be further investigated because they are shocking. But to vote against the establishment of a parliamentary committee should not be taken by anybody in this place, nor should it be taken by any member of the Australian community, as in the least condoning of the allegedly shocking behaviour that has occurred in relation to Crown Casino. I say again that the opposition will join with the government in voting against this motion on the basis that the matter has now been referred to the Law Enforcement Integrity Commissioner for further action.

Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (13:02): This parliament is running a protection racket for ministers and former ministers who have ties to Crown Casino. It is welcome news that the crossbench—and I commend the member for Clark and the member for Mayo—have dragged the government kicking and screaming, together with investigative journalists, to take some steps to refer matters for investigation. But, in the short time that we've had to look at the agency that's going to look at it, what is clear is that ministers won't be caught in that, certainly with respect to the code of conduct.

There are two questions here. One is: have people broken the law? The second is: have ministers and former ministers acted ethically and properly and in accordance with the code of conduct, given that there are reports that ministers are lobbying government departments on behalf of Crown Casino, so that people who are wanted international criminals can bring in their mates to sit at the high-rollers table? Yesterday, we heard very, very clearly in the reports in the papers and on the TV claims that two ministers have been pressuring the Department of Home Affairs to make it easy to bring in high-rolling gamblers even when they've got criminal connections. That in and of itself would be a breach of the code of conduct and potentially corruption. We don't have an independent commission against corruption, a national federal watchdog, to refer those matters to. Those matters...
may in and of themselves not be crimes but they are certainly wrong. If ministers in this government or in former governments are trying to prevail on public servants to let in people who have criminal connections with the minimum of visa checks just because they've got a bag of cash that will go straight to the Crown bottom line, then we need to know about that. This latest investigation that has been launched under pressure from the government is not about whether ministers have done the right thing. It turns a blind eye to ministers.

Yesterday when presented with this the Prime Minister said there was nothing before him to warrant his attention. If you have claims with some credibility that ministers have been pressuring public servants to allow people to come into this country, even when they are wanted criminals, because it might benefit the bottom line of Crown Casino, I would have thought that would be enough to warrant your attention. There is a ministerial code of conduct. If it meant something, at a minimum the Prime Minister would be asking his ministers—and should be conducting an investigation and getting a briefing from the department—about whether those allegations are true.

The Attorney-General today said there is a basis for referral for investigation. If that's right then there is certainly a basis for inquiring into whether ministers have basically acted as an arm of Crown Casino in pressuring the Department of Home Affairs to let wanted criminals and their associates into this country. The first way we will find that out is by having a federal ICAC—but we don't have one of those. The second way we can find that out, given that Labor and the Liberals seem intent on stopping an inquiry into it, is by the parliament setting up its own inquiry to ask the ministers and the department: 'Who has been pressuring the Department of Home Affairs? Who has been setting up the emergency hotlines that we've been reading about in the papers? Just how high and how close to the top does this connection with Crown Casino go?' These are legitimate questions, and there is no reason to believe it is going to be looked at in this inquiry which, under pressure, the government and the opposition have agreed on. We need to make ministers answer questions. And the Prime Minister needs to answer questions as well. If these allegations are not enough to raise a prima facie case that ministers have done the wrong thing then what is? What do you need to do in this country to get an investigation into you as a minister? If a minister saying, 'I want a fast-track entry into this country for people who have associations with criminal activity and triads,' is not enough, then what is?

I commend the member for Clark and the member for Mayo for raising this. I was the only one in question time in the House of Representatives yesterday who asked the Prime Minister a question about it, and it is becoming increasingly clear why. It is that we know where former ministers go when they leave this place. They go and work for Crown Casino—Liberals and Labor and Liberal. So we know there is a massive unwillingness from the major parties to ask questions about this.

The Greens in Victoria have found out the hard way what happens when you stand up to the gaming industry. At the last election, the pokies industry spent $1 million, split between the Labor and Liberal parties, to try and keep the Greens from having the balance of power in the Victorian election. And we are seeing again here today the old parties and the gambling industry lining up to stop sunlight from being shone onto this scourge.

Never again will I take a lesson from this government about the need to stop criminals from coming into this country and the need to have tough border protection policies. What we hear from the government is: 'If you're fleeing war and persecution, we'll lock you up. But if you come here with a bag of cash, we'll open the gate for you so you can go and find the drugs and gamble at the casino.' That is the allegation that has been put before the parliament by the member for Clark—and we haven't heard a single denial from the government. This government does not care about border security. This government only cares about beating up on refugees and using border security as a way of winning votes. But if you are someone who has high connections, potentially with criminal organisations in other countries, this government will bend over backwards to fast-track you into this country, drive you through the open gates at the airport, as we have heard, and take you straight to Crown Casino—perhaps via a brothel along the way. And this government will turn a blind eye. And if there are ministers involved then the government doesn't care, and it seems the Labor Party doesn't care.

So: if we want to have an investigation into whether particular officials have done the wrong thing and whether there have been breaches of laws by our agencies, then good! There should be an investigation into whether or not agencies are complying with the law. But the question is: who is going to look into the ministers and the former ministers? Who is going to hold to account the politicians—the ministers who sit here making decisions on behalf of the country and then go and work for Crown Casino? Who is going to look into them? We don't know. We don't know who has done what, but we have heard the allegations being made and we, the parliament and the public, are entitled to an answer.

Government members interjecting—

Mr BANDT: I hear the members from the government backbench jumping in and intervening and saying there's no case to answer. Well, people think there is a case to answer. If you'd watched 60 Minutes or you'd read
the papers, you would've seen the strongest of allegations being made against ministers. And, when those allegations are being made, unless every minister in here is in a position to stand up, hand on heart, and say they did nothing wrong, and unless the Prime Minister is in a position to say: 'I have conducted a full and thorough investigation and none of my ministers have done anything wrong'—unless that is the case, which I suspect it won't be—we are entitled to an answer.

So I commend this motion. And, if this motion fails, as it's likely to do, if there's no change of heart, if the protection racket for ministers and former ministers continues, then we will press ahead in the Senate, because there is the possibility of a Senate inquiry as well. But if we don't get a parliamentary inquiry—because that is the way to hold ministers to account—then this parliament will have exposed the links between the gambling industry and the highest levels of government in this country, and we will not rest until the same standards that this government wants to impose on refugees and Newstart recipients are imposed on their very own frontbench as well.

Ms STEGGALL (Warringah) (13:12): I commend this motion. It raises such extremely serious questions that I don't think anyone who has sat here listening to them can listen without a serious pause for thought. What exactly is going on? It highlights the need for two very important aspects, I believe, of good governance. It highlights the freedom of the press to be able to highlight these events and these allegations; without their investigative powers, we would not have these stories and would not be alerted. I think it also highlights the need for a national anticorruption commission. We need to have the power to properly investigate. All the members in this place should feel that their reputations in fact are at stake if these kinds of allegations can be aired. We need to be able to investigate and clear them appropriately. The Australian public deserves to have confidence that no one is above the law—that everyone is ultimately held to account for their actions.

In my short time in this parliament, I've certainly heard the government talk forcefully of the need for our strong borders and for us to be extremely vigilant as to who is allowed into Australia. We've seen the passing of legislation in relation to holding Australian citizens from coming back, due to their activities. We've certainly seen a strong approach to poor refugees in dire need of medical treatment, and there are all sorts of allegations made in relation to criminal behaviour or that they are not persons that we would want in Australia—never mind the fact that they're not actually trying to come and stay in Australia but simply to come for medical treatment. Yet we have allegations here being raised of persons of seriously questionable character and criminal background being allowed to come to Australia without the proper scrutiny. No one person is above the law, and we, in this place, have a responsibility to make sure that it is applied equally to everyone.

There have been over the last, say, 12 months a number of incidents and allegations raised from both sides of the aisle here about really questionable conduct and deals that highlight the need for a Commonwealth integrity commission. We have heard commitments from the government that this will be pursued but no real indication as to what teeth such a body would be given. In the 2019-20 budget, the government allocated $104.5 million over four years to establish the commission. These are all steps in the right direction but, again, there have been a number of events raised that require this to be dealt with urgently. This isn't something that should take time.

The Australian public has just come through campaigning over several months, with lots of allegations and issues. We had the $444 million contract granted to the Great Barrier Reef Foundation without tender or due diligence; we had the $420 million contract awarded to the Paladin Group, again without tender or competition; we had past and present politicians helping Liberal Party donors Helloworld win a $1 billion contract for federal government travel; and we had the appointments of former politicians and ministerial staffers to the AAT by the government. Meanwhile, Labor is not blameless. It is under fire for the influence of the unions over its policy and direction and how union fees are collected. We have bills before this House in relation to that.

So members of the federal government have the opportunity for nepotism, favouritism in appointments and the granting of contracts, the misuse of confidential information, conflicts of interest, misuse of entitlements, decisions that favour political donors, and crossover appointments between industry lobbying and parliament, yet there is no criminal sanction against these actions. Clearly, we need action. I commend this motion. It is a step in terms of serious criminal behaviour that needs to be investigated, but we also need the proper investigation of ministers and other members.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the motion be agreed to. There being more than one voice calling for a division, in accordance with standing order 133 the division is deferred until after the discussion of the matter of public importance.

Debate adjourned.
COMMITTEES

Public Works Committee

Report

Dr McVEIGH (Groom) (13:17): On behalf of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, I present the committee's 82nd annual report, which examines committee activities undertaken in the 2018 calendar year.

Report made a parliamentary paper in accordance with standing order 39(e).

Dr McVEIGH: by leave—In summary, 2018 was another busy year for the committee. During this time, the committee of the 45th Parliament inquired into 14 projects with a combined estimated value of more than $1.5 billion, tabled five reports, examined 158 medium works proposals with a combined value of more than $850 million and held 36 meetings both in Canberra and around Australia.

Each Public Works Committee brings a different focus to its work in examining the expenditure of public money on government construction projects. One of the key issues that the committee focused on in 2018 was the cost of contractors. The committee was concerned that contractors often constitute an additional layer of cost in public works projects, and that the tier 1 contractors may put local contractors and small to medium enterprises at a disadvantage. The committee was pleased to note that, in some cases, tender processes were expected to target tier 2 and tier 3 contractors. I would certainly encourage departments and agencies to continue this practice.

On a related note, the committee also examined the engagement of local contractors. Of interest to the committee is not only the trend towards seeking to engage local contractors in construction projects but that steps were sometimes being taken towards assessing the capacity of local contractors prior to approaching the market. The committee particularly commends the Department of Defence for its efforts to quantify the engagement of local contractors and anticipates seeing the outcomes of this in future post-implementation reports.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to my fellow committee members from the 45th Parliament. It was a privilege to work with all of you. I look forward to working with all of you. I look forward to continuing the committee's work in ensuring that taxpayer money is spent on public works as efficiently and effectively as possible. I'd also like to welcome both my fellow committee members who have joined us for the first time and those who have rejoined us on the committee in the last two weeks. I would like to state that I look forward to a productive and no doubt busy year. Finally, I'd like to thank our secretariat, who have supported us so very well and with absolute professionalism. I commend the report to the House.

BILLS

Treasury Laws Amendment (Consumer Data Right) Bill 2019

Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr STEPHEN JONES (Whitlam) (13:20): I'm pleased to be speaking on this important piece of legislation, and I also move this second reading amendment:

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

"whilst not declining to give the bill a second reading, the House notes the needs of Australian consumers to be satisfied that their data is secure and that they have control over its use, modification and storage before, during and after an authorised transfer, in particular:

(1) the right for customers to request the deletion of their personal data held by companies;
(2) the need to prevent the use of technologies which may operate outside the regime, such as screen-scraping technology; and
(3) the impact of this bill on vulnerable consumers".

The Treasury Laws Amendment (Consumer Data Right) Bill 2019 amends the Competition and Consumer Act 2010, the Privacy Act 1998 and the Australian Information Commissioner Act 2010, to introduce a new framework for a consumer data right. The framework will allow individuals and businesses to more conveniently access data held on them by certain organisations within the private sector. They will then be able to share that data with accredited and trusted third parties. The bill allows for that framework to be progressively extended across different sectors of the economy—initially the banking sector, with the energy and telecommunications sectors to follow later. Sectors will only be designed following extensive consultation and assessment by the ACCC and the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner.
Under the framework, the ACCC will be empowered to set rules, accredit participants, oversee data standards and take enforcement action when consumers' rights are being seriously or systematically breached. Technical standards will be set by a data standards chair, advised by a data standards body. This body, initially CSIRO's Data61, will be responsible for working with businesses and consumers to ensure that the framework is implemented efficiently and effectively.

Individual privacy will continue to be the remit of the Australian Information Commissioner, who will have responsibility for enforcing privacy safeguards around the framework and providing complaints handling for the breaches of the privacy safeguards. The bill will also extend the protections under the Privacy Act 1998 to cover data held by small businesses if those small businesses are accredited data recipients under the consumer data rights framework.

I will now address some of the benefits of a consumer data right, because the benefits to competition accrue directly to consumers. Done properly, the bill will make swapping between banks as easy as swapping a SIM card in your mobile phone. Australia has an incredibly concentrated financial system, dominated by the large players. Reforms that give consumers greater powers, such as the consumer data right, offer a chance to shift that equation.

Today, one in every two Australians are still customers of the very first bank that they opened an account with. This isn't really surprising. There are enormous barriers to switching banks in our current system. As it stands, most consumers don't consider switching their bank accounts or their home loans. A survey by the Customer Owned Banking Association found that 65 per cent of all respondents were not likely to consider changing their home loan or investment loan provider in the next 12 months. The ABA found in another survey that only 17 per cent of respondents had switched banks in the last three years, leaving 83 per cent with the same bank. When you interrogate those results, what you'll find is all of the associated administrative arrangements that come with switching a banking product or a loan product, whether they're complicated offset arrangements or a whole range of direct debit arrangements with third party merchants and providers. It's the administrative burden that comes with switching a bank product, which is often the obstacle that keeps people with their existing provider, often against their own financial interests.

Improved access to banking data for the people who ostensibly own it, the customers, will enable the development of new tools to help understand the dizzying array of choices on offer in our financial system. Breaking down barriers that stop people from getting the best possible deal on their credit card, their mortgage, their business loan or their bank account has to be in the public interest. It will also allow for the development of new financial services and applications that help Australians budget better and manage their financial lives. These benefits aren't limited to individual consumers. For small businesses, the open banking reforms will unlock a range of new products and services to manage their accounts and cash flows more efficiently than they do today. These benefits are likely to be replicated across sectors as the consumer data right expands.

This important reform has been supported by a long series of inquiries. Back in 2015, the Harper Competition Policy Review was the first national review to recommend that data access and portability rights be implemented across the economy. In 2017 the Productivity Commission released its inquiry into the availability and use of data. This inquiry recommended that a new comprehensive data right be created that would, amongst other things, allow consumers to: share joint access to and use of their consumer data with the data holder; receive a copy of their consumer data; request edits or corrections to it for the reasons of accuracy; be informed of the trade or other disclosure of consumer data to third parties; and direct data holders to transfer data in machine readable form either to an individual or to a nominated third party. The Productivity Commission found that the benefits from greater access to data would be widespread. Competition in many markets would be invigorated by greater availability and transferability of data.

This inquiry was followed by the open banking review, which set out a detailed program to implement a consumer data right in the banking sector. The open banking review noted such a framework would break down barriers to competition and market entry in the financial sector and help address pervasive information asymmetry issues in financial markets. It also supported a joint regulatory model where the ACCC would be primarily responsible for standards setting and competition issues, while the OAIC would remain primarily responsible for privacy protections.

Mechanisms to allow consumers to access and transfer data easily have been supported by many other inquiries, including: the Northern Australia Insurance Premiums Taskforce: final report; the Review of the four major banks: first report in 2016; the Independent Review into the Future Security of the National Electricity Market; and the Productivity Commission's report on competition in Australian financial systems, together with the Council of Australian Governments' report Facilitating access to consumer energy data, the Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman's report Affordable capital for SME growth and the ACCC's electricity supply and prices inquiry.
Other activity has been happening in parallel to the development of this legislation. The ACCC has consulted extensively on its consumer data right rules framework. The CSIRO's Data61 has worked to develop a clear data standard for the banking industry, with draft documents released for comment in November and December 2018. For all of these reasons, we are supporting the government's legislation and moving an amendment that says: "whilst not declining to give the bill a second reading, the House notes the needs of Australian consumers to be satisfied that their data is secure and that they have control over its use, modification and storage before, during and after an authorised transfer, in particular:

1. the right for customers to request the deletion of their personal data held by companies;
2. the need to prevent the use of technologies which may operate outside the regime, such as screen-scraping technology; and
3. the impact of this bill on vulnerable consumers".

I understand that the motion will be seconded by the member for Eden-Monaro.

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

Dr Mike Kelly: I second the motion and reserve my right to speak.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 43. The debate may be resumed at a later hour.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Pensions and Benefits

Ms RYAN (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (13:30): I rise today to condemn this government's robo-debt system that is catching innocent Australians in its net. Designed to catch cheats, it is now reversing the onus of proof onto innocent Australians to demonstrate what they have already demonstrated. To put it in simple terms for those playing along at home, the ATO provides data matching that averages someone's salary across a 12-month period. If you were on Newstart for a six-week period in that 12-month financial year, you are likely to be given a robo-debt notice that tells you that you've done something wrong. Basically, it accuses you of defrauding the Commonwealth. There are hundreds of young people in my electorate who have knocked on my door, and I have sat with them as they've worked this through with Centrelink. I have heard the people on the end of the phone demand from them pay slips that do not reflect the period of time that they were getting social support. They are asking for pay slips that, in this day and age, not every young worker is receiving. That's another issue.

The robo-debt system is causing havoc for families. It is a scourge in this country. It is coming to a family near you if it hasn't already. There are thousands of young people who have accepted a debt that they did not owe, and there are thousands of others who've gone to local members, sought support and had their debt waived. The debt often didn't exist. This system is a failure. This government should review it and cancel it.

Moore Electorate: Schools

Mr GOODENOUGH (Moore) (13:31): I'm pleased to announce that schools in Moore will collectively benefit from $200,000 in federal funding under the Local Schools Community Fund, which is open to all public, independent and Catholic schools within the electorate. Schools may use the funding for both capital and non-capital projects, with each school being eligible to apply for one project to be funded from $1,000 up to $20,000. Projects may include small-scale building extensions, refurbishments or the purchase of computers, electronic learning aids, playground and sporting equipment, air conditioning and other student amenities. An independent advisory committee will assess the applications on merit and allocate the funding.

There are 59 local schools in Moore. During my visits to a number of local schools, the need for funding for very worthy improvements was brought to my attention by both staff and parents. This program gives all schools, both public and private, the opportunity to access federal funding to improve the educational amenities provided to local students, above and beyond the fundraising efforts of our local school communities through their parents and citizens associations. The Local Schools Community Fund complements the government's Stronger Communities Program, which similarly funds small-scale projects.

Solomon Electorate: Festivals

Mr GOSLING (Solomon) (13:33): Saturday night was a fantastic evening at the Nepalese Food and Culture Festival down at the Darwin Waterfront. Locals and tourists enjoyed authentic Nepali food, musical performance and Lakhe dance and admired the Nepali cultural attire. The event was organised by the Nepalese Association of the NT, NANT, with the support of the CDU Nepalese Student Association. I want to congratulate the Nepalese Association of the NT and in particular the president, Subash Pokhrel, and also Sudeep and Suyana Shrestha, Sarbesh Chitrakar, Sayam Thapa, Gunjan Upadhyay, Sunil Neupane, Yubraj Pant, Gaurab Wasti, Kesav Adhikari...
and everyone else who made the event such a success. The NT Nepalese community contributes significantly to our Top End community in so many ways. As well as Nepalese students studying at CDU, in every profession you will see Nepalese people. They're such a wonderful community, and festivals like the Nepalese Food and Culture Festival make the Top End such a wonderful place.

I want to extend an invitation to all members of the House and to all Australians to come up to Darwin and join us for the Darwin Festival, which kicks off early next month. It's a wonderful time in the Top End, and I encourage everyone to come and join in.

**Bennelong Electorate: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics**

Mr ALEXANDER (Bennelong) (13:34): I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again: Bennelong is Australia's capital of innovation. We’ve got the nation’s most forward-looking companies in Macquarie Park and our best and brightest in our schools. It was in the name of putting these two groups together that I launched the Bennelong Schools' STEM Challenge back in 2017, and, after two successful years, I’m glad to report that it has become a regular fixture in the Bennelong calendar.

This December we'll be holding the third iteration of the event, again sponsored by Medtronic, which is one of the many high-tech companies based in the electorate. Through Medtronic, students are able to get up close to the medical tech of the future, have conversations with engineers and see firsthand how the STEM subjects they study at school have real-world implications and possibilities. But, perhaps more importantly even than this, participants learn from each other, building on what they see others do. The camaraderie between the students is visible to all. The day starts with a bunch of students in a room and ends with a group of friends with a common interest. The Bennelong Schools' STEM Challenge will be bigger and better this year, and I can't wait to see what our scientists and engineers of the future have in store for us.

**Sarcoma Awareness Month**

Mr BURNS (Macnamara) (13:36): The month of July has been Sarcoma Awareness Month. Sarcoma is a type of rare cancer of the bone and soft tissue. It is unique because sarcoma can form anywhere in the body. It is unfortunately particularly common in children and young adults. Each year hundreds will be diagnosed with a type of sarcoma and will go through a challenging experience, often a long and hard journey through gruelling cycles of treatment. I and the entire Labor family know a little bit more about sarcoma because of our dear friend and former Young Labor president Julijana Todorovic. Anyone who knows JJ knows that, with the strength that she fights her political battles, it's hardly surprising that she fought sarcoma into remission.

Sarcoma Awareness Month is designed to raise the profile of sarcoma and to bring desperately needed attention to this disease—attention that will help efforts to generate increased research and new treatments. The five-year survival rate is, on average, 70 per cent, but it can be less for different types of sarcomas. The Australia and New Zealand Sarcoma Association is the peak body for the sarcoma community and aims to improve outcomes for sarcoma patients through research, education and awareness of sarcoma and related tumours. For more information, head to their website sarcoma.org.au and join me in going yellow for sarcoma awareness.

I thank Senator Ciccone in the other place for also calling for greater awareness, and I thank the member for Corio for providing this particularly striking tie to help create awareness about this important issue.

**Menzies Electorate: Doncaster Returned and Services League Club**

Mr ANDREWS (Menzies) (13:37): I rise today to both acknowledge and celebrate the centenary of the Doncaster RSL in my electorate. As all honourable members will know, the Returned and Services League was formed in June of 1916 by servicemen returning from the Great War. Throughout Australia, there are RSL clubs which continue to serve veterans of the various engagements over the past century or more. The Doncaster RSL is one of those traditional—old-fashioned, you might call it—RSLs, one of three I have in my electorate. The other two are at Templestowe and Warrandyte. When you visit these RSLs and look at cenotaphs, you see the names of the then young men who didn't return from the Great War.

In the case of Doncaster, a rural, fruit-growing and vegetable market-gardening area about 20 kilometres outside Melbourne at that stage, you see etched on the cenotaph the number of young people who didn't return from the Great War, who paid the ultimate sacrifice. Congratulations to all involved in the Doncaster RSL, particularly President Charles Collins and Secretary Joan Brown, on the work that they continue to do in the footsteps of those who came before them, serving the veterans community locally for the past century.

**Workplace Relations**

Ms WELLS (Lilley) (13:39): Australians have seen countless examples of employers ripping off their workers in recent years, from 7-Eleven and Domino's Pizza to Chatime and Michael Hill Jewellers—and now, most recently, millionaire celebrity chefs. In my electorate of Lilley, Nundah had the highest reported number of wage
theft complaints to the Ombudsman in the last term of the parliament. Since this was first reported on Friday, I have sought clarity on where exactly this is occurring, what Fair Work inspectors have planned in Nundah and whether we will get the same action as the audits carried out in West End. I will also be meeting with the relevant unions to find out why this is so prevalent in my community and what Nundah workers need from this government to fix this issue.

We don't see this third-term government doing too much about it. We don't see legislation to tackle stagnant wages, wage theft or wage exploitation. Instead, they have been focused on going after unions, the organisations on the front line fighting against wage theft. That is like seeing a house on fire and deciding to go in and take apart the smoke alarm. Unfortunately, members on this side of the House understand the urgency around wage theft, and as the new member for Lilley I will step up and fight to make things right for workers in Nundah.

Mental Health

Mrs ARCHER (Bass) (13:40): Access to mental health services is a passion of mine and was an area of focus during the recent election campaign, leading to $10.5 million for an adult mental health centre in Launceston. I thank the minister, Greg Hunt, for working with me to secure this funding.

On Saturday I was proud to join around 120 community members for the inaugural Walk for Suicide Prevention in Launceston. The walk, which is hoped to become an annual event, is an initiative of wonderful members of the Bass community, Scott Towns and David Pretorius with the Rotary Club of Central Launceston, and aims to raise understanding and, importantly, create awareness of the help that is available. Scott was moved to action after seeing the terrible impact of mental ill health within his own friend network.

Sadly, Tasmania has the second-highest rate of suicide in Australia and it is the leading cause of death amongst people aged 15 to 44. There are many incredible organisations which do much in this area, including of course headspace and, in Tasmania, SPEAK UP! Stay ChatTY, founded by Mitch McPherson in 2013 after his brother Ty died by suicide.

We know that commitment and investment will make a difference to the lives of Australians, such as the coalition's $125 million investment in the Million Minds Mental Health Research Mission. By supporting innovative and ground-breaking mental health and suicide prevention research, the mission aims to assist up to one million people affected by mental illness.

Melbourne Electorate: Safe Injecting Centres

Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (13:42): Lives are being saved in Melbourne thanks to the medically safe injecting centre in North Richmond. But now is the time to explore expanding the trial to other areas of Melbourne to ensure that the trial succeeds and that Richmond residents aren't the only ones dealing with the challenges. I'm proud to have worked alongside my Victorian Greens colleagues for many years as part of the community campaign to deliver a trial of the safe injecting facility in my electorate Melbourne. Since it was opened over a year ago, staff have responded to over 1,232 overdoses. That's more than 1,232 lives which might have been lost had this facility not existed. Ambulance Victoria figures show a reduction in call-outs, suspected drug overdoses and patients being transported to hospital. Medically supervised injecting facilities save lives but there is more we need to do.

The Victorian government made the right decision to start the trial but they are not delivering the centre properly, ignoring the feedback and concern of local residents and leaving them in the dark, jeopardising its social licence and making amenity worse for many locals. It is time to seriously explore expanding the trial with more injecting facilities across the city and deeper community consultations. We also need to review whether the exclusions to the centre are appropriate or are having an impact.

Addiction is a health issue, not a criminal one. The North Richmond supervised injecting centre is saving lives and now is not the time to turn our backs on the challenge. I'll continue to work with my colleagues at the state and local level as well as the community to protect, expand and improve the facilities in Melbourne and improve resident amenity.

Berowra Electorate: Galston Valley Railway

Mr LEESER (Berowra) (13:43): The Galston Valley railway is one of the great assets of my community. It's popular with families and train lovers from right around Sydney. It boasts a five-inch model railway gauge and a mainline link of about a kilometre. The railway belongs to the Hornsby Model Engineers Co-op, a group that's now 46 years old. Most of the model trains that run on the track are crafted individually, often by the skilled hands of members. The co-op is led by Roger Lainson and Robin Levin, and some of the earliest members of the club, like Bob Farquhar and Allan Head, are still involved today.
I was fortunate to attend one of the most exciting events on the railway's calendar, the Galston500. Twenty-one teams each had a locomotive and collectively travelled 500 kilometres through the day. That's the equivalent of Sydney to Coffs Harbour. The Galston500 wasn't just a unique and entertaining occasion for families; it was also a great fundraiser for a worthy cause. It was an event created by club treasurer Allie Thackeray and her husband, Evan. The team solicits sponsorship, and this year they look set to raise nearly $12,000 for multiple sclerosis. The money is going to Multiple Sclerosis Research Australia through its Kiss Goodbye to MS campaign, supporting very important research. I want to commend Allie, Evan and everyone else involved in the Galston500 and the Galston Valley Railway. I think it's a terrific institution, and I really commend the Hornsby Model Engineers Cooperative.

Lyons Electorate: Big Blue Farmer

Mr BRIAN MITCHELL (Lyons) (13:45): Last week the Southern Midlands Council, in collaboration with Rural Alive and Well, RAW; and Rotary, launched the big blue farmer community arts project. The Big Blue Farmer is part of the Oatlands 'looking out for each other' initiative and will sit at the entrance to the small town as a reminder of the importance of good mental health and wellbeing and to check in on our mates. The Big Blue Farmer is made from recycled baling twine, which was donated by farmers and was knitted together by locals; Agfest patrons, including myself; Oatlands District High School students; and members of the northern Midlands communities.

The initiative was started by Tasmanian artist Grietje van Randen, who has done similar projects in the communities of Bothwell and Deloraine, which are also in my electorate. RAW CEO Liz Little said:

The Blue Farmer is here to remind us that we need to look out for each other. When people are doing it tough it is important that they have someone they trust to talk to, someone who will listen and help them get the support they need.

Too many of our rural and regional communities do not have accessible mental health services. Organisations such as RAW help to bridge this gap by offering mental health outreach programs. RAW operates 24/7 and can be contacted on 130043576283. Thank you, Liz Little. I welcome her successor, Barb Walters. I look forward to working with her in the future.

Australian Greens

Mr CHRISTENSEN (Dawson) (13:46): Brisbanites who have had their mornings disrupted on a regular basis by green extremists now know where they can direct their anger. It is towards the un-Australian Greens Party in general and their grandstanding councillor Jonathon Sri in particular. Why? Because Councillor Sri aids and abets law-breaking and disruption, and the ratepayers of Brisbane are footing some of the bill for their actions. Councillor Sri offers up his office for use by green extremists, who assume a variety of names to stage their protests by. The good ratepayers of Brisbane fund Councillor Sri and his office expenses, and these resources are now being used to disrupt their lives. Of course, the Greens councillor is not only willing to provide his office for strategy meetings and training courses on how to deal with police at protests; he is completely in favour of their disruption and is indeed one of the disruptors himself. Councillor Sri said the actions of the green extremists in gluing themselves to city streets and sitting in canoes in the middle of roads are a legitimate and effective strategy for maintaining political pressure and drawing attention to an issue.

I have a suggestion for Brisbane City Council and the good mayor: as Councillor Sri is the aider and abetter of disruption to businesses and workplaces and all the other annoying activity that takes place in Brisbane and elsewhere, let's send the bill for all of the costs involved in court action, lost productivity and police man hours wasted to Councillor Sri and the Australian—or should I say un-Australian—Greens to pay.

Doonside Railway Station

Mr HUSIC (Chifley) (13:48): Sixteen per cent of the Doonside population are over the age of 60 and nearly a thousand Doonside residents report needing assistance in their day-to-day lives because of a disability. Yet, if they turn up to their local railway station, they literally see evidence that they are being blocked from using public transport, with a station that still maintains long ramps that prevent the access and use of public transport. It's not only that it's preventing their access; if they do use it, they're finding it dangerous, with one Doonside resident, Benjamin Punzalan, spending over a week in hospital because while travelling down the station ramps he was thrown out of his mobility scooter and struck the ramp's metal barriers.

For years we have been asking for lifts to be installed at that station to ensure that the elderly and those with a disability can use their local station, and they've been denied this by the Liberal government in New South Wales. Earlier this year, I wrote to the New South Wales transport minister saying this needed to be fixed, and in response he flicked it to his parliamentary secretary, who boasted that over 90 per cent of customer journeys are accessible to all—except if you live in Doonside. I have now also raised this with the Australian Human Rights
Commission, saying that people are being prevented from accessing public transport. These lifts should be built, and the elderly and disabled should not be prevented from using public transport.

South West Rocks Surf Life Saving Club

Mr CONAGHAN (Cowper) (13:49): We all know the importance of the volunteer work of surf lifesavers around Australia. In this regard I congratulate Brienna Elford of the South West Rocks Surf Life Saving Club, who has been selected to attend the Surf Lifesaving Australia National Leaders' Masterclass for those who hold senior leadership roles in surf lifesaving. Brienna was selected from a large field of applicants across New South Wales, where only seven were selected to attend. Over the four days the selected participants will be challenged to think strategically about the future of surf lifesaving in the company of likeminded members from clubs around Australia. They will further develop their leadership knowledge, learn new skills and create opportunities for personal growth through networking exposure and lifesaving pathways. I know that the South West Rocks Surf Life Saving Club are very proud of Brienna and her achievements and I know that she will be a great ambassador for surf lifesaving. I congratulate her for her efforts as I congratulate all volunteers in surf lifesaving.

Springfield Anglican College: SolarBuddy

Mr DICK (Oxley) (13:51): I recently had the pleasure of attending the Springfield Anglican College sustainable information evening, where year 6 students from the college have been learning about the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. There are 17 goals, which focus on promoting prosperity while protecting the planet. In the lead-up to the event year 6 students carried out a funding mission by partnering with a company called SolarBuddy to bring light into the lives of children living in energy poverty. SolarBuddy is a registered Australian charity dedicated to educating and empowering the next generation to change the lives of children living in energy poverty. Their mission is to help improve the educational opportunities of six million children living in energy poverty throughout the South Pacific, South-East Asia and Africa by 2030 by providing them with a SolarBuddy solar light to study after dusk. The students will assemble solar light kits obtained from SolarBuddy. Once completed SolarBuddy distribute these solar lights to children living in energy poverty. The recipients of these lights are children who would otherwise work with a kerosene light to complete chores or to do their homework. This exposure to kerosene is a significant health hazard which will be reduced through initiatives like this. My congratulations to Springfield Anglican College, the teachers, the parents and SolarBuddy for their partnership, and I wish them all the best for continued success in the future.

Run Melbourne: Community Living & Respite Services Inc

Mr DRUM (Nicholls—Chief Nationals Whip) (13:52): Last month Walter Lubcke, a German politician, was fatally shot in the head by a far Right extremist. Walter Lubcke is just the latest in a growing list of political figures murdered by far Right extremists in recent years, including Jo Cox in the United Kingdom and Pawel Adamowicz in Poland. Far Right extremists were also linked to at least 50 murders in the United States alone in 2018, and all Australians were horrified at the 51 Kiwis murdered by an Australian far Right extremist in Christchurch earlier this year—targets chosen for politically motivated reasons. These politically motivated murders should be a warning to all of us in this chamber.

These far-right extremists are not lone wolves or isolated individuals; they are part of a globally connected movement. They are radicalised by a common ideology of white nationalism, shared in common channels of communication. The involvement of Australians in these networks is a reality that must be confronted by government and civil society. There should be no sides in this fight. Those who believe in liberal democracy must be united in taking the fight up to this challenge. We rightly took online radicalisation seriously in the face of the rise of ISIS, and we need to do the same with white nationalists.
This isn't just about confronting the streaming of attacks; it's about preventing radicalisation before it happens. That's the heart of the Christchurch call issued by New Zealand Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern. It's too late to prevent the Christchurch atrocity, but we can act before more people are killed.

Krilich, Mr Max, OAM

Mr FALINSKI (Mackellar) (13:55): Max Krilich is a Narrabeen local and a one-club rugby league legend, playing his whole career at Manly Warringah Sea Eagles. Max was recently awarded the Order of Australia medal for services to rugby league at the Queen's Birthday 2018 honours list.

Max joined the Sea Eagles at the age of 19, following his schooling and amateur career. Moving on to the firsts team, Max played as hooker before gaining the Manly captaincy in 1976. Success came in 1978, with Manly playing six matches in 24 days to make it through to the grand final, where they defeated Cronulla.

Dr Mike Kelly: Cronulla! Yes, they did!

Mr FALINSKI: There goes my ministerial career! Max played 215 first-grade games, scoring 31 tries before retiring in 1983. Alongside his Manly accolades, Max also represented Australia. He played the first two tests in the 1978 New Zealand tour and captained Australia to victory against New Zealand later, in 1982.

Following his playing career, Max moved into coaching, becoming the coach of Manly's under-23 side from 1984 to 1988. From 1989 to 1991 he coached Manly's reserve-grade side, before retiring from the professional game.

Max thoroughly deserves all the recognition, and his success as a rugby league player, coach and mentor make him a worthy recipient of the Order of Australia medal.

Economy

Mr STEPHEN JONES (Whitlam) (13:56): The Prime Minister wants Australians to think that the economy is strong, but in their households they know the story is very, very different. Today they learned that median household income is lower in real terms under this government than it was when they took office in 2013.

There has also been a significant decline in income mobility. What this means is that if you're born poor, you're more likely to stay poor. The proportion of people living below the poverty line has increased by 10 per cent under this government—that's 200,000 more Australians living in poverty. Meanwhile, the average Australian is spending 23 per cent more time travelling to work than they were in 2002.

The government's answers to these problems are to give the big end of town a tax cut; to freeze infrastructure spending or delay infrastructure spending, when it is needed now; to cut spending on TAFE; and to cut spending on universities. Prime Minister, if it is taking Australians longer to get to work, if they're spending a longer time at work and if they're taking less money home, how on earth can you say that the economy is strong for ordinary, everyday Australians?

Australian Greens

Mr THOMPSON (Herbert) (13:58): As I rise today, being a new member of parliament, I reflect and say, 'I may not agree with everyone and what everyone says.' That became apparent today. Jonathan Sri, a Brisbane councillor and Greens politician, is using his ratepayer funded office to host strategy meetings for lawbreaking and rebellion, and has been slammed by veterans as 'despicable' for comparing their disruptive protests to diggers marching on Anzac Day.

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr THOMPSON: I hear a lot of chatter from the other side. I'm happy to name your name in Hansard if you think that Greens activism is the same as veterans marching on Anzac Day.

An opposition member interjecting—

Mr THOMPSON: Do you? Yes, sliding down in your chair! It's hard to find some leadership on that side of the House. I can tell you now that it's an absolute shame. I haven't seen anyone on that side condemn these comments. Neither has the member for Melbourne; he hasn't come out. He's backing his Greens activism mates over the diggers. It is absolutely disgusting that this has happened, and what are they protesting against? The resource sector again. They are anti coal, anti resource sector and anti growth. It is absolutely embarrassing that these people sitting across from us support the Greens activism.

The SPEAKER: It being 2 pm, in accordance with standing order 43, the time for members’ statements has concluded.
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Medicare: Magnetic Resonance Imaging Licences

Mr BOWEN (McMahon) (14:00): My question is to the Minister for Health. Can the minister confirm that the government has granted an MRI Medicare licence to Sound Radiology in Parkside, Adelaide while overlooking 443 other applications?

Mr HUNT (Flinders—Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Cabinet) (14:00): I'm delighted to receive a question from the member for McMahon.

I can confirm that the government has granted 53 MRI licences, and 43 have already commenced. This one is one of those 53. It was done through an independent process where applications were called for and assessed by the department.

Very interestingly, 53 were announced and 43 have already commenced. The two of which have not yet commenced include Kalgoorlie in Western Australia, where we're awaiting upon the Western Australian government to purchase and deliver the machine which is required, and we are also waiting in Queensland for the Queensland government in relation to one of their own hospitals to deliver and to do that. That is the situation. There are 53 announced and 43 already underway, and we are waiting on the governments of Queensland and Western Australia as exemplars to deliver the final part.

Stirling Electorate: Community Events

Mr CONNELLY (Stirling) (14:01): My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister update the House on how the Morrison government is demonstrating that it is on the side of our local communities, including in my electorate of Stirling?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:01): I thank the member for Stirling for his question, and I commend him on his first speech to this chamber yesterday. As I sat and listened to that speech I was so impressed by his commitment to service, and that's what's brought him into this place. He has served our country in uniform and now he is serving it in this place. He brings that culture of service leadership to this parliament, and I commend him for doing so.

He is one of all members of this House who have the opportunity to provide support to their local communities through the various programs that our government has introduced to provide direct support. There are projects that this government has brought in through the congestion-busting program and through two successive budgets, which means improvements in Balga, at Osborne Park in Hamersley in the member's electorate will see people get home sooner and safer.

On top of that, we have the Building Stronger Communities Grants Program which is accessible to all members in this place, and has been, in particular, supporting the work of surf lifesaving clubs all around the country which I know the member is a keen supporter of. Veterans in our communities are being supported at a local level with the establishment of our Veterans' Wellbeing Centres, whether it's in Adelaide, Townsville or many other locations around the country.

The Accelerating Commercialisation grant means that GET Tracker, a mining equipment and service company in the member's electorate, has benefited from a million dollar grant to support mining technology and ensure these businesses can get ahead, go ahead and employ more Australians. The $1.25 billion program for local community health and hospital projects is also ensuring that those local communities are being supported.

On top of that, we have the $30.2 million Local Schools Community Fund: $200,000 per electorate that enables schools in our communities, public and independent, to get access to additional support through the hard work of their local members, in touch with their communities, and to get access to those programs to deliver real meaningful change on the ground.

And, on top of that, there's the Communities Environment Program that the Minister for the Environment spoke of the other day in this place. It's a $150,000 program, which is available in each electorate, for every single member of this House to reward and support practical environmental action dealing with local waterways, local parks and local beaches.

This is a government that is absolutely focused on the needs of local communities and partnering with those local communities to deliver on the projects which they say are important to them because, on this side of the House, we understand that government is about the people of Australia. It's not about political parties and it's not about individuals; it is about the people who sent us here to do this job. They have sent the member for Stirling here to do this job. He's going to do an outstanding job, as all of our members will be able to do through these important community based programs.
DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER (14:05): I’d like to inform the House that we have present in the gallery this afternoon the Hon. Vincent Tarzia, who is the Speaker of the South Australian House of Assembly and a friend and colleague of mine. Welcome to the House of Representatives.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Medicare: Magnetic Resonance Imaging Licences

Mr BOWEN (McMahon) (14:05): My question is to the Minister for Health. Can the minister confirm that Sound Radiology in Adelaide is situated within five kilometres of nine other MRI machines with existing MRI Medicare licences?

Mr HUNT (Flinders—Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Cabinet) (14:05): I’m very happy to check the details and return on that. But let me run through the criteria for this process, because I understand that the ALP ran a parallel process but there was no identification of the grounds, there was no identification of the basis for applications and there was no identification of a formal process.

In particular, I can indicate that, on 4 February 2019, the government announced further investment in the MRI program, bringing the total of MRI units to receive Medicare eligibility to over 50. In particular, on 23 September 2018, the government announced an invitation to apply for an ITA process, commencing on 24 September 2018, to allocate Medicare eligibility to up to 20 additional MRI units comprising a mix of fully eligible units and upgrades of existing partial units in metropolitan and regional areas. The closing time for lodging applications was 2 September 2018.

In terms of the streams to which applications were available, they included the upgrade of partially eligible MRI equipment to full Medicare eligibility, with a current deed within the department for partial Medicare eligibility for the MRI unit to which the application relates. Stream 2 is full Medicare eligibility for MRI equipment applicants who have an operational MRI unit at the practice or will have an operational MRI unit at the location by 31 December 2020. The grounds and conditions for application assessment are set out in those terms, and that's the process that's been followed.

Economy

Dr MARTIN (Reid) (14:07): My question is to the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer outline to the House how a strong economy is delivering real benefits for all Australians, including in my electorate of Reid? Are there any alternative policies that could put this at risk?

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong—The Treasurer) (14:07): I thank the member for Reid for her question and acknowledge her background as a psychologist helping others and as a small business owner. It’s that expertise and that experience that she'll be bringing to this place.

I can inform the House that the fundamentals of the Australian economy are sound and that the Reserve Bank governor last week made a speech in which he said: ‘The underlying foundations of the Australian economy are strong.’ That is what the Reserve Bank governor has said. And I can tell you what makes the Australian economy stronger, and that is the tax cuts that we have provided to the Australian people. I’ll tell you what makes the Australian economy weaker, and that’s the $387 billion of higher taxes that are still on the books of the Labor Party.

The Australian economy is in its 28th consecutive year of economic growth. We have an AAA credit rating from the three leading credit rating agencies, one of only 10 countries in the world to do so. As a government, we have helped create the conditions where 1.4 million new jobs have been created since we've come to government. Workforce participation is now at a record high. There are more women in the workforce today than at any previous time. In fact, the gender pay gap has narrowed. There are more young people in the workforce than ever before. And we will be delivering the first budget surplus in more than a decade—paying back Labor's debt. We’ve also had the longest consecutive run of months of trade surpluses since the 1970s.

A strong economy is not an end in itself; rather, it helps families get ahead, it helps small businesses grow and it helps seniors be confident about their retirement. For example, in Reid, there are going to be 26,000 small businesses that will be able to access our extended instant asset write-off. There will be more than 86,000 taxpayers in Reid that will get a tax cut, including 32,000 who will get the full $1,080. We are spending record amounts on schools, hospitals, aged care and—as announced in the budget—80,000 new apprentices. On this side
of the House, we stand for more jobs. On this side of the House, we stand for lower taxes. On that side of the House, those opposite stand for $387 billion of higher taxes and a lower standard of living for all Australians.

**Medicare: Magnetic Resonance Imaging Licences**

Mr BOWEN (McMahon) (14:10): My question is to the Minister for Health. Can the minister confirm that the Department of Health has advised Senate estimates: 'Successful applications were decided by the government'. Can the minister also confirm the CEO of Sound Radiology is also the vice-president of the South Australian branch of the Liberal Party?

*Opposition members interjecting—*

The SPEAKER: Members on my left. Members on my left.

Mr Husic interjecting—

The SPEAKER: I'm very happy to solve the problem another way, Member for Chifley. The Minister for Health has the call.

Mr HUNT (Flinders—Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Cabinet) (14:11): In relation to the latter argument, I can't confirm—that matter is not known to me and, to the best of my knowledge, has never been known to me. In relation to the former, we received submissions from the department and, as is the case with submissions—they are signed off in the ministerial office. I would note—

*An opposition member interjecting—*

Mr HUNT: Yes, exactly, by the minister. That is the role which comes with it. I would note that, in relation to fully eligible MRI units per 100,000 population, in the Adelaide region—and indeed in the electorate of Adelaide, an opposition electorate—the rate of MRIs per 100,000 people is 0.7. That is significantly lower than the rate in south-east Melbourne, Perth South, East Melbourne with 0.5; the Australian Capital Territory with 0.5; Western Sydney with 0.5; Brisbane South with 0.5; Nepean, Blue Mountains with 0.5. In country South Australia it is 0.6; Brisbane North 0.6; central and eastern Sydney 0.6; Hunter, New England and Central Coast 0.6. These things are determined on a basis of need. That sets out the fact that that area is significantly lower in MRI concentration than all of those other regions of Australia.

**Tasmania: Housing Affordability**

Mr WILKIE (Clakr) (14:13): My question is to the Minister for Housing. Minister, the housing roundtable held recently in Hobart was the second in 12 months. There was lots of talk but too little achieved—especially to provide crisis accommodation for hundreds of Tasmanians sleeping rough. While this matter is mainly a state responsibility, there are obvious opportunities for federal assistance. So I ask you three questions: firstly, what's the government doing to prioritise National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation funding for Tasmania? Secondly, has the government progressed its thinking regarding Tasmania's housing debt and the possibility of waiving the debt, or at least the crippling interest bill? Thirdly, when will the government draft a national affordable housing plan to boost social housing supply?

Mr SUKKAR (Deakin—Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Housing) (14:13): I thank the member for Clark for his question. I know that the member for Clark, like me, would welcome the state government announcement today for an additional $5 million for crisis accommodation in Hobart. Can I thank the member for Clark for making time to meet with me when I was in Hobart, and I appreciate his advocacy.

One of the first things I did as Minister for Housing was attend the Hobart homelessness forum back in June. It's clear that in Hobart there's a significant gap between the approval of new dwellings and the increasing population, which is putting pressure across the housing spectrum.

Following the forum, as I said publicly, I immediately asked the CEO of the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation to meet with the Tasmanian Minister for Housing, Roger Jaensch, in order to make sure Tasmania was prioritised in the work of the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation, which is essentially a body set up by this government to drive additional social and affordable housing. I'm told that that meeting went very well and NHFIC is working with the Tasmanian government on a range of projects in and around Hobart and Tasmania more broadly. I also thank the member for Braddon and Bass, who, similar to the member for Clark, are very strong advocates for Tasmania.

At that forum, yes we did speak about the Tasmanian housing debt; that was a topic of conversation. Similarly, we spoke about the Hobart City Deal, which was announced by this government. Again, I thank the member for Clark for his advocacy here. The Hobart City Deal is a $30 million boost to social and affordable housing in and around Tasmania. I was very pleased on that trip to visit CatholicCare, which is receiving $8 million under the
Hobart City Deal to construct 55 affordable units. There is also $8 million going to Community Housing Ltd, $8 million to Housing Choices Ltd and $6 million to the Supported Affordable Accommodation Trust.

The member for Clark also asked about a national plan. It wasn't that long ago that we—the Prime Minister was Treasurer and I was his assistant—renegotiated the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement, which guarantees funding, including homelessness funding. Through the agreement with Tasmania, we are already contributing $33.7 million, of which $3 million is permanent whereas it wasn't previously, and that is solely dedicated to homelessness. In addition, across the country the coalition has announced a $78 million commitment to support women and children escaping domestic violence, for which I know there are projects underway in Tasmania already, and this includes $60 million to build emergency accommodation.

So there a range of measures. I thank the member for Clark for his work in this area. We are focused on Tasmania, and Hobart more specifically, as we are throughout the country on these projects.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER (14:17): I inform the House that we have present in the gallery this afternoon former senator Michael Baume. On behalf the House, I extend a very warm welcome to you. It is good to see you back, particularly in the House of Representatives. I also inform the House that we have present in the gallery the Honourable Natasha Fyles, Attorney-General and minister in the Northern Territory government. I welcome you as well.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Regional Development

Dr GILLESPIE (Lyne) (14:17): My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development. Would the Deputy Prime Minister please update the House on the Liberal-National government's continued commitment to delivering for local communities through the Building Better Regions Fund?

Mr McCORMACK (Riverina—Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development and Leader of The Nationals) (14:18): I thank the member for Lyne for this question. The key word in his question was 'local'. All politics is local, as it should be. And we have been addressing local issues and providing resources and infrastructure, as local solutions for local people at a local level, since coming to government in 2013. The member for Lyne knows the importance of being local and being true to your local constituents—and he certainly is that.

Our local communities are the heart and soul of this great nation. The Liberals and the Nationals are committed to building stronger local communities—in particular, regional communities right across the nation. That's why, in government, we established the Building Better Regions Fund. It is an $841.6 million investment, an $841.6 million program, creating jobs, driving economic growth and building the infrastructure that Australians, particularly in local communities such as the member for Lyne represents, need, want, deserve, expect and demand—projects such as the Kew Main Street upgrade on the Mid North Coast in the member for Lyne's electorate. We're investing $800,000 to beautify the Main Street, the CBD there in Kew, making it a more attractive place to visit. If you make these places better places to visit, people will come, particularly in times of drought. We are also adding more car parking spaces for locals to go about their daily business. Peter Newman, from the Kew Business Group—I know that the member for Lyne knows him well—said this funding is 'a great outcome'. He said: 'Kew is a small village but everyone has a positive outlook and this funding will make a significant difference.' Peter Newman knows it, the member for Lyne knows it and everyone on this side of the House knows it.

I am pleased to announce that round 4 of the Building Better Regions Fund will open this year. I invite all regional members from all sides of parliament to take part in that. I am sure that applications will come in thick and fast.

There is another person who understands the importance of 'local'. Those opposite should know him—it's former New South Wales Labor Premier Morris Iemma, who headed that great state from 2005 to 2008. I've got a bit of time for Morris Iemma. After the election he was talking about the sitting Liberal MP David Coleman, and Chris Gambian, the Labor candidate, accused David Coleman of being the 'minister for roundabouts'. I would take that as a compliment if I were the member for Banks! Morris Iemma said:

While the Gambian Army of keyboard warriors from … Newtown and Marrickville sat around quaffing their Columbian bean piccolos, Coleman was out building from the grassroots …
While our transients guffawed at Coleman for attending to local traffic problems and getting them fixed with roundabouts, the locals were expressing their appreciation with a massive increase in vote. That is what you get when you look after the local regions. There are 537 councils across Australia getting a 25 per cent increase in Roads to Recovery funding. Local decisions made at a local level—*(Time expired)*

**Economy**

Mr **ALBANESE** (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (14:21): My question is addressed to the Treasurer. Does the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey, released today, show Australians are better or worse off than in 2013?

Mr **FRYDENBERG** (Kooyong—The Treasurer) (14:21): They're certainly better off since 2013. The HILDA Survey the member refers to was conducted to December 2017. Since then, the unemployment rate has come down from 5.6 per cent to 5.2 per cent. The wage price index has increased from 2.1 per cent to 2.3 per cent. Real wages have increased, the participation rate has increased and the ABS household income and wealth survey, released earlier this month, which takes into account the full 2017-18 year, shows that real median household disposable incomes have increased by over $2,000 per year compared to 2007-08.

The other point about the HILDA Survey is that, when it comes to the poverty line, it says it has 'fluctuated over time, but the broad trend has been downwards'. This is especially true since 2007, when 12.4 per cent of the population was in relative poverty. By 2016, the proportion in poverty had fallen to 9.6 per cent. The bottom line is that this government, this side of the House, has been responsible for helping to create the conditions where more than 1.4 million new jobs have been created. Lower taxes have ensured that Australians can earn more and keep more of what they earn.

I will tell you what will lead to worse outcomes for the Australian people, lower household incomes and a lower standard of living, and that's $387 billion of higher taxes. Those higher taxes on retirees, on superannuants, on workers, on small-business owners and on family business owners will lead to lower disposable income and a lower standard of living.

Mr **FRYDENBERG** interjecting

Mr **FRYDENBERG** will cease interjecting!

Mr **FRYDENBERG** interjecting

Mr **FRYDENBERG** interjecting

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The **SPEAKER**: Can I point out to members on both sides that I'm always very happy to get advice, but I haven't given anyone the call yet. Out there in voter land they're just watching a couple of mouths move. You're on mute. I might just sit here for a minute or two—what do you think? I call the Leader of the Opposition on a point of order.

Mr **ALBANESE**: If the Treasurer wants to give me leave to make a statement about Labor's agenda, I'm happy to do so.

Mr **FRYDENBERG**: We were making the obvious point that those on that side of the House stand for $387 billion of higher taxes. Those higher taxes on retirees, on superannuants, on workers, on small-business owners and on family business owners will lead to lower disposable income and a lower standard of living.

The **SPEAKER**: Is the Leader of the Opposition seeking to table a document?

Mrs **McINTOSH** (Lindsay) (14:25): My question is to the Minister for the Environment. Will the minister update the House on how the Morrison government is empowering communities to take action in their local environments with programs such as the Environment Restoration Fund, including in my electorate of Lindsay?
Ms LEY (Farrer—Minister for the Environment) (14:26): I thank the member for Lindsay for her question, and I congratulate her on her outstanding start in the 46th Parliament. She was in my office in week 1, in her quiet determined way, making sure that I knew of all the environment projects that she had spent the last few months fighting for in Lindsay.

As part of our plan for a cleaner environment, we launched the Communities Environment Program this week. It's supporting grassroots organisations working on small projects that make a big difference. In fact there's an information session after question time for all members of the House. They are projects up to $20,000 that you can work with your local communities to deliver.

Today I want to highlight another of our key election commitments: the Environment Restoration Fund. This is a $100 million fund that is designed to support major environmental projects that have lasting conservation benefits. It's designed around three key areas: cleaning up and protecting our coasts, waterways and oceans; protecting threatened species and migratory habitats, particularly of shore birds; and increasing recycling and reducing waste.

These projects can be seen across Australia. There has been $6 million allocated to South East Queensland and northern New South Wales to save our koalas and invest in wildlife rescue and wildlife hospitals; I know that's of great interest to the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology. In Victoria—the member for Higgins will be very interested in this—we are cleaning up the Yarra, improving the health of the lower reaches of Melbourne's Yarra River and Port Phillip Bay, and working to pick up rubbish and clean up our river for all of our community. In Western Australia the member for Swan has been in my office talking about a partnership that involves improving the Swan-Canning estuary, reed management and community education—getting everyone involved from schoolkids on. Also in Western Australia we are protecting the black cockatoos by providing $1 million to support the nesting habitat for the black cockatoos.

I want to thank and congratulate the member for Lindsay for her support for her community. She knows that the Nepean River is the heart of Lindsay. Every weekend hundreds of families come to this river. With the funding she has secured, volunteers will be able to work hard at repairing the vegetation and cleaning out weeds.

Whether we are talking about the smaller Communities Environment Program or the larger Environment Restoration Fund, this is all about partnerships. It's not about going through advocates or agencies; it's about going through the people who actually do the work on the ground. This government is on the side of Australians caring for their environment in their communities.

Economy

Dr CHALMERS (Rankin) (14:29): My question is to the Treasurer. When today's median household incomes data proves that Australians are going backwards, why is this government always banging on about Labor instead of coming up with an economic policy to increase wages and living standards?

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong—The Treasurer) (14:29): We're not going to be lectured to by Sir Tax-a-lot over there. He's quite pleased with and proud of Labor's housing tax and retirees tax—the co-architect, with the member for McMahon over there, of the $387 billion, and the member for Maribyrnong will never forgive them.

Dr Chalmers interjecting—

Mr FRYDENBERG: He's very chirpy now. Sir Tax-a-lot is up and about. The reality is in this quote from the HILDA survey report you just cited today:

… employment picked up in 2017, particularly for women, who saw their employment rate rise from 69.5% in 2016 to 71.4% in 2017—

the highest it has been in the history of the survey. We on this side of the House are in favour of 1.4 million new jobs, we on this side of the House are in favour of lower taxes, we on this side of the House are in favour of $100 billion of new infrastructure spending, we on this side of the House are in favour of 80,000 new apprentices and we on this side of the House are in favour of record spending on schools, hospitals and aged care but we on this side of the House are not in favour of Labor's $387 billion of higher taxes.

Schools

Mr THOMPSON (Herbert) (14:31): My question is to the Minister for Education. Will the minister please update the House on how the Morrison government is supporting the unique needs of local school communities around the country, including in my electorate of Herbert?

Mr TEHAN (Wannon—Minister for Education) (14:31): I thank the member for Herbert for his question. I saw firsthand the passion he has for the schools in his local community after the floods that occurred in Townsville. I had the pleasure of visiting the member for Herbert after those floods. He introduced me to principals, to teachers and to parents whose schools had been impacted by those floods and he strongly advocated
on behalf of those schools. Last month I had the pleasure to join him again where we were able to provide $4 million for schools in North Queensland that had been impacted by floods and droughts. That will benefit 600 students at those schools. Those schools had waived fees. They'd given books to students who'd had their books impacted by the floods and it was all because of the advocacy by the member for Herbert. He did an outstanding job and it was clear whose side he was on when it came to standing up for the schools in his local community.

I say the same goes for the Morrison government: $310 billion is our record investment in Catholic, independent and state schools. That's a 62 per cent increase per student in those Catholic, independent and government schools over the next decade. But there's more: $30.2 million for the Local Schools Community Fund. That will mean every member of parliament in the House of Representatives will get allocated $200,000 per electorate. What you can do is invite all the schools in your electorate to apply for small-scale projects at their school. The opposition might mock the idea of the Local Schools Community Fund but we on this side know how incredibly important those small-scale projects can be. They can strengthen those local school communities. We on this side are on the side of those local school communities. That's why the Morrison government announced that $30.2 million in the budget. I say to everyone: engage with your state schools, with your Catholic schools and with your independent schools. Get behind this Local Schools Community Fund because it will help strengthen local schools in your communities. That's what we on this side want to see occur right across this nation.

Pensions and Benefits

Mr AlbaneSE (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (14:34): My question is addressed to the Minister for Government Services. Have any victims of the Townsville flood received debt notices under the government's robo-debt program?

Mr Robert (Fadden—Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme and Minister for Government Services) (14:35): Let me thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question, and let me say, at present, under the income compliance program, no victims in the four postcodes around Townsville have received a debt notice.

Infrastructure

Mr AndrewS (Menzies) (14:35): I ask the Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure if he could update the House on the $100 billion urban congestion fighting infrastructure fund, and in particular the projects in my electorate of Menzies and the great state of Victoria.

Mr Tudge (Aston—Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure) (14:35): I thank the member for Menzies for his question and for his strong advocacy of urban infrastructure projects in his electorate and across the great city of Melbourne. Indeed, his electorate of Menzies, like so many other areas across Australia, is benefitting from our $100 billion infrastructure program. They are large-scale projects as well as localised projects, all with the key aim of busting congestion, getting people home sooner and safer and supporting the economy.

The biggest single project, which is going on through the member for Menzies' electorate, is the massive North East Link. That's a project which would connect the M80 down to the Eastern Freeway and finally create a complete ring road around Melbourne. It is an incredible project which we have $1.8 billion committed towards. This project would actually save a commuter 30 minutes on their journey from the M80 down to the Eastern Freeway. It would take 15,000 trucks off the suburban streets in the member for Menzies's and the member for Jagajaga's electorates. Eleven thousand cars would be removed from the very busy Rosanna Drive, and 10,000 jobs would be created in the process. This is real congestion-busting stuff.

We also have localised projects in the member for Menzies' electorate as well, through our $4 billion Urban Congestion Fund, targeting those real local congestion pin points and traffic headaches. They include, for example, $10 million for upgrades to Fitzsimons Lane in Templestowe and Eltham. I know the member for Menzies says that this particular area is possibly biggest congestion headache in his electorate, and that people can wait up to 10 or 15 minutes to travel along that journey. This will fix that problem for them. On top of this, we are also improving 17 school pick-up and drop-off points in the Nillumbik area, where the winding roads often make drop-off points dangerous. We also have practical light upgrades to Tram Road in Doncaster, which will make this busy road safer, particularly for the seniors in the Applewood retirement village.

These are very practical local projects making a difference to residents' lives in the member of Menzies' electorate, right across Melbourne and, indeed, Australia. We are repeating this across the country. We have, in fact, got 160 major projects going on right now across the nation—in Melbourne and elsewhere—and we have more to do, with 120 in the planning process. With a huge $100 billion infrastructure program, we are on the side of people who want to get home sooner and safer and bust congestion. (Time expired)
Pensions and Benefits

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong) (14:38): My question is to the Minister for Government Services. Minister, how many debt notices issued under the government's robo-debt program have turned out to be wrong?

Mr ROBERT (Fadden—Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme and Minister for Government Services) (14:39): I thank the shadow minister for his question. As you know, under the income compliance checking process, which is now a checking and updating past income process, we have, since 1 July 2015, recovered $1.9 billion.

Ms Burney interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Barton will cease interjecting.

Mr ROBERT: Of the 800,000 income compliance reviews since 1 July 2016 that have been finalised, 80 per cent have resulted in a debt being collected. To give some focus to that, right now across Australia, as at 30 June 2019, there are 1.54 million outstanding social welfare debts with a value of just shy of $5 billion.

This government, like all governments, has a lawful responsibility to collect where citizens have mismatched what they said they'd earned versus what, through their tax return, they've been shown to earn. That mutual obligation is something that has been around for decades and decades. Governments of all persuasions over the last 20-plus years have sought to recover debts that have arisen because citizens have put forward an assessment of their income and, when their tax return came through, that was different. That difference has to be accounted for. That's the mutual obligation citizens have with their government. I say to all citizens who are receiving income support or indeed family assistance payments: regularly update the assessment of your income through the myGov application, through a telephone service or through a service centre, because, when your tax return is returned, they will be matched and checked and, if there is any discrepancy at all, we have a legal obligation to contact the citizen concerned and seek to explain the deficit.

This has been a process governments have followed for well over 20 years—not just this government but also many members of the front bench over there have been part of that. From 2010, the member for McMahon was the minister for DHS. That member followed this process. Following the member for McMahon was the member for Sydney. The member for Sydney also followed that process. Following the member for Sydney was the member for Gorton. He also followed that process, as will subsequent members. We seek to do it compassionately and sensitively, but there is a lawful requirement to ensure the right people get the right funds at the right time.

Ms Burney interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Barton will cease interjecting and she is warned.

Veterans: Health and Wellbeing

Ms FLINT (Boothby—Government Whip) (14:42): My question is to the Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel. Will the minister advise the House on the progress of the Morrison government's commitment to improve the mental health and wellbeing of our veterans and their families? Will the minister advise the House of the importance of these initiatives, particularly in the electorate of Boothby?

Mr CHESTER (Gippsland—Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel and Deputy Leader of the House) (14:42): I thank the member for Boothby for her question and also for her strong advocacy on behalf of the veterans not just in her own electorate of Boothby but right throughout South Australia and across Australia, particularly her focus on the revitalisation of the general hospital at Daw Park and the work that's been going on there.

I would like to congratulate the Morrison-McCormack government for the work it's doing in partnership with the South Australian state government to support an increase in health and aged-care services in the precinct. Our government is committed to putting veterans and their families first. This year's budget included $11.5 billion to support our veterans and our families across the nation. I must say that Australians have every right to be proud of the way our government and our community, in a bipartisan way, support our veterans and their families across the nation.

I want to stress that service in the Australian Defence Force, by and large, for the majority of individuals, is enormously positive. They learn great skills, problem-solving techniques, leadership and teamwork. So it's good for the individual. It's certainly good when those individuals return to their community and apply those skills in other walks of life and other aspects of their community activity. So it is good for the individual, good for the community and is obviously in the national security interest.

Many of the veterans that I meet—and some of them in this place—describe their service in the Australian Defence Force as the best years of their life. But there are some who are physically injured, some are wounded...
and some bear mental health scars. It is important that the government focuses on mental health wellbeing but also on suicide prevention. I'm sure that those opposite will join me in saying the only acceptable number of veteran suicides is zero, and we are working to achieve that. We announced during the election campaign six new veterans wellbeing centres, including in the member for Boothby's seat, and I look forward to seeing those roll out across the nation in the months and years ahead.

But I would say that I have a challenge today for those opposite and for those on this side of the House as well. We need to act in a very bipartisan way to dispel the myth that all our veterans are somehow broken, busted or bad. We need to work together on this national challenge, and I encourage those opposite to join me in that regard. If we want to see veterans gainfully employed in the community and we want businesses to understand that hiring a veteran is good for your business, we have to sell the positive story of military service across our nation. At the same time, though, we need to make sure that we provide services in a timely way, when our veterans need them.

So my message today to those veterans who may be listening or their families or their support people is: help is available. There is free mental health care available through the Open Arms counselling service, and I encourage those who may need help themselves or know of someone who needs help to please contact Open Arms on 1800011046. Finally, can I say on behalf of the parliament to all those who've served and all those who continue to serve today: thank you for your service.

Pensions and Benefits

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong) (14:46): My question is to the Minister for Government Services. Last night he told the ABC:

Bank records, of course, are always available for seven years and the department won't be going back after seven years in terms of recovering that …

Does the minister stand by that statement?

Mr ROBERT (Fadden—Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme and Minister for Government Services) (14:46): I thank the member for his question. I do stand by that statement. As at today, for the Department of Human Services, under the income compliance, all forward letters that will be going to people will be starting at the 2013-14 financial year. There may well be some outstanding notices from previous financial years, but forward letters going out to ask about a discrepancy will be from the 2013-14 financial year onwards.

Drug and Alcohol Services

Mr PEARCE (Braddon) (14:47): My question is to the Minister for Health. Will the minister inform the House how the Morrison government is supporting and protecting families, including those in my electorate of Braddon, through providing support for drug and alcohol services?

Mr HUNT (Flinders—Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Cabinet) (14:47): I want to thank the member for Braddon, who has been, along with many members in this House on all sides, a great advocate for drug and alcohol services. We know that the challenge for families and people of all ages can be catastrophic. It can be opioids, it can be amphetamines, it can be alcohol or it can be any number of different substances which can cause catastrophic physical outcomes and, of course, tragic mental health outcomes. Frequently, and tragically, these substance abuse cases are associated not just with economic disadvantage and impact but also with suicidality and, in too many cases, suicide or overdose.

I'm delighted that we were able to assist City Mission in the member for Braddon's electorate with $6.3 million for drug and alcohol support. This will work throughout the north-west but in particular with 10 beds. It's part of an initiative that is reaching right around Australia, with over $780 million that is going into this work. We were also able to support a project which has very strong bipartisan support in this chamber, the Glen for Women, a centre for Indigenous women. It's in the electorate of Dobell. It has the support of the member for Dobell. It had the very strong advocacy of the member for Robertson but it also had the support of the member for Barton, and I thank her for her advice. This, of course, followed circumstances which were deeply powerful and important to her.

These are projects across the country, across electorates and across all political divides. We've been able to do work in the electorate of Gilmore with the Triple Care Farm. This proposal has had the support of all sides and, under the Community Health and Hospitals Program, it will allow not just young people but people of all ages to receive support for rehabilitation and recovery from drug and alcohol challenges.

With the member for Dawson, I visited Ozcare in Mackay. Whilst we were there we met people who were on the road to recovery. Of all the different people I have met at facilities, the testimonials given on the personal care and the importance of residential rehabilitation and the way in which we have subsequently been able to support Ozcare were perhaps the most arresting I have received. The stories of people who believed that they had had no
hope until they were given this residential care and residential support really struck a profound chord. It helped set up this national program. I want to thank all of those workers, many of whom are volunteers and work for a modest amount, and say that we are with them and the families in their work to support Australians who have suffered from drug and alcohol addiction. And I want to thank members on both sides of this House for their support in advancing these programs.

**Pensions and Benefits**

Dr MIKE KELLY (Eden-Monaro) (14:50): My question is to the Minister for Government Services. I refer to the minister's previous answer. Can the minister then explain why 79-year-old widowed pensioner Norm Austwick from Mogareeka in my electorate was sent a Centrelink robo-debt letter this month claiming a debt from 21 years ago?

Mr ROBERT (Fadden—Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme and Minister for Government Services) (14:51): Let me thank the member for his question. In relation to the specific case he mentioned, my understanding is the gentleman is a former public servant who was incorrectly sent a letter dealing with an income stream issue, not an income compliance issue—income stream which deals with pensions. The department recognised the error and have apologised profusely, including in the media.

**Industry**

Dr ALLEN (Higgins) (14:51): My question is to the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology. Will the minister update the House on how the Morrison government is backing both traditional and emerging industries through localised industry growth programs?

Mrs ANDREWS (McPherson—Minister for Industry, Science and Technology) (14:51): I thank the member for her question, and I congratulate her on her outstanding first speech to the parliament. We see opportunities for growth in both the traditional industries, such as manufacturing, agriculture and mining; and emerging sectors, which includes the space industry, additive manufacturing and, of course, tech such as AI and quantum computing.

We have a number of programs that are specifically designed to support and assist small and medium innovative businesses. One of those programs is the Entrepreneurs' Program. We've already invested $483 million, and we're investing a further $452 million into that program. Through that program alone we've supported 12,000 businesses, increased turnover in these businesses by a billion dollars and boosted exports by $90 million. This isn't a handout from government; this is matched funding.

In the member's electorate of Higgins there are 31 businesses that have been directly assisted through the Entrepreneurs' Program, and one great example is Agersens, which is based in Camberwell. It's a local business that's created a product to help our farmers in regional Australia. We know how hard farmers work, and we know how tough it is for them at the moment. What Agersens has done is they have developed an intelligent neckband. It's GPS enabled and solar powered, and what it does is it trains animals to stay within a virtual boundary. To develop this product they worked with the CSIRO, and that's exactly what this government is doing—encouraging our small businesses and our medium enterprises to engage with our researchers so that they can get the opportunity to look for new systems, new procedures, new materials and new ways of undertaking the work that they're doing. But in the case of Agersens, it's new technology that is going to grow a local business and also support our farmers.

We backed Agersens right at the beginning with two accelerated commercialisation grants of about $890,000. This enabled them to leverage that support and to raise their own capital of $14.75 million, and to launch their product at Beef Australia last year. Their founder has said that they would not be here today without the Accelerating Commercialisation Grant. He went on to say how helpful it was in providing important validation to their suppliers and other partners.

We're backing local ingenuity and we're backing local businesses.

**Pensions and Benefits**

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong) (14:55): My question is to the Minister for Government Services. In May, Anastasia McCardel, the mother of Bruce McCardel, who was in receipt of a disability pension until he died in November last year, received a call from a Centrelink officer and was told that her son Bruce owed a debt of $6,700. Ms McCardel said:

I wanted to know how they thought Bruce would have worked his way through his paperwork when he actually was dead. What advice can the minister give Ms McCardel?
Mr ROBERT (Fadden—Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme and Minister for Government Services) (14:55): Let me first of all pass on my sincere condolences to Ms McCardel. These things are very difficult for her.

In many cases when the department raises a debt against someone who is deceased and they knowingly know about it, if the debt is large enough they'll seek to recover it through the trustee of the estate. In the vast majority of times, compassion will step in and the debt will be wiped. In this particular case, because of the size of the debt being both uneconomical to recover as well as the length of time the department should simply have waived the debt. They didn't. My department was wrong and I apologise for it.

Pensions and Benefits

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (14:56): My question is addressed to the Minister for Government Services. When will the government finally admit that its robo-debt experiment has failed?

Mr ROBERT (Fadden—Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme and Minister for Government Services) (14:56): Let me thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. As I stated previously, the government has a lawful requirement to recover debts that Australians owe. For the benefit of the House, debts are raised either on income support—there are approximately 13 income support payments, and income compliance goes across eight of them—and then there are family benefit debts that also arise. Together, those debts equal $4.99 million.

To give the House an idea: with family tax benefit debts there are 373,712 outstanding at $1.3 billion. When it comes to Newstart there are 408,895 debts equalling $1.121 billion. Does the Leader of the Opposition seriously want the government to wipe $1.121 billion from 408,000 debts because the member doesn't believe in income compliance? Does the Leader of the Opposition really expect this House to believe that the member for McMahon, who held this—

Mr Brian Mitchell interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Can the member just pause for a second. I have warned the member for Lyons a number of times. He can leave under 94(a).

The member for Lyons then left the chamber.

Mr ROBERT: Does the Leader of the Opposition truly expect this House to believe that it was all right for the member for McMahon, when he was the minister for DHS, to actually seek to raise debts under income compliance but it's not okay for this side of the House? Does the Leader of the Opposition really believe that it was fine for the member for Sydney, under income compliance, to raise debts but somehow it's not appropriate for this side of the House? Does the Leader of the Opposition seriously believe that it's fine for the member for Gorton to collect income compliance but it's not okay for this side of the House? Does the Leader of the Opposition seriously believe that going to an election with $387 billion worth of new taxes but not following the law in income compliance is the way to govern? If that's what the Leader of the Opposition believes, then our government and his opposition are vastly at odds.

Migration

Ms LIU (Chisholm) (14:59): My question is to the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs. Will the minister update the House on how the Morrison government is on the side of multicultural communities? And is the minister aware of any future opportunities to support hardworking migrant communities?

Mr COLEMAN (Banks—Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs) (14:59): I want to thank the member for her question and to honour her extraordinary Australian story. We are so pleased to have her in this place. She's standing up for the people of Chisholm and she's demonstrating that, in this nation, for people who work hard, anything is possible.

We are the greatest migrant nation in the world. Migrant success stories define our nation. The small-business person who takes a chance, invests and employs dozens of Australians; the one in three small businesses in Australia started by a migrant; the professional who uses their skills to help grow our economy; the religious leader who provides spiritual guidance to their community; the married couple who work hard, make extraordinary sacrifices and commit to the nation so that the next generation of their families might have opportunities that weren't available to them—these are the stories of Australia, in every town and suburb. And this government will back those migrant communities every step of the way.

In the electorate of Chisholm, there are two important programs that the government is supporting for our Fostering Integration Grants program. We're providing $50,000 to Chinese community social services for their Together as One program. We're providing $45,000 to the Migrant Information Centre of eastern Melbourne to
support refugee families to integrate into the broader community. More opportunities to apply for grants under the program are coming up later this year.

Outside of Chisholm, there is so much more going on. The Prime Minister announced earlier this year that we'll be committing $10 million to community language schools. They're so important because they help Australian kids to learn a second language and learn more about their cultural heritage.

We're backing the Greek community in Melbourne through providing $2.5 million to the Hellenic Chair in Global Diasporas at the University of Melbourne, and $2.5 million towards the Greek community centre hub on Lonsdale Street.

We're backing the Australian Vietnamese community, with some $5 million towards the Australian Vietnamese museum in Melbourne. The Australian Vietnamese community deeply values the freedoms and liberties of this nation, and it is a wonderful thing that we will have this museum to celebrate the extraordinary contribution of Australians of Vietnamese background.

There are so many more programs. There's our small business program backing migrant start-ups, and we're also helping people to access culturally appropriate aged care.

As I said at the beginning, we're the greatest migrant nation in the world; a big part of that is the contribution of millions of Australians who have immigrated to our nation. Our government, under this Prime Minister, will back those communities every step of the way.

**Statement of Ministerial Standards**

**Mr BANDT** (Melbourne) (15:02): My question is to the Prime Minister and it's about his Statement of Ministerial Standards. Yesterday, despite reports that your ministers lobbied Home Affairs on behalf of Crown, you said there was nothing before you to warrant taking action. Today, you and Labor opposed a parliamentary inquiry into ministers and former ministers. The Attorney-General has referred some of the allegations to the law enforcement Integrity Commissioner, but this will not look into whether your ministers have acted improperly and breached ministerial standards. Given the stench from allegations regarding these matters, can you assure the House that you have fully investigated and that none of your ministers lobbied Home Affairs on behalf of Crown, or is it a case of don't ask, don't tell, with the government running a protection racket for ministers who have ties to Crown Casino?

**The SPEAKER:** I'm just going to hear from—
**Government members interjecting—**

**Mr Porter:** With respect to standing order 90 and reflections on members, that is a reflection on all ministers here, without identifying particularly which minister he is reflecting on. And indeed there were no allegations of the type that he's raised in the media specifically or otherwise. So I think this is clearly out of order, Mr Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** I'd just say to the Leader of the House: it's not up to me to judge what was in or not in the media. I only judge questions. I'm not going to bring a media summary in with me.

With respect to his point of order: the Practice makes it very clear on reflections. They really generally have to be direct reflections on particular members of parliament, and I think you'd find precedent questions of this nature have been asked before. Obviously, it was a long question—the full 45 seconds worth. I'll allow the question. I'll just say to the member for Melbourne: given the amount of preamble commentary and the nature of the 45-second contribution that wasn't all a question, the Prime Minister has extreme latitude in how he wishes to answer it. I call the Attorney-General—and, as I said, Attorney, that same latitude applies.

**Mr PORTER** (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (15:05): There are two matters to which I think we can provide a response. The first is with respect to the statement I made earlier today, and that is that all of the matters that have been raised in recent days in the media have now been referred by me to the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity pursuant to section 18 of its act.

As I noted for the members' benefit this morning, in making that referral I'm simply saying there are sufficient concerns that have been raised to allow for that precautionary referral to the Australian commissioner for law enforcement integrity. He may decide to take further action by way of an investigation. He may report back to me that there is not enough in it to warrant a full investigation. But, clearly, that is the body that is best placed to make any investigation of the matters that have been raised in the media.

As to the broad nature of the issue that you raise, I can say that, with respect to the idea that there is some kind of favouritism or fast-tracking, there are systems in place—I say this representing the Minister for Home Affairs now—where a variety of passport holders, particularly referenced in the white paper on developing northern
Australia, are themselves able to access and facilitate quick visa processing. There's nothing new in that. That's occurred on both sides of the House. But if there are any specific allegations that the member wants to make then perhaps he needs to make them.

An honourable member interjecting—

The SPEAKER: No, the call is going to alternate. I'll just say to the House very briefly: obviously people are jumping up. I'm trying to alternate the call. There's no secret that there are arrangements, with an Independent question early on in question time. If the government has decided not to jump, that doesn't mandate who I call, so I did call the Leader of the Opposition immediately after the member for Maribyrnong. I did that on the basis that I thought he was first getting to his feet ahead of the member for Melbourne. But I do point out, in any event, given the position of the Leader of the Opposition, if it was a contest, I would have called the Leader of the Opposition anyway. It obviously presents a difficulty for me, but we have two questions from that side and one from the government. We've now had one from this side.

All I can do is ensure that, in allocating the call, I alternate. If members wish to have things run more smoothly, with respect to the Independents, that's something they'll have to sort out within their processes. It's not up to me to simply just pick an Independent because the government hasn't jumped. What I've tried to do now is allocate the call as fairly as I can.

Ms Burney interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Barton might like to resume her seat. Members will recall that the member for Melbourne had sought the call after being denied it as well. I thought that was the fair thing to do. We'll now go back to the regular alternating of the call.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

Mr WALLACE (Fisher) (15:08): My question goes to the Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the Minister for Government Services. Would the minister please update the House on the actions the Morrison government is taking for children with developmental delay and disability and the services that are being provided to them by the National Disability Insurance Scheme, particularly in my electorate of Fisher, and is the minister aware of improvements that are being made to the NDIS?

Mr ROBERT (Fadden—Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme and Minister for Government Services) (15:08): I thank the member for Fisher for his question, for the great work he does for people with disability in his electorate and for his considerable lived experience. I also note that, as at 31 March, there are more than 42,000 participants benefitting from the NDIS in the great state of Queensland, including—and this is really exciting—more than 12,000 who are receiving disability supports for the very first time in their life. That's something the whole House can rejoice in. This also includes 4,600 children, aged between zero and six, who are receiving support through an NDIS plan, with an additional almost 3,000 receiving support via an early childhood early intervention, or ECEI, partner. Now, there have been some challenges with rolling out the ECEI approach. In some areas there have been longer-than-ideal wait times for children. Clearly these wait times are unacceptable, and we've made it a very clear priority to turn it around.

On 26 June I announced the six-month recovery plan for the ECEI approach. For the benefit of the House, the key initiatives of the plan are as follows. Firstly, we'll work with key ECEI partners to secure additional resources to ensure children are able to receive early childhood supports in a far more timely manner. Secondly, for children who are experiencing significant waiting periods for a plan—where the period between an access decision and getting a plan is greater than 50 days—the NDIA will provide a standardised interim plan for six months. These interim plans will be replaced by a full NDIS plan within six months of being issued. Thirdly, for new participants who are not categorised as complex or who are not transferring from an existing Commonwealth state or disability program, they'll be given a six-month interim plan with a package value of $10,000. Fourthly, for those who are transferring from an existing Commonwealth state or territory disability program, their interim NDIS plan and funding package will reflect their existing support levels. If that amount is lower than $10,000, they'll also receive a $10,000 standardised interim plan for six months. Lastly, for participants with complex needs, they'll immediately be streamed to an NDIA early childhood specialist to develop their plan and the appropriate funding package.

To support these initiatives, the NDIA will increase the capacity of its national access team and continue to closely monitor the progress and timeliness of access decisions, including reporting to me. The NDIA will also provide additional support to ECEI partners in areas that are experiencing delays, by redirecting available partners to assist with planning activities. This recovery plan is just one part of a larger plan to deliver the final 20 per cent of the NDIS. We're rolling out significant improvements in planning pathways, two-to-three year plans, expanding
the Community Connectors Program and so much more. I look forward to working with everyone on this great national endeavour.

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

DOCUMENTS

Presentation

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (15:12): A document is tabled in accordance with the list circulated to honourable members earlier today. Full details of the document will be recorded in the Votes and Proceedings.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Infrastructure

The SPEAKER (15:12): I have received a letter from the honourable member for Ballarat proposing that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely:

The Government's failure to properly invest in infrastructure.

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

More than the number of members required by the standing orders having risen in their places—

Ms CATHERINE KING (Ballarat) (15:13): I'm very pleased to have moved this matter of public importance about the government's failure on infrastructure. The government would have you believe that it has only just come into office. That, at 18 May, somehow—it's a miracle—they're a brand new government. But this is a third-term government that has had no agenda when it comes to infrastructure. After six years, two terms, they're basically claiming that projects that Labor had funded in government were somehow miraculously their own, they're cutting projects that had been funded and there are cost blowouts and delay. At the eleventh hour they discovered infrastructure, with this claim that they've now got a $100 billion 10-year infrastructure plan. I want to unpick that a little bit.

The first thing to say is that it is not $100 billion. The $100 billion includes projects that are not agreed by states and territories, like the East West Link in Melbourne, something that the state government in Victoria has clearly stated is not a project that it will be pursuing. It includes things like the Perth Freight Link. I see that the Liberal Party in Western Australia have again decided that they're going to pursue this particular project. But, again, it is a project that the federal government is not providing enough money for. It goes to a port that has already reached capacity and is frankly not going to assist with the freight task for Western Australia. Also, it is nowhere near the amount of money that will be needed to deliver that project.

So the first thing is that it's not $100 billion at all. The next thing is that they have already underspent by $5.1 billion on projects that they promised they were going to deliver. That's $5.1 billion less than they should have actually delivered in their term in office. They are projects that should already have been well and truly underway. So this government hasn't even been able to deliver on the small amount that it did actually promise.

The next thing is that a vast majority of this money is frankly on the never-never. How much of this so-called $100 billion infrastructure fund is actually going to be delivered in this term of office? We know from Senate estimates is very little of this money is actually going to be delivered in this term. Even where it is, it's back-ended basically the fourth year of the forward estimates, when the government is going to be out there trying to claim these projects as new and part of the 2022 election campaign.

We have lots more of these examples, and I suspect there are lots more on the other side as well. Many of our backbenchers started to ask some questions about when some of these projects would be delivered. When will this money be delivered? In the forward estimates, only 30 per cent of the infrastructure money will be flowing. That's only in the forward estimates. We asked questions about the Pacific Motorway. It is an important project, an extension to Raymond Terrace in New South Wales but only $1.6 billion of that will be available in the next four years.

We asked about work on the South Geelong to Waurn Ponds rail upgrade in Victoria. That won't actually commence until July 2024. I'm not sure if the then member for Corangamite, when she was talking about this project, put in her leaflets: 'You might get this project, but you won't get it until 2024. Don't just elect me at this election but at the one after as well.' We know what the people of Corangamite thought about that. There's still absolutely no start date for the new Bridgewater Bridge, a project that's important for the member for Lyons seat in the north of Hobart. It is an important project. When is it going to start?

We know that this government has been big on rhetoric but very, very small on delivery. Remember, this is a third-term government that has been unable to deliver on infrastructure. It's now making a big claim. Let's see
what it's going to be able to deliver. We know 90 per cent of the $500 million will be available for the safety upgrades for the Princess Highway south of Nowra, in the member for Gilmore's electorate, where we had the Prime Minister talking a big game about how he would fix all of the road safety problems on a highway that has seen far too many deaths in recent years. He was going to fix that. How much of that is actually going to be available? We know a very small proportion of the money, some $50 million, will be available in these four years.

When is work going to begin on eliminating the Boundary Road level crossing in Coopers Plains, one of South-East Queensland's worst traffic black spots? When we asked questions about that last week, the minister was totally unable to say when this project would commence. We also asked questions last week about the Rockhampton Ring Road, the bypass in Rockhampton. I know the member for Oxley asked the question, but somehow or other we had the minister unable to actually talk about where the project was. He started talking about—

Mr Neumann: He thinks it's in Brisbane.

Mr Giles: All politics is local.

Ms CATHERINE KING: Exactly. All politics, I guess, is local, except if you're asking questions about projects in Rockhampton. This is a government that has been big on rhetoric, but very, very small on delivery.

What else has the government done in the two weeks we've had of parliamentary sittings? The other thing it's done when it's come to funding infrastructure is, of course, abolish the Building Australia Fund. They are taking $3.9 billion out of funding for infrastructure. Why did they do that? Because they didn't like the fact that this was a bucket of money that could have been used to fund important infrastructure projects that had been recommended by Infrastructure Australia. They didn't like the fact that they had to go through a proper assessment process to determine whether these projects could get funded. So they have taken $3.9 billion out of available funding for priority projects in infrastructure, including projects in Western Sydney around the airport including road projects and securing the pipeline for fuel infrastructure to make sure we have the capacity in the future to take hundreds of trucks off the roads in Western Sydney that deliver fuel. What did they do? Once again, after four attempts to get rid of the Building Australia Fund, they decided they would abolish it. And that's what they have done. They have taken that big bucket of money away from the priority projects of Infrastructure Australia. Basically, they are undermining the Infrastructure Australia process again. This is a government that doesn't like transparency when it comes to infrastructure funding. This is a government that talks big and delivers very little.

What we also know is that the government has an Urban Congestion Fund. That is good to see. We ourselves, around the election, announced a number of projects around these issues; we know that they are very important to people. But if you are a council and you are thinking, 'There's an urban congestion fund. Let's go to the government and see whether we can get a roundabout or another project in our area,' the money is basically spent on the next federal election. So you will be able to spend it in the election year.

This is a government that always plays politics when it comes to infrastructure. What we have seen is that it is not $100 billion, including projects that are never going to be funded because there is no agreement or they put so little money into the project that it is not actually able to be delivered. We know that they have also put projects on the never-never—projects that are desperately needed today. We've got the Reserve Bank governor, state and territory governments and reputable economists across the country saying, 'Bring forward infrastructure projects today.' So what does this government do? It says: 'Maybe we'll think about it. Eventually we might do a few.' But most of the projects they have funded are well and truly on the never-never. They have also underspent—not actually delivered what they promised to deliver—when it comes to infrastructure. Of course, what they have done is with the Building Australia Fund.

We know how important infrastructure is to local economies. We know how important it is for building jobs in regional economies. We know how important infrastructure is to making sure people are able to get to work safely and for the quality of life in their communities. But what we have seen from this third-term government is that it has no agenda and has completely neglected the space for the last six years. And then before the election, at the eleventh hour, they claim they are somehow going to be spending $100 billion over the next 10 years. For every single project you have said you are going to deliver on, in every single community, we are going to hunt you down and make sure you deliver every single dollar and every project you have promised.

Mr TUDGE (Aston—Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure) (15:23): I am very pleased to speak on this matter of public importance. My first point is that I don't know where the member for Ballarat has been. If she got out of Canberra and got out of her office, she would see construction going on in every major capital city right now. She will see it going on in regional centres across our country. It is not for no reason that
many commentators are saying we are in an infrastructure boom right now—and that is because we have projects right across this great nation dealing with congestion, supporting the economy and addressing community safety and road safety this very second. In fact, since we came to government, 900 projects have been identified to be funded, 280 projects have already been completed and 160 major projects are underway right now across this country. There are 160 major projects underway, under construction, this very second. The bitumen has been laid, the bulldozers are going and people are working very hard. Thousands of people are being employed, which is supporting local economies right across this nation. We also have 120 projects in the planning, ready to go. Once that planning is completed the money is there and ready to go. So to suggest that we don't have infrastructure projects going on, as the member for Ballarat is suggesting to this parliament, is, frankly, absolutely wrong.

I could refer back from a financial perspective to just five years ago, when the CEO of Infrastructure Partnerships Australia, Brendan Lyons, said that our plan at that stage represented the largest-ever national infrastructure investment program in Australian history. That was five years ago. Do you know what the size of our infrastructure program was then? It was $50 billion. Do you know what it is five years later? It is now a $100 billion program. Five years ago we had the respected leader of Infrastructure Partnerships Australia saying that this is the biggest program he'd ever seen in Australian history. Five years later we've doubled that again to $100 billion. We have so much infrastructure going on now that some commentators are saying that we're now reaching supply complaints from the construction companies, who may not be able to take too much on. This year we are spending on infrastructure more than double what the Labor Party spent in their last year in office.

So I say to the member for Ballarat: I honestly do not know where you have been. Get out there: go to Sydney, go to Melbourne, go to Adelaide, go to Brisbane, go to Perth, go to Hobart and go to the regional centres and you will see this construction going on all the time. I want to refer specifically to two or three projects, though. I've talked about the aggregate numbers. We have doubled the funding. We have a $100 billion program. We have 160 underway and another 120 planned. Let me at least talk about two or three very large-scale projects. These are projects which in some respects should have been built a long time ago, arguably decades, but it took this government to actually get them underway.

The very first one I'll mention is the Western Sydney Airport. This is a project which has been on the books for literally decades, but within six months of our coming to office we decided that we would get on with the job of building that second airport in Western Sydney. We did the planning work. We immediately put $5.3 billion on the table to get it underway. If the member for Ballarat bothered to go out to Western Sydney she would see the landscape changing before her eyes. Already a million cubic metres of earth has been moved to flatten that enormous landscape out there. When completed it will be the largest earthmoving project in Australian history, creating 11,000 jobs in the process. That's happening right now and it didn't happen under the opposition. They had the opportunity, they talked about it and they said that they wanted it, but for six long years Labor didn't get it done, because they couldn't make the decision.

Look at the next big project: the airport rail link down in Melbourne. Again, to be honest, this rail link should have been built two or three decades ago. This is another one where the Labor Party looked at it, talked about it and said that Melbourne needs a rail link out to the airport. Did they actually do anything about it in their six long years in office? No; nothing. Again it took this government to finally put money on the table. We put $5 billion on the table and said to the state government, 'Join us, please, in delivering this vitally important project for Melbourne and finally connect up Australia's second-busiest airport to the rail network.' They're now committed. We now have a construction schedule starting in 2022 and we will see that job done.

Mr Giles: Wasn't the Baillieu government going to build it, along with the Rowville-Monash rail?

Mr Tudge: I heard an interjection here in relation to the Rowville-Monash rail—another project which never happened under the former Labor government, which is connecting up Australia's single-largest university campus to the rail network. Fifty-five thousand people attend the Monash Clayton campus. It took the government, in our infrastructure plan, to finally put the $475 million on the table and say, 'We need to get this job done.' If the member for Ballarat wants to assist in expediting that process then I ask her to pick up the phone to the Minister for Transport in Victoria or the Premier in Victoria and say, 'Let's get cracking on this project,' because the 55,000 students who attend that campus every single day want to see that campus connected to the metropolitan rail network in Melbourne.

I'm going to go back to Sydney and talk about WestConnex. WestConnex is a $16 billion game-changing project for Sydney and particularly Western Sydney. It was only just a couple of weeks ago that we opened up the next stage of WestConnex, which was the M4 tunnel from Homebush to Haberfield. It's a 5.5-kilometre tunnel and an absolute game changer for people in Western Sydney. It means that if you're sitting in Parramatta, or further afield, today and you want to travel into the city—

CHAMBER
Dr Freelander: What's the cost? Tell them how much money it will cost.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hogan): The member for Macarthur is warned.

Mr TUDGE: you will now be able to avoid 22 sets of traffic lights. It will save you 20 minutes each way on that journey. I know the member for Reid is a great supporter of this particular project. If you decide to take Parramatta Road instead of taking the tunnel—and that's your choice—it is estimated that 50 per cent of the traffic will be removed from Parramatta Road as a result of this tunnel. That's the type of game-changing infrastructure that we are building, completing and opening, and we have all sorts of other projects underway.

Again, I refer back to what the Labor Party said in relation to this project. They couldn't get it done. Do you know what the now Leader of the Opposition said when he was shadow minister for transport? He said, 'If we're in government and I'm the transport minister, I won't put a cent into that project.' Do you know why he said that? He said, 'We're not going to do that because that is a road to nowhere.' That's what he said. This is a road which goes from the Sydney CBD into Western Sydney, to Parramatta, and he said that was a road to nowhere. We on this side of the House don't think Western Sydney is nowhere. The member for Reid certainly does not think that Western Sydney is nowhere. That is the type of attitude which the inner-city latte set sitting on the opposition benches have about Western Sydney. They think it's nowhere, so they wouldn't have put a cent into that project.

There are all of these great projects underway, getting going and in the planning phrase. They are game-changing projects: the Western Sydney Airport, the Melbourne Airport rail link, the Monash Rail, WestConnex—you name it. They are projects which the Labor Party could not deliver in their long six years in government but which we are getting going. And we've got more. The member for Ballarat mentioned a ripper project in Victoria, and that is the East West Link. By gosh, we want to see that project done. We've got the money on the table. The state government doesn't have to put in a cent. I know that everybody in the eastern suburbs wants that project done, as everybody in Perth wants Roe 8 and Roe 9 done. They want that road done as well. We are getting on with the job—(Time expired)

Mr Giles (Scullin) (15:33): It's always a pleasure to follow Minister Tudge! On this occasion, as on many others, I've got to give him full marks for enthusiasm, but we cannot give him a pass for content. This seems to be everything that is wrong with the government's attitude to infrastructure. It's all about rhetoric but, when you scratch the surface, the reality exposes pretty much everything they say and everything that Minister Tudge has said. One of the things I found very interesting in his contribution was his series of references to 'commentators', because it seems that his main interest in being the minister for infrastructure is being the commentator on his own performance. He really enjoys this. And that's fair enough, because there are very few experts who are going to give him or his government any credit.

So I rise to support this matter of public importance today because the Morrison government—in particular, the minister—is failing to properly invest in infrastructure. This matters. It's holding back productivity growth in our economy, especially in our cities. The minister has that responsibility in his title, yet he fails to recognise, as does the Deputy Prime Minister, that taking action to meaningfully bust congestion in our cities is the best thing we can do to boost productivity growth. But, of course, this is about more than just productivity growth, as the member for Ballarat knows and all my colleagues understand; it's about the quality of life for too many Australians.

Mr Tudge interjecting—

Mr Giles: After all the excitement you injected, Minister Tudge, I can understand that they are just taking on board what you said. The thing is, Minister, that, after you talked such a big game about infrastructure and busting congestion—busting congestion in marginal government-held seats, not in the north of Melbourne, not in the west of Melbourne and certainly not in Ballarat—during the election campaign, Australians remain concerned, and rightly so, by the government's reluctance to bring forward infrastructure investment to stimulate a sluggish economy and to bust congestion.

The minister today and in the media keeps banging on about his $100 billion figure, but funding as a percentage of GDP over the forward estimates has actually dropped. It has dropped, Minister. In fact, less than 30 per cent of the so-called $100 billion 10-year infrastructure program is budgeted for the next four years. This follows the dismal record of spending $5.1 billion or less on infrastructure than the government promised over the first six years. We are going backwards when it comes to infrastructure investment, under this minister. And today we are reminded that Australians are struggling with lengthy commute times. The government, despite its rhetoric, isn't helping. The HILDA data shows that Australians are spending on average 4.5 hours a week getting to and from work—an increase of 23 per cent since 2002. It's time for Minister Tudge to bring forward investment in infrastructure projects to stimulate the economy and actually bust congestion, rather than just talk about it in such a self-satisfied and offensive manner.
I did find it interesting earlier listening to the minister in question time talking up the North East Link. I was glad to hear you talk about the North East Link, Minister. It’s a good project that was brought forward by the Andrews state Labor government—a $16 billion project. It’s a $16 billion project, Minister. But the minister said in question time that his government's commitment to it is $1.8 billion—$1.8 billion towards a $16 billion project—yet the minister was in here gloating like he was personally responsible for the project. Minister, perhaps you should thank Daniel Andrews and Minister Allan for their work and for giving you something to talk about. But it's more than that with this minister and this government. Australians are deeply frustrated by the attitude of the government and the constant short-termism in the infrastructure debate.

Our establishment of Infrastructure Australia was a structural reform which could and should have broken the cycle—the problem in the cycle between the election cycle and the infrastructure cycle—but the government have ripped up this rule book, they’ve ripped up this consensus, such that as many as 39 of 45 of the congestion-busting projects the minister likes to talk about, announced during the campaign, are flowing to Liberal-held marginal seats. This will only be compounded by the gutting of the Building the Australia Fund. When it comes to infrastructure, this is a government that is only concerned with short-term political advantage, not about the national interest.

So it's time for the minister to stop congratulating himself. It's time for him to get on with the job of fixing up an institutional framework, a policy framework, that can get this right. The debate about infrastructure is too important to be politicised in this manner. It's too important to be reliant on the short-term fixes and the budget trickery of this government and this minister. It's time for a government that will actually take the infrastructure needs of Australia seriously.

Mr BUCHHOLDZ (Wright—Assistant Minister for Road Safety and Freight Transport) (15:38): It is a great opportunity to stand at the despatch box and talk about this government's infrastructure achievements in regional Australia. The Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure rightly pointed out the infrastructure projects that are happening across our capital cities. But we must not forget the lion's share of infrastructure investment being spent in regional areas. This government is absolutely committed to the infrastructure that regional communities need.

There's $5.2 billion leaving our pockets through the Roads to Recovery Program from 2013-14 out to 2023 for local roads, appropriating directly to local government so that they can make those infrastructure priorities at their doorstep in their communities. There's an additional $804 million through the Black Spots Program, which is saving lives—an additional $110 million per year from 2021-22 delivering those much-needed safety barriers and street lighting and upgrades of sections of dangerous roads that need attention. There's an extra $2.6 billion through the Community Development Grants Program that has been rolled out from 2013-14 through to 2025-26.

Between 1 July 2013 and now, there has been no less than $16.2 billion spent on land transport infrastructure projects in New South Wales alone. To date, that has resulted in 71 projects being completed, and a further 51 are underway. So this government is getting on with the job in the state of New South Wales. In Victoria, $6.4 billion worth of projects have been completed. Of the projects the government has committed to, 50 are being completed and a further 49 are either under construction or in the planning phase. In South Australia, over the same period, there has been $3.5 billion spent on land transport infrastructure projects. There have been 11 projects completed, and 20 are underway or in planning. In Western Australia, there has been $5.3 billion spent. There have been 22 projects completed, and a further 31 are underway.

In Queensland, my home state, there has been $25.6 billion of funding spent on land transport infrastructure projects between 1 July 2013 and now. That $25.6 billion is part of our $100 billion commitment. We were at a $75 billion commitment on infrastructure. We noticed the importance of that to driving the economy, driving jobs, driving growth and getting those economic corridors right, so we increased that to $100 billion. In those outward years, Queensland's share of that is $25.6 billion. To date, we have spent $9 billion on transport infrastructure in Queensland, with 84 projects delivered and a further 94 underway.

Our record speaks for itself. In the coming months, I look forward to opening part of one of the most significant inland road infrastructure projects in Australia's history—the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing. That is a $1.7 billion project to which we committed 80 per cent of the funding. These projects do not get off the ground unless governments are in a strong economic position and can co-fund the projects with state governments to make sure these major pieces of infrastructure are opened. There is a new stretch of road—41 kilometres—that will bypass the city of Toowoomba. That will take out of the community no fewer than 24,600 vehicle movements a day, of which 4,400 are heavy vehicles—large trucks. And I note that 80 per cent of these—3½ thousand people—are expected to divert around the Toowoomba range crossing. It will be a magnificent piece of infrastructure. It fills me with a sense of pride when we drive up to Toowoomba: you can see the viaducts, which weren't there years ago.
ago. It is going to save lives. Lives were lost on the old piece of infrastructure, which could be described as a death trap.

In Queensland this morning The Courier Mail reported that the tolls for that road had been advertised. The tolls are $2.30 for a car, $5.70 for a commercial vehicle and $22.85 for a truck. That is much less than what was anticipated by the private sector. In coming to office, we have committed that we will invest another $10 billion in infrastructure on the Bruce Highway. All this infrastructure in Queensland is being rolled out whilst this government is delivering record investment in health and record investment in education. We as a government are delivering. We can do it because we have a strong government and we have our expenditure under control. We are the government that will deliver infrastructure into the future.

Dr FREELANDER (Macarthur) (15:43): I rise to speak on this matter of public importance, which is very close to my heart. Certainly the people of my electorate of Macarthur feel very deeply the lack of infrastructure provided by this federal government and also by the New South Wales government. I can talk very well about the Western Sydney Airport. I well remember the debates about the site of the Western Sydney Airport going back to the Fraser government in the 1970s. Many governments, of both persuasions, have over the years had a degree of responsibility for not providing the definitive site for the Western Sydney Airport.

I do think it is a very good thing that this government has finalised the site and work is underway. And I have been out to see the earthworks going ahead. But what I would say is that, unless this government provides proper public transport to the new Western Sydney Airport, it will not be a successful airport. Every infrastructure person, every town planner, every transport planner believes that the Leppington line, the link to Sydney and South Western Sydney, should open when the Western Sydney Airport opens. The corridor is already preserved yet this government, time and time again, has denied that development, which must occur if the airport is to be successful.

People of Macarthur are sick of the lack of provision for this, because this is the one line that will connect my community to the great benefits that the Western Sydney Airport could offer in terms of jobs, transport and freight and in terms of connecting to the Kingsford Smith airport and Greater Sydney. So, it has to happen. Everyone agrees that it does. But this government just denies it time and time again. Its motives for doing this are unclear to me. I suspect it's because it wants to provide infrastructure in the Liberal and conservative-held electorates to the north. But it is doing nothing for Western Sydney and South Western Sydney, and it's an absolute disgrace.

Those opposite seem to be a little bit misguided when it comes to infrastructure in Western Sydney and South Western Sydney. They're delivering the square root of absolutely bugger all yet they talk themselves up time and time again. Members would do well to note the previous Labor government's achievements in delivering infrastructure. It was the former Labor government that increased the annual investment in our nation's transport, energy, telecommunications and water infrastructure, with it having doubled from $29 billion to $57.7 billion by the end of the Rudd government.

Under this government, we've had two ministers for infrastructure—the member for Aston and the member for Riverina—who have delivered nothing. One could be forgiven for thinking that the coalition took the notion of delivering infrastructure seriously, given the portfolio is so well represented in the ministry and by the Prime Minister's friends yet in actual fact they are delivering nothing. The Prime Minister and his front bench talked a big game in infrastructure throughout the recent election campaign, but they've left us waiting, with very little information, on so many projects. They are always talking about it happening in the future, but it's not happening. Less than 30 per cent of the government's so-called $100 billion 10-year infrastructure program is budgeted for the next four years.

We also desperately need a number of infrastructure projects in my electorate, not just the rail link to Western Sydney Airport. In the last 20 years almost 40 people have been killed on Appin Road in my electorate, along with terrible motor vehicle accidents that have left many in my community grieving. Time and time again we've requested action from this government and the New South Wales Berejiklian government. What have they done? Absolutely nothing. It's shameful. They are letting the people of Macarthur and the Illawarra die on this road with their complete inaction and ignorance of the problem.

Thousands and thousands of people have moved into my electorate on the basis of rapidly developing new suburbs, whose names even I can't remember—suburb after suburb—yet there is no public transport infrastructure. It is absolutely disgraceful. Developers are ripping literally billions of dollars from the allowed new developments in my electorate. Over 30,000 new people have moved into my electorate since the 2016 election, yet there is no public transport infrastructure.

Our schools, built in the fifties and sixties, are disgraceful—please see my previous speeches about this—yet nothing is being done. The NBN is a disgrace. There are large areas that can't get coverage.
Mr SIMMONDS (Ryan) (15:48): It is a pleasure to rise to speak on this MPI. What's particularly clear from the minister for urban infrastructure's speech is that this government, the Morrison government, is the one that's on the side of delivering infrastructure. It's on the side of Australian families—to get them home sooner and safer. In contrast, what is clear is that the roadblock to better, less congested roads is the Labor Party. The roadblock to families getting home sooner and safer is the Labor Party.

The member for Ballarat stood up and talked about timing. I thought it was an incredible contrast, because it was just last week that I was in the electorate looking at a brand new federally funded facility that is helping to ease congestion locally. It wasn't a big project. It was one of these local urban congestion projects, with $3 million from the federal government. It has been funded, built and delivered, and has now reduced congestion for hundreds of families around the local school, from 45 minutes down to just seven minutes.

While the Morrison government is out there delivering for the families of Ryan, in contrast the Labor Party have been dragged kicking and screaming when it comes to infrastructure. When I was out there during the previous election campaign, I had no less than the Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure himself and the Prime Minister himself come and drive on one of the most congested road corridors in the electorate, the Moggill Road corridor. This is a corridor that, because of the Labor state government's inaction, is now No. 1 for delay costs in the whole of Queensland. Over a million dollars is lost in delay costs per kilometre per year on that corridor. Both the minister and the Prime Minister drove that corridor, and, as a result, there is funding in the budget for two projects on that particular corridor, the Indooroopilly roundabout and the Kenmore roundabout. In contrast, it was in the last week of the election campaign that the Labor candidate decided to stick up their head and suddenly match all our promises, as if they'd suddenly just discovered that infrastructure and getting families home sooner and safer was important to local families. It is this government, the Morrison government, driving that.

It's no better illustrated than in Queensland, where the Labor state government is the absolute handbrake on infrastructure. They have the lowest infrastructure spending, well below the decade-long average. But even when they don't have to put in any money, like with Brisbane Metro, a fully funded project by the Brisbane City Council with $300 million on the table from this Morrison government, they still can't get out of the way. If the member for Ballarat would like to hunt somebody down, it should be Mark Bailey, because after more than 270 meetings with the Brisbane City Council, who are trying to get on with delivering this project so that people can get home to their families sooner and safer on public transport when it's fully funded, Labor Minister Bailey still can't make the decision to get out of the way and let us spend this money on important infrastructure. Perhaps our best chance is to find a good investment property for the Deputy Premier to purchase on the route; that might finally kickstart it. It's clear that the only plan Labor had in Queensland to fund infrastructure was to await an inevitable Shorten government, which would then invest in their pet project, Cross River Rail. Instead, they're left holding the bag.

On top of that is the fact that these projects are possible because we know how to manage the economy. We know how to manage money in the Morrison government. That's how we can continue to make investments in local infrastructure projects. We're getting on with the job of funding local infrastructure projects in the Ryan electorate, like the Indooroopilly roundabout, with $25 million to get that project out of the too-hard basket and get it going. The federal government can really add value to reducing urban congestion by getting some of these projects out of the too-hard basket and getting them going. We're able to get the project underway at the Indooroopilly roundabout because we've got a strong partnership with the LNP-held Brisbane City Council. In contrast, the other local project we've got in the Ryan electorate is the Kenmore roundabout. There is $12.5 million on the table from this federal government. We're waiting for the Labor state minister, Minister Bailey, to get out of the way, come to the table and help us get that project under way.

Ms THWAITES (Jagajaga) (15:53): It's so important that I rise to talk about this issue today, because our national economy is clearly showing signs of slowing down. The warning signs are clear. Wages are stagnant. Median household income is going backwards. Living standards are declining. There are increasing levels of insecure work, underemployment and youth unemployment. Yet listening to this government today you'd think there was no problem at all. I remind those on the other side that they're the third-term government, they have two ministers for infrastructure and they need to get their act together.

They need to get their act together because the people in my electorate of Jagajaga are worried about the future, worried about their wages, worried about their jobs and worried that, no matter how hard they work, they just can't seem to get ahead. I certainly heard that loud and clear as the Labor candidate for Jagajaga, and now as the federal member.

The people of Jagajaga noticed during the election campaign that the Liberal Party did not make a single commitment in Jagajaga.
Mr Gorman: Not one!

Ms THWAITES: Not one that would boost local infrastructure, increase our transport options or create any jobs at all. They certainly noticed that Victoria has seen barely any of the national infrastructure spend from the federal government for the past six years. Funnily enough, the current minister for infrastructure is Victorian; you'd think that would count for something. Clearly not!

Victoria will only receive 17 per cent of the federal infrastructure budget in 2019-20, despite being home to 25 per cent of Australians. This is outrageous! As we've heard from my Victorian colleagues today, Victorians are lucky that we have a Victorian Labor government that has invested so heavily in roads, rail and removing level crossings. The minister was just crowing about the North East Link. The people of Jagajaga know that this project will be delivered thanks to the Andrews Labor government. North East Link, the removal of the level crossing at Lower Plenty Road in Rosanna, the Melbourne Metro project, the Hurstbridge line duplication and the historic Suburban Rail Loop project are all huge examples of what is happening under the Victorian Labor government. We are not seeing anything like this level of investment from Canberra—and I will let the minister know that it's Rosanna Road, not Rosanna Drive!

Of course, the chorus of those now calling for urgent action is not reserved to the Labor benches. The Reserve Bank, economists and state governments—even state coalition treasurers—have implored the government to urgently lift infrastructure to give our economy the shot in the arm it badly needs. We do need to fast-track infrastructure projects now to stimulate this sluggish economy, to create jobs and to reduce our commute times.

They've talked a big game on infrastructure, but many major projects are still off on the never-never. And in Victoria they continue to include the East West Link project, which the Victorian government and the community have not supported at two consecutive state elections, as evidence of action. Less than 30 per cent of the government's so-called $100 billion, 10-year infrastructure program is budgeted for the next four years. It doesn't add up; it's a con. They include projects like the East West Link, and it will not proceed. In their six years in government they've spent less on infrastructure than they promised. Projects have been announced but delayed, postponed or cancelled.

Of course, the data released today in the HILDA survey confirms just how poorly they are failing when it comes to busting congestion. We see now that Australians are spending on average $4½ hours a week getting to and from work. That's a rise of 23 per cent since 2002. That's parents who are sitting in traffic rather than spending time with their children. Too many Australians are facing longer commutes, with one in six Australians now travelling more than two hours each day, up from one in eight in 2002.

So today I call on the government to bring forward funding for infrastructure projects in Victoria to stimulate the economy, to improve safety and to boost productivity. If the government were serious about big congestion-busting projects it would get on with work in Victoria. The people of Jagajaga are sick of the spin. They see through the con. They know they're sitting in traffic for too long. They want to be home with their children, not stuck on the road. They want action; they want real improvements in their lives and they see through this government that is failing to deliver for them.

I call on the government to put in the proper level of spending to deliver for the people of Jagajaga, for the people of Melbourne—our fastest-growing city—and for Victoria.

Dr MARTIN (Reid) (15:58): The opposition today is making the completely false claim that the coalition government has underdelivered on infrastructure. But it cannot be ignored that this year's April budget brought total infrastructure expenditure by the coalition government up to $100 billion over 10 years. The coalition government is investing in infrastructure, from small black spots to major motorways and from soccer goals to sporting amenity upgrades on projects in regional areas and in urban electorates such as my own in the inner west of Sydney. Only recently, I joined the Deputy Prime Minister and the New South Wales Premier to open a core piece of infrastructure in my electorate: the first stage of WestConnex. This piece of infrastructure was possible only because of the coalition government's commitment of $1.5 billion and providing a concessional loan of $2 billion. This infrastructure will be getting residents of Reid home sooner and safer, residents of the broader Sydney area home to their families and, significantly, will be providing a new connection between Sydney's eastern CBD and the emerging western CBD. The later stages of WestConnex will link Sydney's western suburbs to Sydney Airport as well as diverting trucks off the very busy Parramatta Road.

In the 2019-20 budget we're providing $2.2 billion over 10 years for a local and state government road safety package. This includes a major boost to the Black Spot Program, which targets safety issues on urban and regional roads, and additional funding to the Roads to Recovery Program, which supports vital road maintenance to local governments. Though some of these projects seem quite small on paper, a new roundabout or road surfacing can have a huge impact on a local community.
In my electorate of Reid it's the back roads used by commuters that see the greatest benefit from these programs. Earlier this year the Morrison government committed $50 million from the $4 billion Urban Congestion Fund towards improvements to Homebush Bay Drive. This will improve safety and traffic flow on an arterial roadway that carries traffic from north of the Parramatta River to South Sydney. The Urban Congestion Fund will also deliver upgrades to the very busy King Georges Road in the electorate of Banks and $50 million for key commuter carparks across Sydney.

The Western Sydney Airport will open up new opportunities for businesses, for jobs and for trade. That reflects a $5.3 billion investment by the Morrison government, creating 50,000 jobs. Careful fiscal management has allowed the coalition to invest millions of dollars into Reid's local sporting infrastructure via the Community Development Program, including improvements to facilities at Strathfield Park, to netball facilities at Centra Park, to rugby facilities at Goddard Park and to AFL facilities at Timbrell Park, all in my electorate. As a mother and a psychologist I know how important sport is to a child's development, not just social and emotional but physical as well. This investment in local sporting infrastructure will allow more children to get involved in team sports.

We also have the Stronger Communities Program with round 5 opening up next week. This program is hugely popular in Reid because it allows even our smallest community groups to improve their infrastructure and build their capacity to offer support and programs to our local community groups such as the Embroiderers Guild New South Wales and Eurella Community Services as well as Scouts groups, sporting groups, Lions groups and Rotary clubs, who all benefit from this funding.

Nationally over 7,700 programs have been funded since the establishment of the Stronger Communities Program. I can't wait to work with community groups and not-for-profit organisations in Reid on the next round in the coming weeks. Grants from the Stronger Communities Programs, the $22.65 million Communities Environment Program and the $30.2 million Local Schools Community Fund provide tangible local examples of infrastructure grants that have been announced by the Morrison government and that will deliver real benefits to my electorate of Reid and to all electorates across Australia. It's clear that the coalition government is delivering record spending on infrastructure as a result of a strong economy, careful fiscal management—(Time expired)

**Ms WELLS** (Lilley) (16:03): Mr Deputy Speaker Hogan, I think you've been a consistent and supportive presence at each of my speeches in the chamber so far. Thank you for your ongoing support. When I read in business arising in the Federation Chamber yesterday of a motion by the member for Boothby congratulating the government on all of its work on infrastructure funding in the May 2019 budget, I was compelled to run to the Federation Chamber and speak on that very point. You were there, Mr Deputy Speaker. Then today, seeing that the matter of public importance was on, again, the issue of infrastructure and what this government has and has not done, I felt compelled to sprint in my heels to the chamber to speak on this matter. In question time today, the Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure, Mr Swan, made a number of mentions of infrastructure, particularly in our cities. I think he spoke at length about congestion busting. But I find that difficult to swallow when today is the day that we have learned that commuting times are getting worse for everyone in all capital cities across the country, and I know that is true for my constituents in Lilley on Brisbane's north side.

Despite the government lavishing praise upon themselves around congestion busting, we on this side of the chamber are superior at chop busting, so that is what we will have to do in the matter of public importance today. As I did last night in the Federation Chamber, today I will speak in this chamber about how lacking the government's infrastructure plans are on Brisbane's north side, and I will show up anywhere, anytime to debate this issue. But, sadly, I will not be showing up quickly if I have to rely upon the major arterial roads on Brisbane's north side that have been neglected by the government, who have now had six years to get on with work and are entering their third term with nothing new to say for the people of Lilley.

Allow me to take you on a little mental holiday to the majestic tropical north, to Brisbane's north side. I want to speak on two particular projects. The first is at the particular request of the member for Petrie, who asked that I discuss the Gateway Upgrade North project, or the GUN project as we like to call it. I am nothing if not an accommodating and good neighbour, so let us touch on that now. This is a project that was announced by Treasurer Wayne Swan in his last budget, in May 2013. It was recently opened in the months approaching the federal election. So, after being promised by the last Labor government as one of the last major infrastructure projects promised on Brisbane's north side, it was recently opened. I was very happy to note that, and I am glad that the member for Petrie also acknowledges the work of my predecessor, a lion of the Labor movement, Wayne Swan, and his commitment to big nation-building infrastructure projects on Brisbane's north side.

The second project I want to bring up today—and I'm very glad the member for Petrie is here to hear it—is Linkfield Road, which is at centre stage of the government's kabuki theatre with respect to their infrastructure plans for the north side. Linkfield Road is a dangerous choke point and congestion site on Brisbane's north side.
It's about two kays beyond the Lilley boundary. If you choose to leave the boundaries of Lilley, you'll be the poorer for it, but if you do you can proceed two kays along Depot Road and approach Telegraph Road, and you'll hit the Linkfield Road intersection. We all agree that this is an important congestion and choke point that needs work. That's why both our side and the government pledged $100 million to fix this intersection.

But, while this was discussed at length during the election campaign, something that did not appear on the LNP election material was the timing of the funding of the $100 million commitment. Something you did not see on the LNP election material was that not a single dollar would arrive for this much-needed, agreed-upon project until the 2026 federal budget. Let me tell you about a couple of other things that will happen by 2026. A child born this year will be in the under-eight soccer team by the time they get to use Linkfield Road to get to their soccer fields. Newlyweds married during the election campaign will be beginning to feel the seven-year itch by the time dollars are laid at Linkfield Road. Children who are starting in grade 1 at Aspley State School, which is probably the nearest school to Linkfield Road, will be in high school; they will be at Aspley State High School. We will have had two Olympics and two Commonwealth Games by the time we hit 2026. (Time expired)

Dr GILLESPIE (Lyne) (16:08): It's great to talk about infrastructure when we've been through this amazing period of infrastructure being rolled out by the Liberals and Nationals in a coalition government since 2013. In fact, $32.8 billion has rolled down from Canberra out into regional Australia, and that is roads, bridges, water infrastructure, Roads to Recovery, the Black Spot Program and councils. In particular, in the Lyne electorate we have had an infrastructure bonanza.

Before the election was called, I had the pleasure of announcing over $8.5 million from the federal coalition's community development grants fund for public infrastructure that will trigger the development of a $455 million construction project: a master plan aged-care living complex, to kick it all off, on the banks of the Manning River in Taree. At the moment we've got the Forster Civic Precinct build, courtesy of a $6 million grant from the coalition government, which is leading to a massive public works and then a seniors-living complex on the banks of the waterways of Forster—real game changing commitments.

We have the major Pacific Highway upgrade, all the way up between Newcastle and the Queensland border, and that continues apace. There has been over $1 billion worth of work delivered in the time I've been in this parliament on the Pacific Highway upgrade in the Lyne electorate. We have also got other social infrastructure rolling out: new MRI licences for health facilities and funds towards radiotherapy services. We have got amazing expansion of aged-care facilities. Whether in Wauchope, the Manning Valley, the Tea Gardens Precinct or the Lorn-Largs-Bolwarra complex, it goes apace because we have social and physical infrastructure.

I might add that we've had 30 bridges funded and mostly completed in the Lyne electorate, courtesy of our Bridges Renewal Program. In the run-up to the last election I announced $8.6 million for the Brig O'Johnston Bridge replacement, near Clarence Town. That will be a real game changer and lead to the development of a whole new suburban region on the banks of the Williams River in Clarence Town. We have also got $5 million from the Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program going into the Buckets Way upgrade. We announced another $20 million from the Roads of Strategic Importance initiative for the Buckets Way upgrade. The list goes on. We have got infrastructure in roads and bridges going ahead in leaps and bounds across the Lyne electorate.

Across broader areas, my area and the whole of the North Coast is serviced by the M1 Pacific Motorway. It was really pleasing to see $1.6 billion announced for a 16-kilometre section going from Black Hill, across the Hunter River, over to Raymond Terrace. Those on the other side are criticising it because it's not happening for a couple of years. That is because we don't actually build all these infrastructure projects; we partner with local and state governments. State governments have got to get on board with this. You see the debacle in Victoria, where the Victorian Labor government is blocking all the infrastructure build. You've got the same thing happening in Queensland—a Labor government. We are building this massive inland rail—$9 billion worth of work. Where is the hold-up? It's not at the New South Wales or the Victorian end of the build; it's in Queensland. You've got the Second Range Crossing being delivered in Queensland. Around the country there is so much happening.

In the water infrastructure space, we have just passed the Future Drought Fund. We've got over $3.3 billion in funding already being used for a national water infrastructure program and a loan facility, to give extra money to state governments and other private builders of water supplies. Councils have also benefited from extra funds from the Roads to Recovery Program and the Black Spot Program. When you add the sum total of all these extra builds across regional Australia, they are making amazing changes to road safety and to transport, allowing bigger freight and more efficient freight to happen, letting tourism get into the regions, and it's a whole lot safer. (Time expired)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hogan): The discussion has concluded.
COMMITTEES
Crown Casino Committee
Appointment

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That:

(1) a Joint Select Committee into Crown Casino be appointed to inquire into and report on public allegations involving Crown Casino, with particular reference to:

(a) accusations of Crown Casino's links to organised crime, money laundering, improper activity by consular officials, tampering with poker machines, and domestic violence and drug trafficking on Crown property, including:

(i) the allegations raised in the House of Representatives on 18 October 2017 by the Member for Clark (the then-Member for Denison) concerning Crown Casino;

(ii) the Member for Clark's referral to the Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission on 24 July 2019 of the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation and the Victorian Police; and

(iii) reports by Nine newspapers and 60 Minutes in July 2019 concerning alleged criminal activity and misconduct involving Crown Casino;

(b) the actions taken or omissions made by state and federal agencies in responding to these allegations, and in particular the actions of the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation and the Victoria Police;

(c) the relationship between Crown Casino and governments, including the role of former members of state and federal parliaments; and

(d) any related matters;

(2) the committee may report from time to time but make an interim report by 30 October 2019 and a final report by 28 February 2020;

(3) the committee consist of 16 members, three Members of the House of Representatives to be nominated by the Chief Government Whip, three members of the House of Representatives to be nominated by the Chief Opposition Whip, two Members of the House of Representatives to be nominated by the Member for Clark, three Senators to be nominated by the Leader of the Government in the Senate; three Senators to be nominated by the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, one Senator to be nominated by the Leader of the Australian Greens, and one Senator from Centre Alliance;

(4) participating members may be appointed to the committee, may participate in hearings of evidence and deliberations of the committee, and have all the rights of members of the committee, but may not vote on any questions before the committee;

(5) three members of the committee constitute a quorum of the committee, provided that in a deliberative meeting the quorum shall include one Government member of either House and one non-Government member of either House;

(6) every nomination of a member of the committee be notified in writing to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

(7) the members of the committee hold office as a joint select committee until the House of Representatives is dissolved or expires by effluxion of time;

(8) the committee may proceed to the dispatch of business notwithstanding that not all members have been duly nominated and appointed and notwithstanding any vacancy;

(9) the committee elect a chair and a deputy chair;

(10) the deputy chair act as chair when the chair is absent from a meeting of the committee or the position of chair is temporarily vacant;

(11) in the event of an equality of voting, the chair, or the deputy chair when acting as chair, have a casting vote;

(12) the committee have power to appoint subcommittees consisting of three or more of its members, and to refer to any such subcommittee any of the matters which the committee is empowered to consider;

(13) the committee and any subcommittee have power to send for and examine persons and documents, to move from place to place, to sit in public or in private, and to report from time to time its proceedings and the evidence taken and such interim recommendations as it may deem fit;

(14) the committee be provided with all necessary staff, facilities and resources and be empowered to appoint persons with specialist knowledge for the purposes of the committee with the approval of the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

(15) the committee be empowered to print from day to day such papers and evidence as may be ordered by it, and a daily Hansard be published of such proceedings as take place in public;

(16) the committee have power to adjourn from time to time and to meet during any adjournment of the Senate and the House of Representatives; and

(17) a message be sent to the Senate acquainting it of this resolution and requesting that it concur and take action accordingly.
The **DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hogan)**: In accordance with standing order 133, I shall now proceed to put the question on the motion moved earlier today by the honourable member for Clark on which a division was called for and deferred in accordance with the standing order. No further debate is allowed.

The **SPEAKER**: The question is that the motion moved by the member for Clark be agreed to.

The House divided. [16:18]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

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**AYES**

- Bandt, AP (teller)
- Sharkie, RCC
- Wilkie, AD (teller)
- Haines, H
- Steggall, Z

**NOES**

- Albanese, AN
- Allen, K
- Andrews, KJ
- Archer, BK
- Bird, SL
- Broadbent, RE
- Burke, AS
- Butler, TM
- Chester, D
- Christensen, GR
- Claydon, SC
- Coleman, DB
- Conaghan, PJ
- Conroy, PM
- Dick, MD
- Drum, DK
- Entsch, WG
- Fitzgibbon, JA
- Flint, NJ
- Frydenberg, JA
- Georganas, S
- Gillespie, DA
- Gosling, LJ
- Hastie, AW
- Hayes, CP
- Hogan, KJ
- Hunt, GA
- Irons, SJ
- Kearney, G
- Keogh, MJ
- King, CF
- Laming, A
- Leeser, J
- Ley, SP
- Liu, G
- Marles, RD
- McBride, EM
- McIntosh, MI
- Mitchell, BK
- Morrison, SJ
- Mulino, D
- O'Brien, LS
- O'Dowd, KD
- Owens, JA
- Payne, AE
- Perrett, GD
- Pitt, KJ
- Porter, CC
- Ramsey, RE (teller)
- Rowland, MA

- Alexander, JG
- Aly, A
- Andrews, KL
- Bell, AM
- Bowen, CE
- Buchholz, S
- Burns, J
- Champion, ND
- Chesters, LM
- Clare, JD
- Coker, EA
- Collins, JM
- Connelly, V
- Coultou, M
- Dreyfus, MA
- Elliot, MJ
- Evans, TM
- Fletcher, PW
- Freelander, MR
- Gee, AR
- Giles, AJ
- Goodenough, IR
- Hammond, CM
- Hawke, AG
- Hill, JC
- Howarth, LR
- Husic, EN
- Joyce, BT
- Kelly, C
- Khalil, P
- King, MMH
- Landry, ML
- Leigh, AK
- Littleproud, D
- Marino, NB
- Martin, FB
- McCormack, MF
- McVeigh, JJ
- Mitchell, RG
- Morton, B
- Neumann, SK
- O'Brien, T
- O'Neil, CE
- Pasin, A
- Pearce, GB
- Phillips, FE
- Plibersek, TJ
- Price, ML
- Robert, SR
- Ryan, JC (teller)
Question negatived.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL’S SPEECH
Address-in-Reply

Consideration resumed of the motion:

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

May it please Your Excellency:

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

The SPEAKER (16:28): The question is that the address be agreed to. Before I call the honourable member for Sturt, I remind the House that this is the honourable member's first speech and I ask the House to extend to him the usual courtesies.

Mr STEVENS (Sturt) (16:28): Mr Speaker, can I start by congratulating you on your deserved re-election as Speaker of this parliament. I look forward to behaving myself to the extent that the rest of my colleagues seem to under your firm but fair chairmanship.

Can I also acknowledge all of my colleagues in the class of 2019. It has been a great pleasure to listen to the amazing stories of so many of my colleagues over the past few weeks. It seems to me that delivering your maiden speech is akin to delivering your own eulogy. Listening to my colleagues, I've decided it's important for me to hang in there a bit longer and try and put a bit more meat on the bone of what I have done so far in my life. I feel highly inadequate in the company of so many people who have come to this place having already achieved such great things and no doubt will all go on to still greater heights in this chamber.

It is my honour to represent the beautiful eastern and north-eastern suburbs of Adelaide. My electorate of Sturt is one of the largest in this chamber, with more than 120,000 constituents, stretching from the tollgate at the South Eastern Freeway to Grand Junction Road. Sturt is the home of the iconic Penfolds Magill Estate, and the birthplace of their flagship shiraz, the Penfolds Grange. We have produced four Nobel prize winners, most particularly Lord Howard Florey, who I believe, as the pioneer of the development of penicillin, has made the greatest humanitarian contribution to the world of any Australian in our history.

I was preselected as the Liberal Party candidate a mere eight weeks before the 18 May election. This was a short window of time for me to campaign throughout the electorate, but nonetheless it was still enough time for me to deepen the already strong connection I had with this beautiful part of the world. I was born in my electorate 36 years ago, and it is the greatest honour of my life to be able to represent the people of Sturt in the House of Representatives. They have placed their trust in me, and I will ensure that every day, especially those when I am here in this chamber, that I remember and respect the incredible responsibility that I have to serve them and always be motivated to act in their best interests as their member of parliament.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the creation of the seat of Sturt. I am honoured to become only the sixth person to represent the seat in that 70 years. My immediate predecessor, Christopher Pyne, represented the people of Sturt for a record 26 years. He was the longest-serving non-Labor federal member of parliament in South Australian history. This is a record I do not intend to break. Christopher's legacy for his electorate, his state and his nation is of a remarkable scale and longevity. In particular, his contribution in the defence portfolios

CHAMBER
during his final term in the parliament will transform the capability of our armed forces and provide a baseload to the South Australian industrial capacity for decades to come.

His further legacy, whether viewed positively or not by members of this House, is my presence in this chamber today. Christopher Pyne has been a dear friend, mentor and political ally of mine for almost 20 years. I was fortunate to have his strong support for my candidacy to enter the parliament and succeed him as the member for Sturt. He is here in the gallery today and I wish to thank him again for his support of me and my career in the past and hopefully also into the future.

Becoming a member of this parliament represents the third major career change of my adult life. I have been lucky to always commence a new career pathway in unexpected circumstances and with some regret at leaving behind the one before. I spent most of my twenties working for the iconic South Australian merino wool company, Michell. I was the commercial manager and subsequently general manager of the textile division, and spent many years travelling throughout the world marketing Australian merino wool to textile companies and fashion houses. My customer base was in Europe and North America, and my supply chain stretched through Asia, Africa and the South Pacific. My time working in the commodity textiles sector was transformative for my commercial acumen, but particularly for my understanding and appreciation of the fact that we produce some of the highest quality primary products in the world and that exports underpin the capacity of our nation of 25 million people to continue to grow our wealth and living standards to the benefit of all Australians.

Six years ago, the now Premier of South Australia, Steven Marshall, who is also in the gallery today, became leader of the South Australian Liberal Party. He offered me the opportunity to serve as his Chief of Staff, which I accepted with a great enthusiasm to be a part of leading the South Australian team back into government after a prolonged period in opposition. The pathway back to government took a little longer than either of us planned, but in March last year I was honoured to play my part in the Liberal Party's successful campaign that saw Steven Marshall become Premier and the Liberal Party returned to government after 16 years of Labor rule.

South Australia now has a precious opportunity that is rare in our history. We have two Liberal governments at the state and federal level, neither of which faces an election for almost three years. The last time this occurred was in the late 1990s.

This presents a phenomenal opportunity for reformist policy making. We all know that complex problems and opportunities are difficult to pursue when one eye is firmly on the ballot box. Some reforms take time to demonstrate their full value to the people, particularly when up against the modern 24-hour news cycle.

I am excited for the opportunities for my state that will be possible with the Marshall and Morrison governments working together to drive the prosperity of my state and fully exploit the opportunities we have, underpinned by recent decisions around naval shipbuilding, the national Space Agency, our city deal and the massive co-investment in skills, training and apprenticeships for the jobs of the future. This can be a golden era, and I will ensure that I play my part so that we take every opportunity to achieve the full value of what this period can provide.

I first started following politics in the early days of the Howard government. In particular, as I became more inquisitive about politics, one of the major industrial relations battles of my lifetime was playing out on the Australian waterfront. This was one of the many battles over the decades between a recalcitrant union movement and reformist governments seeking to enhance productivity and thus prosperity for our economy.

The labour movement have succeeded in achieving important reforms in this nation, such as the minimum wage, the eight-hour day and child labour laws. These all date from the nineteenth century.

The role of the union movement in the 20th century deserves close scrutiny and critique. The waterfront battles of the nineties were nasty, but were of course only one of many instances of union warlords seeking to protect their own sinecures and indulgences at the expense of reforms designed to lift workers' wages and the living standards of all Australians.

In the early 20th century, elements of the union movement became a bastion of the Communist Party. During the Second World War, industrial action caused significant disruption to the war effort, particularly the regular and comprehensive strikes in the New South Wales coal sector and even the disruption of the loading of critical supplies at Australian ports destined for Allied forces in the South Pacific. For shame!

In the postwar period, there were countless instances of labour movement collusion with the Soviet Union. Industrial sabotage, pattern bargaining, wildcat strike action, blockading of ports, blackballing of corporate appointments, compulsory collective bargaining—I could go on and on and on.

In the 21st century, the old dinosaur apparatus of the labour movement can stay in place as far as I'm concerned, as it has been very helpful in collapsing union membership amongst the workforce but even more
importantly in assisting the Labor Party to lose elections. It is time, however, to place proper and sensible boundaries around the activities of the union movement, and others, when it comes to our democracy.

In the Liberal Party, like all formal political actors, we are strong and fierce fighters at election time. We are also subject to proper and appropriate transparency, oversight, disclosure and integrity measures so as to ensure that the people of Australia have confidence that they decide who makes decisions on their behalf.

I have noticed, in recent years, the forces of the left establish a kind of political paramilitary capability that is able to operate outside the rules that formal parties have to observe. The recent election in particular highlighted the urgent need for electoral reform in the interests of safeguarding our democracy.

Having made my antipathy towards the union movement abundantly clear, I would like to balance the scales by talking about a political movement of great virtue and distinction within our democracy—the Liberal Party. I first joined the Liberal Party at the age of 16; thus, later this year will be my 20th anniversary of membership. When I joined the party, John Howard was Prime Minister and John Olsen was the South Australian Premier.

I never had any hesitation as to my political leanings, even at that young age, but I also had a desire to become politically active. I felt that good Liberal governments are only possible if they have the support of a strong party membership. When I first joined the Liberal Party, I never thought that, nearly 20 years later, I would represent my party on the ballot paper for a seat in the House of Representatives. I never could have imagined that the army of volunteers and supporters whose ranks I joined would select, through a democratic preselection process, me to be their candidate and would then support me with their time and money to become a member of parliament. The Liberal Party has given me so much in my life. I have served in a variety of capacities over the years, but to be a member of the federal parliamentary Liberal party room is a unique and cherished honour. The recent election result was a particular highlight of my time in professional politics. Apart from my own personal success, more importantly the election victory for our party and the coalition was one of my proudest moments as a Liberal Party member.

I wish to pay tribute and thank the federal director, Andrew Hirst; federal president, Nick Greiner; and the entire federal campaign team. I also thank south Australian state director, Sascha Meldrum; state president John Olsen; and the team at the South Australian headquarters. Most importantly, to Prime Minister Scott Morrison: congratulations on your leadership of our campaign, one which answered the deepest prayers of so many of our most loyal supporters. It was a night when I felt so proud to be an Australian. It was a result that showed that Australians will not be turned against each other and that aspiration and a fair go are central to the values that we all hold dear.

My electorate of Sturt is named for Captain Charles Sturt, who, amongst many fine achievements, was the first European to explore the River Murray. This river system is the lifeblood of my electorate and the 1.6 million South Australians whose water supply it provides. Mark Twain once said, 'Whiskey's for drinking and water's for fighting over.' This musing was beginning to be put to the test amongst the Murray-Darling Basin communities at the beginning of this century as the millennium drought exposed the reality that the river system was under enormous pressure from the over-extraction of water and that it faced the real risk of environmental collapse if changes were not made to the way in which we managed the use of what, in many ways, is the most precious natural resource on the driest continent on earth.

John Howard provided exceptional leadership to this process. It was his government that legislated for the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, which was subsequently developed by the Rudd-Gillard government and implemented in 2011. It is a plan to ensure the environmental health and sustainability of the entire basin system and to support and share this burden across all of the communities that it sustains. It brings together all levels of government under national leadership to work together in the best interests of a common consensus that we must have a sustainable river system and that without cooperation we cannot achieve that long-term sustainability.

The plan is far from universally supported. In fact, I think it is fair to say that there is no particular stakeholder, community or government that has had its expectations satisfied under the plan. This proves that the balance of the plan is fair and equitable. If the plan were loved by one section of the basin, it would prove that others were bearing an unreasonable burden. Some elements of upstream communities would probably rejoice at the plan's collapse. I have often heard community and political leaders from east of the South Australian border deride the fact that a single drop of water crosses into my state at all. This is, for the most part, in jest, but it demonstrates that undercurrent of an attitude, prevalent with some, that the paramount environmental objectives of the plan should be called into question.

What concerns me greatly is the recent development of a culture of undermining the plan from amongst those who I would have thought should be dedicated to the plan's success. Having spent more than 10 years getting to where we are today, there should be unity around focusing on implementation of what has been a herculean task.
to achieve this fragile consensus. Not so, it seems, for South Australian Labor, Green and Centre Alliance politicians and the ABC's Four Corners program. They have joined a coalition of forces that would seek to undermine the plan and, thus, potentially see it completely blown apart. Recent calls for further royal commissions, inquiries and even the complete suspension of the implementation of the plan are a recipe for undermining a process that will genuinely lead to a secure future for the river. It is bad enough that some would not be prepared to share the burden of the action that must be taken for the health of our river system. It is absolutely appalling that there are those who are wilfully or unwittingly contributing to a faux scepticism over the plan's credibility that could only lead to their home state being dramatically worse off.

The interests of South Australia and the future health of the Murray-Darling Basin are best served by a singular focus on implementing the plan that has been developed, in full and as quickly as possible. Any distraction from that objective should be called out for what it is: mischievous attention seeking at the expense of the long-term national interest. I am a strong supporter of keeping our focus on implementation so as to fulfil the important targets for environmental flows. To support the plan is to support a healthy Murray-Darling whilst maximising sustainable farm production across the basin.

I am inherently optimistic about the future of this great country of ours. We have achieved great things in our past, but I believe the present and our future are filled with promise and should be looked forward to with excitement. We live in the lucky country. Certainly, when they were handing out continents, not many countries were given one to themselves. There can be a tendency for some to refer to previous periods of national prosperity as if they are glory days that will never be rivalled again. I know there is a view that positive stories don't sell newspapers. Many members of the commentariat seem loath to engage on the fundamental positives about our country. We can always do better, and there are no doubt risks to our current prosperity, such as the election of a Labor government at some point in the future. But, fundamentally, we should have great pride in where we are, what we have achieved and what lies ahead.

When I was a boy, unemployment, interest rates and inflation were all in double digits. Today, our unemployment rate is 5.2 per cent, which, in my undergraduate days, was the economic orthodoxy of full employment. We have a healthy trade surplus and are situated in the economic engine room of the planet, with China and India on our doorstep, not to mention the rest of Asia. There was a time when we talked of the tyranny of distance, given our antipodean orientation from the economic markets of the North Atlantic. Now we have what I would describe as the reverse, the opportunity of proximity, thanks to the economic might of our Asian neighbourhood but, more importantly, the fact that geographic vicinity is not the overwhelming factor in trading opportunities that it once was.

Later this year, the United Kingdom is due to depart the European Common Market, which it joined when it was the European Economic Community in 1973. This, I firmly believe, will be Australia's Berlin Wall moment, when our greatest historical economic partner, which has been closed off from us for more than 40 years, will suddenly be free to once again engage in a deep economic and trading relationship with us in a comprehensive way. The United Kingdom is a First World country, double the economic size of Australia. We share deep cultural, legal and consumption similarities. Australia also has an enormous capacity to compete with a vast array of Britain's imports from Europe—of commodities, produce, manufactured goods and services—that have had an appalling protectionist advantage over us for so many decades. I see an independent trading relationship with the UK, free from Europe's nasty chokehold, as one of the great economic opportunities for our country in my lifetime. It also presents an even greater opportunity for us to seriously consider how the Commonwealth of Nations can be used much more effectively as a vehicle to deepen our economic and trade ties. I strongly support efforts towards multilateral trade liberalisation through the WTO negotiating rounds, but the reality is that bilateral negotiations have represented far greater progress for our country in recent decades. Brexit allows us to breathe new life into the Commonwealth and presents a further opportunity for our country to open up new markets to drive the long, sustained economic prosperity of this country that I am confident will continue for a long time into the future.

I have already thanked my predecessor Christopher Pyne and the leadership of the Liberal Party campaign. I wish to also thank my unbelievably dedicated army of volunteers on the Sturt campaign—numbering at nearly 500 people. Thank you in particular to my campaign manager, Alex May, for her spectacular leadership, hard work and strategic nous that meant every element of our campaign was comprehensively resourced and to the highest of standards.

I mentioned my time working for Premier Steven Marshall, and I again wish to thank him for the extensive involvement he has had in the development and progression of my career, as well as his friendship, advice and support for more than a decade of working together in a wide variety of capacities. To my dear friends Senator Simon Birmingham and Senator Anne Ruston, who are sitting here with me now in the chamber: I had the honour
to attend both of your maiden speeches, and I am just as honoured to be joining you for my parliamentary career and to now be able to call both of you colleagues. I would also like to acknowledge and thank my good friends and colleagues Vincent Tarzia, the Speaker of the South Australian House of Assembly; and John Gardner, the member for Morialta and Minister for Education in the South Australian parliament, who are both here in the chamber today.

Lastly, I wish to thank my parents, Richard and Penny, and my sister Kate for their support to me, not just during my campaign for parliament but throughout my entire life. Kate and I were so fortunate to have had the happiest of childhoods. We were well-educated, had fantastic family holidays, were supported along the life pathways that we chose for ourselves, and had a supportive and nurturing structure around us that endures to this day. Mum and Dad, thank you for voting for me in my preselection, assuming that you did, and for your contribution and support throughout the campaign.

It is humbling and deeply touching to receive the support of so many people as part of my journey to this chamber. I have come to this place to serve my electorate, my state and my nation. I have also come here to fight for my electorate, my state and my nation. I have also come here to win those fights, because our democracy embraces at its essence the adversarial process—the battle of ideas; a contest between competing ideologies and policy prescriptions.

There are some that claim that politics and the political system has lost its way and become too nasty and that there is a great lack of confidence in our democratic institutions. Some of these criticisms may be justified, and I'm sure we can do better in our civility and tone, but I comprehensively reject the proposition that we should try and agree with each other more and seek to more regularly achieve consensus around the solutions to the great challenges that lie ahead.

When the political leadership of a nation is in furious agreement and consensus, it's because that nation is a dictatorship. The people of Germany were spared the petty point scoring and squabbles of parliamentary debate when someone burnt down the Reichstag in 1933. Conversely, our mother parliament in Westminster enshrined the supremacy and power of the people and representative democracy in the most comprehensive way possible by arresting, putting on trial and executing the sovereign in 1649.

As I stand in this equally august chamber with the great honour and privilege of representing my fellow Australians as one of their members of the House of Representatives, I can only say that I hope and pray to serve them with dignity, humility and diligence. I am here for the fight and for the contest, because we are all ambitious for our country's future. I hope that history will judge that my contribution as a member of this House was worthy of the great people and nation that I have the honour to represent.

I commend the address-in-reply to the House.

Debate adjourned.

COMMITTEES
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights

Report


Report made a parliamentary paper in accordance with standing order 39(e).

Mr GOODENOUGH: by leave—I rise to speak on the tabling of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights' Human rights scrutiny report: report 3 of 2019.

As this is the committee's first report of the new parliament, I would like to take the opportunity to remind the House of this committee's important role. As committee chair, I would also like to acknowledge and welcome new and continuing members of the committee.

The committee is a technical scrutiny committee which examines and reports to the parliament on the compatibility of bills and legislative instruments with Australia's international human rights obligations, in accordance with its legislative mandate under the Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011.

As usual, this report contains a credible technical examination of legislation with Australia's obligations under international human rights law. Of the bills and instruments examined in this report, a number have been restored to the Notice Paper or reintroduced in relevant substantially similar terms to those previously reported on. In these cases, the committee has taken the approach of reiterating its views as set out in its previous reports, including in relation to a number of bills scheduled for debate this week, namely:

- the Treasury Laws Amendment (Consumer Data Right) Bill;
the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Amendment (Sunsetting of Special Powers Relating to Terrorism Offences);
the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment (Ensuring Integrity); and
the Royal Commissions Amendment (Private Sessions).

Additionally, 61 bills have been assessed in this report as not raising human rights concerns.

As part of its role, the committee seeks to explore questions of human rights compatibility through dialogue with relevant ministers and officials to identify and explore questions of human rights compatibility. To this end, in this report the committee is seeking further information in relation to two new pieces of legislation, including the Fisheries Management Regulations 2019. By authorising the collection and disclosure of identifying personal information, these regulations engage a number of human rights, including the right to privacy. There is also a question as to whether the instrument may permit the disclosure of information overseas, including to foreign governments in circumstances where there may be a risk that a person may be subject to the death penalty or to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. This risk was not addressed in the statement of compatibility. Accordingly, the committee has sought further advice from the minister as to the human rights compatibility of the regulations.

With these comments I commend the committee's Human rights scrutiny report: report 3 of 2019 to the House.

**BILLS**

**Australian Veterans' Recognition (Putting Veterans and Their Families First) Bill 2019**

*First Reading*

Bill received from the Senate and read a first time.

Ordered that the second reading be made an order of the day for the next sitting day.

**Farm Household Support Amendment Bill 2019**

*Returned from Senate*

Message received from the Senate returning the bill without amendment.

**Treasury Laws Amendment (Consumer Data Right) Bill 2019**

*Second Reading*

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

to which the following amendment was moved:

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

"whilst not declining to give the bill a second reading, the House notes the needs of Australian consumers to be satisfied that their data is secure and that they have control over its use, modification and storage before, during and after an authorised transfer, in particular:

(1) the right for customers to request the deletion of their personal data held by companies;

(2) the need to prevent the use of technologies which may operate outside the regime, such as screen-scraping technology; and

(3) the impact of this bill on vulnerable consumers".

**Mr STEPHEN JONES** (Whitlam) (17:01): by leave—In continuation, Labor supports these reforms. The competition benefits are clear. It's time to act. But it's important to know that the Treasury Laws Amendment (Consumer Data Right) Bill 2019 is not the end of the line. It simply establishes a framework for consumers to access and transfer data between businesses. It's not a comprehensive framework for controlling your personal information, whether that be personal information held by banks or other financial institutions or personal information more broadly.

More needs to be done to improve the ability of ordinary Australians to control their data and their privacy. The ACCC's recent digital platforms inquiry supported a range of improvements to privacy protections. Firstly, it recommended giving consumers a right to delete across the economy—that is, allowing them to require data holders to erase their personal information; secondly, it recommended introducing rights for individuals to bring court actions against organisations that violate their privacies; thirdly, it recommended raising penalties for breaches of the Privacy Act; fourthly, it recommended strengthening consent and notification requirements; and, fifthly, it recommended prohibiting unfair contracts. We would encourage the government to consider each of these recommendations to help build a safer information economy. We would go further and say that it is
absolutely essential that legislation be brought before the House to enact the recommendations of the excellent report of the ACCC.

We're also concerned about the existence of what is known within the sector as screen-scraping technologies. Some financial service companies are asking customers to provide them with sensitive login information, often in breach of the terms of service of their originating financial institution, and they are thereby scraping the data off their screens. The purpose is not necessarily nefarious; in fact, they are doing this in the absence of any other regime which enables the authorised transfer of data from one financial institution to another or to an intermediary. What we say is that something needs to be done which would further regulate or preclude these sorts of technologies. We shouldn't do this precipitously, but we now have, through this bill, a regime—a code, if you like—for dealing with the transfer of data within and between financial institutions, including banks. It should be seen as a complete code. If more needs to be done to deal with these other technologies then we will be, and are, calling on the government to act in this space.

More needs to be done to ensure that vulnerable consumers are not locked out of mainstream financial systems. All Australians deserve to be included within the economy. All Australians deserve to have access to credit services. We expect that the ACCC will work hard to prevent predatory lenders and other fringe financial services from using the consumer data right reforms or the absence of extensive coverage in other areas not covered by this bill to discriminate against or otherwise harm customers and target the most vulnerable of consumers. We will be watching carefully. We'll be supporting the legislation in this House and in the other place, but we will be watching carefully. We believe this bill, as important as it is, is not the last word on the matter. We commend the legislation to the House.

Mr THISTLETHWAITE (Kingsford Smith) (17:05): I'm speaking in support of the amendment that's been moved by the shadow minister. More generally, this bill, the Treasury Laws Amendment (Consumer Data Right) Bill 2019, creates a consumer data right framework with the intent to allow individuals and businesses to easily access consumer transaction data held by businesses. It's more commonly known as the open banking regime, because it will initially apply to the banking industry before being expanded to other industries throughout the country. It authorises secure access to a person's personal data by accredited third parties known as authorised data recipients.

Generally, Labor supports these reforms. But in the consultations that have been undertaken in respect of the bill many organisations raised issues concerning the use of data by particular organisations and privacy associated with the use of that data, and also about ensuring that people from low socioeconomic backgrounds in particular aren't locked out of the economy or locked out of credit associated with the discriminatory use of data against them.

The bill allows for the consumer data framework to be progressively extended across different sectors of the economy. It starts with banking and will then extend to energy, and telecommunications will follow later. Sectors will only be designed following extensive consultation and assessment by the ACCC and the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner. Under the framework, the ACCC will be empowered to set rules, accredit participants, oversee data standards and take enforcement action where consumers' rights are being seriously or systemically breached.

The reforms, if properly implemented, have the potential for the consumer data right to create a more dynamic economy through which new players, new products and competition can increase. Increasing competition, particularly in financial services and in the energy sector, should be one of the great benefits of this reform. Increased competition should come through the ability of consumers to shift between service providers and require service providers to give customers open access to their data in shifting. That data can relate to products that the consumer has been using, terms and conditions associated with the use of those products and transaction records, as well as credit histories and the like. Importantly, the consumer should be able to direct where the data goes.

On what we've seen with these reforms, Labor believe that more work needs to be done to improve the ability of ordinary Australians to control their own data and be satisfied and secure that their data is being used in the proper manner. The process of developing this highly complex initiative has been far from methodical. It reflects the government's rush to get this legislation introduced instead of creating good policy for a future economy.

There's been significant stakeholder concern that key details remain unclear, that processes designed for efficiency don't line up with existing rules or legislation and that a two-tiered system is simply unworkable. Some of those issues relate to consumers' ability to provide informed consent in relation to their data rights and significant knowledge gaps in the community about what sharing their data would mean. Many stakeholders have flagged a big concern with general education of the Australian public about what this all means: their rights
associated with what data can be transferred, how it can be transferred and what can be done if someone feels that their data privacy has been breached. I know that there are provisions within the legislation and the explanatory memorandum goes through the role of the Privacy Act and also that of the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, but nonetheless these concerns in the community do exist, and it's incumbent upon the government to make sure that those concerns are allayed, that they're consulting with individuals and groups who express those concerns and that they don't rush this policy.

We also must ensure that vulnerable consumers aren't locked out of the mainstream financial system. There have been concerns raised that people may have an adverse credit rating associated with a particular period in their life when something went wrong. It's not characteristic of their financial transaction history or indeed their financial security history, yet that data may be shared in a manner which locks them out of the mainstream financial system—in particular access to banking products, financial services, energy products and other products for sale in the wider community.

All Australians deserve to be included in our economy, and we expect that the ACCC will work hard to prevent predatory lenders and other fringe financial service providers from using consumer data right reforms to discriminate against and target the most vulnerable consumers. That's something that Labor is deeply concerned about. It's implicit in the second reading amendment that's been moved by the shadow minister, and it's something that we'll be seeking to interrogate the government further about as this bill proceeds through the parliament, particularly in the Senate.

Labor will watch carefully to ensure that vigorous regulations, rules and other legislative instruments set out under this bill protect the rights of consumers. We live in a world where, increasingly, data is driving decisions around people's right to participate within the economy and within society. It's a fact that we can't escape, but we as a parliament can put in place the necessary measures to ensure that people can feel safe about providing data and that the organisations that have access to that data aren't manipulating it or using it for ulterior motives that disadvantage people and consumers and prevent them from participating in the economy.

One of the great benefits of this reform should be consistency of data that's transferred, particularly around financial transactions and participation in energy schemes and the like, and ensuring that the data meets particular guidelines and that, when it is transferred, it is transferred in a manner that ensures that it's easy to understand; that consumers, importantly, understand what is being transferred; and that the provider of the transfer and the receiver of the transferred information are operating on the same platform to ensure consistency of that data. That should, of course, result in better outcomes for consumers and improved efficiency not only within industries but in the broader economy.

On the whole, this is a reform that's been coming for some time. It follows reforms that have occurred in other jurisdictions throughout the world that haven't been without fault and have had issues. Australia can certainly learn from some of the issues that have come up in other countries associated with this reform. Again we reiterate the point that more work needs to be done by the government, particularly around those privacy concerns and ensuring that vulnerable consumers aren't locked out of particular sectors of the economy and Australian society more generally.

Mr HUSIC (Chifley) (17:14): Over 10 years ago, a bloke in a black skivvy strode onto a stage and declared to the world that the company he headed up would be releasing a new product that consumers would never have witnessed before, and that was this—the iPhone. At that point in time, there was a lot of excitement about what this new device would do but not much conception of how it would transpire. One of the great benefits of this reform should be consistency of data that's transferred, particularly around financial transactions and participation in energy schemes and the like, and ensuring that the data meets particular guidelines and that, when it is transferred, it is transferred in a manner that ensures that it's easy to understand; that consumers, importantly, understand what is being transferred; and that the provider of the transfer and the receiver of the transferred information are operating on the same platform to ensure consistency of that data. That should, of course, result in better outcomes for consumers and improved efficiency not only within industries but in the broader economy.

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I'm thinking a lot about this example, about not knowing how the introduction of one method might lead to a multiplicity of new ways of doing things. I'm thinking about how that emerges, particularly in reference to what we're discussing today and opening up the use of data. In the banking sector, in the first instance, what might that do? A lot of people will be thinking about what parliament is considering today and they will wonder what it all means. This opens up all that data that used to sit in your major financial institution. It's not just about being able to select a product between big banks. It's smaller, more innovative firms, thinking of ways they can come up with a better deal or a better financial product or service, as opposed to what has been offered by a major financial institution. The way they can do that is by analysing your transaction data and coming up with a better solution, something that might benefit you more significantly than you've been accustomed to in the past.

There are people who look at this reform and wonder whether or not it's worth it, and it is a lot of money. From what I recall from the explanatory memorandum when this legislation was first introduced to the parliament in the last term, the compliance cost is somewhere near $100 million for our major financial institutions. This is a reform that does not come cheap for those major banks. There are some issues, potentially, for those banks in being able
to upgrade older IT legacy systems, and this has been reflected upon by people such as Wayne Byres, the head of APRA. But, in spite of the costs and concerns, it is a reform whose time has well and truly come.

It has taken a bit to get here. There are a number of reasons for that. I think it is important, firstly, to recognise Scott Farrell, who did the opening banking report. I recall an article by James Eyers in the Financial Review that referred to Treasury officials saying that Scott Farrell's work was some of the most professional and well thought through work that had been done. The Farrell report was also recognised by Australia's fintech sector as being well thought through. It was also recognised as being gutsy in part, in that it was standing up to big interests that wanted to set things up, in terms of open banking, in a particular way. Farrell had the courage to stand up and say no, and he went counter to industry interests. He suggested, for example, much bigger roles for regulators such as the ACCC. I think the Farrell report is a terrific reflection on Scott Farrell. This report was brought down and put into the government's lap to respond to some time ago.

It has taken a bit to get here and I make two reflections. One is something, I think, should be sheeted home to the government. Another is something that's happening more broadly in society when it comes to people's appetite for the use of their data by bigger firms. The government has had three cracks at the legislation that we are discussing today. In consultation with stakeholders, when I was the shadow minister, around the shape of this legislation, one of the prevailing criticisms that came through from a number of stakeholders was that the government had attempted a number of times to put out draft forms of legislation—and I do commend them on it; they were up-front about it—but what I think a lot of people were critical of was that the government did not listen adequately, deeply, in a considered way, to some of the concerns that were being raised. That is what prompted us, in Labor, to argue that this needed to go to a Senate inquiry.

Although the government put the legislation out for public comment in a number of instances, it then finally decided, regardless of the criticisms, that it would—and off the top of my head, it brought it into the parliament in around late October or November last year—just put it through nonetheless. That's not the way that this legislation should be managed, given the impact. To be frank about this, I think that the Senate process strengthened this legislation that is now before the House. I understand that, as a result of some of the changes that have been made, consumer groups like CHOICE have now said that they are quite comfortable with what is being put forward. But that certainly wasn't the case through the course of last year.

This could have been done quicker if the government had actually taken on board some of the concerns. We're talking about consumers having control over their banking data and being able to authorise someone who will be accredited to obtain that from a data holder and then analyse it and come up with a product that would best suit consumers. But there was a point in time that the government actively contemplated allowing for a situation where data holders, major institutions, would be able to charge consumers for accessing that data, which is quite simply unacceptable, because a lot of that data could be easily transported over at the request of a consumer to get a better deal. In fact, the ACCC had specifically indicated in earlier versions of their rules framework that this would be a situation, the charging for the use of data, that they would not be comfortable with. I understand this is no longer going to be the case and the government, from what I am led to believe, will not have this type of thing occur. But, again, these are the types of things that people had been raising on a number of instances with the government and had been saying that this needed to be fixed, and the government took their time to fix it. It is good that we've got to a stage where, as a result of people being able to express their views about the shape of the government legislation, the government have finally responded and we have seen some changes as a result of that.

But there is something broader that's happening in the community, where there is a greater concern starting to emerge about the way in which data has been gathered by big firms and the way it's being used. The Labor opposition has, through the second reading amendment put forward by the shadow minister, rightly pointed out concerns around privacy. While it has been considered deeply in the development of this process, this will still be a system where people will be concerned that very sensitive data relating to peoples' financial circumstances may go somewhere inappropriately or not be dealt with. The big challenge for business and government is to demonstrate respect for data—respect in the way that it's captured, respect in the way that it's stored and respect in the way that it's used. Organisations like businesses and governments that fail to demonstrate a respect for data should face very forthright public criticism about that. Sometimes in some jurisdictions where open banking reforms have been undertaken you have seen big financial institutions suddenly discover a respect for data that didn't seem to exist previously. I would hate to think that some of the big institutions would use privacy and cybersecurity as ways to slow down open banking reform, but in some jurisdictions they have.

To be honest, it is not just smaller firms. Smaller accredited firms under this system will need to make absolutely sure and be confident that they are storing data in a secure way and to the confidence of the public. But that is not to say that just because you're a smaller firm you can't store data well. We have seen major data breaches that have affected major financial institutions. Most recently, with the NAB there were, I think, 13,000
people affected as the result of a recent breach. Size does not matter in this but respect for data does, and making sure you've got robust cybersecurity systems in place to protect data is very important. When setting up frameworks like open banking, it is certainly a lot more incumbent on government and businesses, either as data holders or accredited providers—or accredited firms in this case—to go above and beyond to demonstrate that their cybersecurity systems are at a grade where consumers can have utter confidence that their data is being treated well.

One of the two tests, in terms of what we're looking at with the open banking system, is awareness. In other jurisdictions where open banking has been rolled out, awareness has not necessarily met the effort that's been applied to put these systems in place. The result is: if people aren't aware that they can get a benefit out of an opening banking system, and it's not used, we're likely to spend $100 million on compliance effort, in the Australian context, for a system that may not necessarily be utilised by the broader consumer population. So that is an issue.

The other big test of this is: this cannot be a reform that just benefits high-net-worth individuals. For this open banking reform to be successful, it needs to demonstrate that it will benefit not just high-net-worth individuals but all consumers. I think this is a challenge particularly for the fintech sector, which I know has been champing at the bit to get access to this. It has been using some systems, which are reflected in the second reading amendment, such as screen scraping. Screen scraping had to be used by the fintech sector because we did not have an open banking regime in place. It should not have to be used if open banking becomes a reality. It is a practice that should become a relic of a bygone era. These are the types of practices that had to exist because there wasn't a system in place. Certainly we hope that the broader fintech community can demonstrate that this will be a reform that will generate benefit for not just wealthy people but lower income groups as well.

I want to reflect on the point that was made by the member for Kingsford Smith in relation to low-socioeconomic groups. For some time the RBA has been charting that cash is being relied upon less, in terms of currency, and that cashless and electronic systems, some of which will be promoted under this regime, are being used more and more. I do not think we are thinking deeply about the transition to a cashless society and its impact on lower income groups and, in particular, older citizens.

In the UK, it is being considered by the UK parliament. In fact, the Treasury Committee is starting to look at the impact of cashless societies on particularly vulnerable groups as we move towards using payWave, Apple Pay and Android Pay. Some people will be able to embrace that payment mechanism quite well. Others rely on cash and ATMs. As ATMs start to be withdrawn, what will happen to the older person, or the person who doesn't necessarily rely upon a credit card or an automated system to access their cash? If the UK parliament's considering it, I would strongly urge the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Economics to look at the issue of the impact of a cashless society on lower-income people and the older people in our community who still use those mechanisms to get access to their cash.

I've seen it in my own community in Shalvey, where a local facility that had been provided by the Commonwealth Bank was withdrawn. People were still using bankbooks and passbooks to get access to cash. When the CBA withdrew that facility, it had a big impact on older Australians in my area. So, again, while we are thinking of great new things and technological advances that are being unleashed as a result of some of the regimes that are being introduced here, we should also be taking time to think about those who may not necessarily get swept up in the technological revolution that we're all experiencing and enjoying and ensure that we have a system that is fit for many, not just for some on the basis of technology. We should be considering that digital divide.

Dr LEIGH (Fenner) (17:29): A zettabyte is a billion terabytes. A decade ago, global annual data generation was less than one zettabyte. When the coalition came to office in 2013, it was a few zettabytes. Now it is around 25 zettabytes and projected next year to go to 40 zettabytes. We currently produce the same amount of digital data every two days as we did in a year in 2002. The rise of the Internet of Things and wearables technologies and falling storage costs have meant that data is ubiquitous and has the potential to greatly improve the quality of social services and business productivity.

In areas such as health data, energy and social services, it is possible to get significant advantages to the benefit of all Australians, and yet Australia currently lags behind other countries when it comes to access to data. As a report from the Australian Data Archive in 2016 noted Australia is well behind the UK, US and most of Europe on open data. This is impacting Australia's ability to be competitive [in research] and its standing [in the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences] discipline. A study by the World Wide Web Foundation in 2016 ranked Australia's open data performance overall at 10th. In its impact category, we were a lousy 19th. Open data availability in Australia, according to that report, was
particularly low compared to countries with similar governance structures, including not only larger countries, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, but also New Zealand, which has used longitudinal data from anonymised linked administrative datasets to identify young people who are particularly at risk. I gave a speech in Auckland last year about New Zealand's integrated data infrastructure systems and the way in which Australia could learn from that in order to deal with deep deprivation, linking together data that we have from the criminal justice system, education records and child support in order to provide quick, targeted intervention to assist extremely vulnerable populations.

Open data has great potential to improve outcomes in areas such as energy, telecommunications, financial services and insurance. But we need to make sure, as other speakers in this debate have noted, that we get right the issues around privacy. Shoshana Zuboff's book *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism* talks about the way in which the ubiquity of data collection has expanded in scale—the zettabyte figures I began with. And in scope we are now collecting data in areas we previously didn't. She gives the example of Gmail's use of targeted advertisements based on words within emails—a form of surveillance which would have been an anathema to many people in the early days of the web but which is now taken for granted by Gmail users. In terms of activities, she gives the example of Pokemon Go, which was monetised through collaborations with private firms that paid to have Pokemon Go users attracted to areas outside their businesses, using big data to change real-world activity.

A report by the Productivity Commission reported that, while seven out of 10 Australians use social media and eight out of 10 participate in customer loyalty schemes, only four in 10 read privacy policies online and many Australians are unaware of the amount of data that is collected about them and how it is collected. But the Productivity Commission also made the point that increasing data use need not increase risk, that the sheer volume of data is not necessarily the driving factor and that we can construct rules that ensure that data is protected. One of the pleasing examples of this is the use of tokenisation in the area of credit cards. The likelihood that your credit card number will be stolen is now markedly lower than it was before the era of tokenisation. Used smartly, tokenising systems can ensure that we get far fewer data breaches than have happened in the past, where we've seen considerable numbers of data breaches take place in government and non-government agencies and that's undermined public confidence in data.

A terrific report done by Danny Gilligan for Reinventure uses the analogy of a brake and an accelerator, making the case that government has two roles when it comes to the data economy. It has a role of encouraging innovation—that's the accelerator role—through bodies such as Data61, and it has a role of ensuring that privacy is protected; you can think of that as the brake role. But he points out that in Australia the brake and the accelerator frequently sit in quite different parts of the government. Data61 sits distinct from bodies such as the Critical Infrastructure Centre, which is responsible for security and privacy. Danny Gilligan distinguishes that from Singapore, which brings together the brake and the accelerator much more effectively, ensuring that the Singapore government is speaking as one voice to potential innovators and ensuring that strategies such as tokenisation are pursued in order to avoid the risk of data breaches.

The productivity potential is significant. In their *Commonwealth orange book 2019* the Grattan Institute said:

- **In banking**, government should make it easier for customers to switch banks, and make it easier for new competitors to enter the market. Government could cut switching costs by making it easier for customers to share their data, to transfer their direct debits to a new bank, and to free-up their data from the control of their current bank.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has taken a similar approach, pointing out that the Australian banking sector has various characteristics which suggest that it is not, as the ACCC delicately puts it, 'vigorously competitive'. It refers to the concentrated market structure; high overall profit margins by international standards; the relatively quick pass-through of mortgage rate increases but slower pass-through of rate reductions, suggesting an asymmetry; and the low levels of customer switching.

The ACCC points out that the Australian banking sector has various characteristics of the famous competitive forces strategy equilibrium model set out by Harvard Business School's Michael Porter, where he says firms can attain success by erecting high entry barriers, keeping suppliers weak and dispersed, curbing buyer power with high loyalty and reducing the likelihood of substitutes, and points out that those characteristics of firms making themselves productive show up in the Australian banking sector. The ACCC drew an analogy to telephone number portability, which was resisted in the telecommunications market by Telstra 15 to 20 years ago but which has proved to be a significant spur to competitive pressures. Making it easier for customers to switch banks and for customers to share their data to find out the best deal for them is a useful pro-competitive measure.

We're seeing this in the United Kingdom at the moment where the rise of neobanks has been quite significant. Atom bank emerged in 2016; Starling has captured significant revenue growth, opening 520,000 personal accounts since 2016; Monzo has opened 1.6 million new accounts in Britain, opening 30,000 more each week according to *The Economist* magazine; Revolut has a banking licence in Lithuania and is expanding across the
Like my colleagues, I'm very concerned about the impact that open banking could have on vulnerable Australians. We need to make sure that, in any shift towards a cashless economy, vulnerable Australians are not left behind. Yes, there is disproportionate use of high-level currency denominations by organised crime, and one of the ways of addressing organised crime could potentially come through that shift to a cashless economy. But those who are unbanked are, disproportionately, vulnerable Australians, and we need to make sure they are at the forefront of the minds of parliamentarians and public servants as we shape the new open banking environment.

It's important, too, that we think about the role of defaults. We know that there is a history, not just in banking but in other sectors, of customers getting a good deal in their first year and then being defaulted into poorer-performing products. Open banking will work best if there are products or third parties that ensure that customers are reminded if their current bank is not offering them the best deal, if the legacy customers aren't being treated as well as the new customers. Behavioural economics has taught us that defaults matter and there is a stickiness to these things, so improving portability and the ability of customers to shop around is absolutely vital.

I do take seriously the concerns of consumer groups around these issues—the importance of ensuring that we have a system that is not only rigorous and protected against data breaches but also perceived to be so by Australians. The risk to Australians of having a system in place where they don't feel that they can opt out is very real. This needs to be a system which has the consumer at its heart, where consumers are able to opt out and where the shift to open banking and, ultimately, the extension of a consumer data right to other sectors of the economy is very real.

My friend and co-author Joshua Gans has done a great deal of work on the potential of data to spur economic growth. Providing confidentialised government datasets can potentially improve the productivity of firms in the economy. The data.gov.au website is useful, and not only the Commonwealth but state and territory governments have provided data to allow third-party services to emerge. These might be anything from a service that allows people to find the nearest public toilet, or find out when their bus is likely to arrive or to work out the local bin collections, to one that allows them to create useful mapping software.

My brother, Tim Leigh, who works in GIS mapping, has been engaged in the question of how non-profit organisations can assist government, using those GIS data for the public good. There is huge potential for the zettabytes of data that are coming down the pipeline, if the government is smart about this, but it is absolutely vital that the systems are structured in such a way that we avoid data breaches, that privacy is protected and that the spectre of surveillance capitalism is not something which puts people off the significant pro-competitive benefits that can come from smart engagement with the data economy.

Mr COLEMAN (Banks—Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs) (17:43): Firstly, I would like to thank all those members who have contributed to this important debate. This bill, the Treasury Laws Amendment (Consumer Data Right) Bill 2019, will amend the Competition and Consumer Act 2010, the Privacy Act 1988 and the Australian Information Commissioner Act 2010 to introduce a consumer data right and also open banking. With this bill, Australia implements an economy-wide data-access-and-use right for consumers. This is an important reform which will provide individuals and businesses with a right to access data relating to them and to authorise secure access to their data by accredited data recipients.

It will also enable data about products on offer to be available in a machine readable form. The consumer data right will give consumers a right to determine which data is shared, on what terms it's shared and with whom it's shared. It is an important structural reform that will drive competition and improve the flow of information between sectors of the economy.

The consumer data right is a game changer for consumers and small businesses that will enable consumers to better harness their data for their own benefit. Australian consumers will have improved access to data that will support better price comparison services, take into account the actual circumstances and promote more convenient switching between products and providers. Improved access to data will also enable the development of new, better and more convenient products and services, many customised to individuals' needs.

Better access to data will support more efficient processes for businesses, particularly small businesses, with savings and better products and services flowing through to consumers. The consumer data right will also support data driven innovation across the economy, creating new, high-value jobs for Australians. The government has
committed to applying the consumer data right to banking, where it is referred to as open banking, then to energy, telecommunications and eventually the economy as a whole.

This bill creates the backbone of a single broader framework that can apply across all sectors while retaining the flexibility to recognise that data access arrangements must be able to adapt to different sectors, different data sets, different risks, different consumers' needs and, of course, changing technologies. This bill allows for the growth and evolution of the consumer data right by allowing new data sets to be added over time.

Strong privacy and information security provisions are a fundamental design feature of the consumer data right. These protections include privacy safeguards and additional privacy protections through the consumer data rules. These will be backed by well-resourced regulators with access to appropriate investigation and enforcement powers through the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner. We expect that consumers and participants will see the benefits of the consumer data right as the affected markets become more competitive and more effective at delivering goods and services that meet the needs of consumers.

I would like to thank the active and ongoing engagement by industry, consumer and privacy groups and the fintech sector in the development of this bill. I also thank them for their engagement in the Productivity Commission's Data Availability and Use Inquiry, their engagement in the Open Banking Review and their ongoing engagement in the development of rules by the ACCC and technical standards by Data61. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Question negatived.
Original question agreed to.
Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Mr COLEMAN (Banks—Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs) (17:49): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Cashless Welfare) Bill 2019

Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Ms BURNEY (Barton) (17:50): I rise to speak on the Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Cashless Welfare) Bill 2019. I move:

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

"whilst not declining to give the bill a second reading, the House calls on the Government to:

(1) present in Parliament by the end of 2019:

(a) a report making clear whether or not there is continuing community support in each of the trial sites for the cashless debit card program; and

(b) a wraparound services plan explaining how the Government has boosted community services in each of the trial sites and what increased investment in services will be made in the future; and

(2) make participation in the cashless debit card program voluntary from 30 January 2020, unless there is clear local community support and consent for the operation of the program".

Labor has serious concerns about the cashless welfare card. We have always opposed this rollout nationally. Labor supported the initial trial of a cashless debit card in Ceduna and East Kimberley because community leaders indicated support at the time. Of course, the original support offered by communities came against the backdrop of inadequate local services and inadequate local job creation and economic development programs—the investments the government should have been making in local social and economic wellbeing. Labor did not support the further expansion of the trial to Bundaberg, Hervey Bay or the Goldfields because of lack of evidence and a lack of any clear community support.
Let me be clear: Labor will not support the expansion of the cashless debit card to new communities unless the communities want the card and there is informed community consent. At the election, the rollout of the cashless debit card in Bundaberg and Hervey Bay was only partially complete. Labor committed to stopping the rollout of the cashless debit card in Bundaberg and Hervey Bay and to taking a case management approach to putting in place alternative support for people who are already on the card, as well as investing in support services and programs that work. Labor has not been able to satisfy itself, through its own consultations, that the same community desire was present in the other trial sites—the Goldfields, Bundaberg and Hervey Bay.

Labor successfully amended a bill in the Senate in April this year to allow people participating in the cashless debit card trial sites to get off the cashless debit card if they are effectively managing their affairs. Labor's amendment required that community panels, which were established in some cashless debit card sites, be the decision-makers. This was consistent with existing arrangements for reducing the portion of a person's income quarantined on the cashless debit card. The government's subsequent consultations with the community panels found that they did not want to be the decision-maker. This was out of concern for the pressure that could be placed on panel members by members of the community who apply to get off the cashless debit card.

On this basis Labor will not oppose this bill, because it is consistent with the amendment we successfully made earlier in the year and because it will give people a pathway off the card. This bill will amend the exit criteria under the current legislation—the Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Income Management and Cashless Welfare) Act 2019—to allow for a broader consideration of opt-out criteria for persons participating in the cashless welfare card. The bill will create a single administrative process for the Department of Social Services to make decisions about people getting off the cashless debit card. The bill also combines the pre-existing welfare exemption, which allows DSS to exempt a person from the cashless debit card if it is a threat to their physical, mental or emotional health, with the exit pathway established by Labor's amendment. Further, the bill clarifies that exit applications need to be made in a form that is approved by the secretary of the Department of Social Services and expands the wellbeing exemption provisions so they apply more broadly across all regions.

This bill will ultimately assist participants who are managing their affairs well and want to get off the card. We understand that hundreds of people are seeking an exemption from the trial and have already approached DSS about the opt-out process. This shows there is strong community support for people being able to get off the cashless debit card.

The bill sets out what DSS will need to consider when determining the reasonable and responsible management of a person's affairs, including financial affairs: (1) the interests of any children for whom the person is responsible; (2) whether the person was convicted of an offence against the law of the Commonwealth, a state or a territory, or was serving a sentence of imprisonment for such an offence at any time in the last 12 months; (3) risk of homelessness; (4) the health and safety of the person and the community; (5) the responsibilities and circumstances of the person; and, finally, (6) the person's engagement in the community, including the person's employment or efforts to obtain work. Labor has some concerns about the operation of certain provisions in this bill. We will continue to speak to the minister, and Labor of course reserves our right to seek to make improvements in the Senate.

The cashless debit card trial has been running too long. It is no longer a trial and it is time the government produced some real evidence about the effectiveness of the card, as well as reassessing community support in each trial area. That is why Labor has moved an amendment to this bill, calling on the government, firstly, to table a report in parliament by the end of the year making clear whether or not there is continuing community support at any of the trial sites for the cashless debit card; secondly, to table a wraparound services plan in the parliament by the end of the year, explaining how the government has boosted community services in the trial sites and what increased investment will be made in the future; and, thirdly, to make the cashless debit card voluntary from 30 January 2020 unless there is clear local community support and consent for the card.

This is an incredibly important point. The government simply cannot continue to impose the card on communities where there is not clear support, and they cannot continue to impose that in the absence of evidence about the card's effectiveness. In this context, Labor's future position on the cashless debit card is clear: we will not support the extension of the cashless debit card trial sites or the further rollout of the cashless debit card unless the government can demonstrate there is clear and genuine local community support. That is not because a mayor wants it and it's not because a local member wants it; it's because the local community wants it.

Since the introduction of the cashless debit card trials the government have continually failed to be up-front about the full costs of implementing the cashless debit card. Hopefully, this is something the minister can shed some light on in the course of this debate. The government have already spent $34 million on the cashless debit card, and the budget papers show they plan to spend $128.8 million over the forward estimates, including on new sites and the rollout of a cashless debit card across the Northern Territory. That's over $160 million that could
Instead have been allocated to employment and economic development, to early intervention services and to drug and alcohol treatment.

It was reported in mid-2017 that the cost of the cashless debit card exceeded $10,000 per participant. In the same year, the Auditor-General found that the annual running costs of the cashless debit card would be over $3,700 per participant. The problem is that we have never had a proper evaluation of what better outcomes would be possible if this money were differently invested. This is incredibly concerning, particularly when you consider the Auditor-General found that there was no evidence—and I repeat: no evidence—that the cashless debit card was effective.

In addition, Labor has become increasingly concerned about the government's persistent clinging to the deeply flawed ORIMA Research evaluation, and I have read that evaluation from cover to cover. The Prime Minister has continued to use this report to sing the praises of the cashless debit card and mislead the Australian people about the extent of its success. Leading academics have referred to comments made by the government as extremely misleading and perplexing. The Auditor-General found deep inconsistencies in the ORIMA evaluation. The government must stop relying on this report to justify the cashless debit card trials.

At the Senate inquiry into the cashless debit card earlier this year, the committee heard evidence that in some trial sites the cashless debit card had been in operation for so long that the opportunity for a proper piece of evaluation to be conducted had passed. In fact, we may never know what, if any, positive impacts the cashless debit card may have had on these affected communities. There have now been a number of inquiries into the cashless debit card scheme. The most recent committee inquiry heard, at best, mixed evidence about the card. Some think it has been beneficial in their communities; others think it has made existing problems worse.

Indigenous leader and Foundation Chair of Australian Indigenous Studies at the University of Melbourne Professor Marcia Langton has said that the cashless debit card is a failure. Professor Langton said:

Because the local community is not involved in implementing the policy, the policy failed.

One wonders at the rhetoric of this government of doing things with Aboriginal people, not to Aboriginal people.

One of the community leaders in Kununurra who initially supported the introduction of the trial, Mr Desmond Hill, has since withdrawn his support. Mr Hill told the recent inquiry that one of the conditions community leaders had had when agreeing to the East Kimberley becoming a trial site was that people would be able to apply to leave the trial. This has not been the case up until now. Another Indigenous leader in the East Kimberley, Ian Trust, who remains a supporter of the cashless debit card, told the committee that he was not opposed to people being able to come off the card in some circumstances. This is why it is important that people can get off the cashless debit card, even in areas where the trial might be supported by the community.

This bill will allow people to come off the cashless debit card. The fact is that many of those people should not have been on the card in the first place. The government has already had enough time to demonstrate the merits of the cashless debit card, and it has failed to do so. That is why Labor is calling for three things in its amendment today: firstly, table a report in parliament by the end of the year making clear whether or not there is continuing community support in any of the four trial sites for the card; secondly, table a wraparound services plan in the parliament by the end of the year explaining how the government has boosted community services in the trial sites and what increased investment will be made in the future; and, finally, make the cashless debit card voluntary from 30 January 2020 unless there is clear local community support and consent for the card. I think they are perfectly reasonable things to expect about such a massive intervention into people's lives.

The bottom line is this: while Labor will not oppose this bill, because it implements an amendment we made some months ago and provides a pathway off the card, we will not support the extension of the cashless debit card trial sites or the further rollout of the cashless debit card unless the government can clearly demonstrate that there is clear and genuine local community support, which has been a total failure in the last two trial sites. Labor will take an evidence based approach to this policy and to income management. We will not demonise social security recipients, as seems to be the habit of this government.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr McVeigh): Is the amendment seconded?

Mr Butler: I second it and reserve my right to speak.

Mrs MARINO (Forrest—Assistant Minister for Regional Development and Territories) (18:05): I would like to thank members for their contribution to this debate on the Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Cashless Welfare) Bill 2019. The cashless debit card is an important part of our plan to improve the lives of Australians by supporting people, families and communities in places where high levels of welfare dependence coexist with high levels of social harm. By reducing the amount of cash available in a community, the cashless debit card is reducing the overall harm caused by welfare-fuelled alcohol, gambling and drug misuse.
This bill continues the operation of the cashless debit card program but improves the processes introduced through recent non-government amendments for participants to exit the program. It provides a more effective and consistent application process and ensures that the welfare of children, families and the whole community is considered when assessing applications for participants to exit the cashless debit card. The passage of the bill will clarify the administrative requirements of the cashless debit card exit process and ensure that the exit process is consistent across cashless debit card regions. There are no changes to the continuation of the cashless debit card program in the current trial areas and no change to the government's commitment to reducing the devastating effects of alcohol, drugs and gambling in these communities.

The government is introducing this legislation following consultations with community leaders to ensure there is a clear and fair process for participants to exit the cashless debit card program. The government thanks the community leaders it has worked with and will continue to work with on the implementation of the cashless debit card. We acknowledge their courage and their leadership to assist members in their communities to break the cycle of welfare dependence, to improve social outcomes and to support people into employment. I commend the bill.

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

The House divided. [18:11]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .................64
Noes .................75
Majority .............11

AYES
Albanese, AN
Bandt, AP
Bowen, CE
Burney, LJ
Butler, MC
Byrne, AM
Champion, ND
Claydon, SC
Collins, JM
Dick, MD
Elliot, MJ
Freelander, MR
Giles, AJ
Gosling, LJ
Hill, JC
Jones, SP
Kelly, MJ
Khalil, P
King, MMH
Marles, RD
Mitchell, BK
Mulino, D
O'Connor, BPJ
Owens, JA
Perrett, GD
Plibersek, TJ
Ryan, JC (teller)
Stanley, AM (teller)
Thistlethwaite, MJ
Vamvakinou, M
Wells, AS
Wilson, JH

NOES
Alexander, JG
Andrews, KJ
Archer, BK
Broadhent, RE
Chester, D

CHAMBER
Tuesday, 30 July 2019

NOES

Coleman, DB
Connelly, V
Drum, DK (teller)
Evans, TM
Fletcher, PW
Frydenberg, IA
Gillespie, DA
Haines, H
Hastie, AW
Hogan, KJ
Hunt, GA
Joyce, BT
Laming, A
Leeson, J
Littleproud, D
Marino, NB
McCormack, MF
McVeigh, JJ
Morton, B
O’Dowd, KD
Pearce, GB
Porter, CC
Ramsey, RE (teller)
Sharkie, RCC
Simmonds, J
Stevens, J
Taylor, AJ
Thompson, P
Van Manen, AJ
Webster, AE
Wilson, RJ
Wood, JP
Zimmerman, T

Conaghan, PJ
Coulton, M
Entsch, WG
Falinski, JG
Flint, NJ
Gee, AR
Goodenough, IR
Hammond, CM
Hawke, AG
Howarth, LR
Irons, SJ
Kelly, C
Landry, ML
Ley, SP
Liu, G
Martin, FB
McIntosh, MI
Morrison, SJ
O’Brien, LS
Pasin, A
Pitt, KJ
Price, ML
Robert, SR
Sharma, DN
Stegall, Z
Sukkar, MS
Teahan, DT
Tudge, AE
Wallace, AB
Wicks, LE
Wilson, TR
Young, T

Question negatived.
Original question agreed to.
Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Mrs MARINO (Forrest—Assistant Minister for Regional Development and Territories) (18:17): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.
Bill read a third time.

Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2019-2020
Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2019-2020
Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Bill (No. 1) 2019-2020

Second Reading

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

Dr CHALMERS (Rankin) (18:18): Labor supports the Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2019-2020, the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2019-2020 and the Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Bill (No. 1) 2019-2020 but we don't support the approach of this Liberal-National government to the economy. This is a third term government now. They've spent the bulk of the last six years wandering around the country, pretending to be doing a good job of managing the economy, at the same time as the facts tell a very different story. After six years of those opposite, Australia's economy is defined by slowing growth, stagnant wages, declining living standards, weak consumption, weak productivity—the list goes on and on, as the Treasurer would say. The economy, under
those opposite, is floundering. Ordinary Australians are struggling. Those opposite have absolutely no idea or no plan to turn it around and the main reason is that they are in denial about the weaknesses in our own economy.

The Treasurer was at it again today. He likes to pretend that the fundamentals of the Australian economy are strong. He continues to set a very low bar for economic strength and he continues to trip over it. Saying that the foundations of the economy are strong ignores the fact that, for many people in middle Australia, their circumstances and their experience of the economy are very different to the picture that’s painted, badly, by the Treasurer. If the economy were going so well, Australians wouldn’t have the feeling that, no matter how hard they work, they just can’t seem to get ahead and that the link between effort and reward has been severed in this country. For so long now, the idea in Australia that, if you put the effort in, you can get ahead and provide for your loved ones—arguably the most important principle we have in the economy—has been diminished, undermined and trashed by the lack of economic policy from those opposite.

If anything could have really brought this home to the government at the beginning of its third term, I think today’s release of the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia survey, the HILDA survey, should have been the wake-up call that the government needed when it came to its mismanagement of the economy. The data in that HILDA report today was a stunning reminder of the economic failures of those opposite. What it showed was that living standards have gone backwards under the Liberal government. It showed that real median household income declined by almost $500 per person in 2017, and it also showed that people are actually earning less now than in 2013, when government changed hands when those opposite were elected. Their living standards have gone backwards. That is a shameful indictment of the economic mismanagement of those opposite. After six years in office, declining living standards and stagnant wages really do say it all about what’s happening in the economy under the mismanagement of those opposite. It’s what happens when a third-term government has a political strategy to distract from these economic failures but doesn’t have an economic strategy to get the economy growing again, get wages moving and get living standards moving in the right direction. Living standards have been moving, of course, but they have been moving in the wrong direction under those opposite.

The data that was released today went back 10 years. We had the headline in The Australian 'Aussies no better off since GFC', which showed that the data goes back to 2009. So that people don't get the impression that living standards have been in decline since the GFC—and you might get that impression from reading some of the material—it’s really important to remember that we’re talking about a $500 decrease in 2017 but there were two annual increases under the former Labor government, both of them over $4,000 in a single year, in 2009 and 2012. So we have in that 10-year period had growth in living standards. We have had growth in people's capacity to provide for their loved ones. But the story of the last six years has been a very disappointing one for an economy like ours, a rich country with a proud tradition of economic growth—28 years of economic growth, principally as a consequence of the decisions taken by Hawke and Keating and then Rudd and Gillard. We have had 28 years of uninterrupted economic expansion. The idea that those opposite can spend six years in office and, at the end of those six years, have living standards further behind than when they were first elected says so much about what's happened under the Liberals and Nationals in this country since 2013. The same goes for the figures on poverty. The percentage of the population in relative poverty in today's HILDA data increased to 10.4 per cent in 2017, so people are getting poorer in this country. More and more people are falling further and further behind.

So Australians are understandably worried about their wages, their jobs and the fact that those opposite don't seem to have a plan to turn things around because they are in denial about the weakness in the economy. They are in denial when it comes to the floundering economy and the fact that middle Australia is struggling quite badly.

Lest we give the impression that today's HILDA data is some kind of outlier—and for those who attempt to take the Treasurer at his word when he says that everything is hunky-dory in the economy—let's just have a bit of a tour around what's happening elsewhere in the domestic economy. This is a report card on what has happened in the economy over the past six years. Economic growth is the slowest it's been for 10 years, since the GFC. The national economy has fallen from eighth fastest growing in the OECD to 20th today. Australia's now in the longest per capita recession since 1982. Wages growth has been stuck at or around record lows for the last few years under the Liberals, with low wages growth, in the finance minister's words, a deliberate design feature of their economic strategy.

We've got weak consumption and weak productivity growth. Productivity has actually fallen for four consecutive quarters. Every single quarter that the current Treasurer has been the Treasurer has seen productivity growth go backwards. Productivity is where we get economic growth from, and it's gone backwards in four consecutive quarters. The current Treasurer has never been in that job with positive productivity growth. That's an extraordinary fact. Household spending is weak, contributing hardly anything to growth. Unemployment and underemployment remain too high. Unemployment is much higher than in comparable countries. Underemployment is a massive challenge. There are too many people, almost two million people, who either are
out of work or would like to work more hours and can't find those hours. That's another extraordinarily damning statistic. Youth unemployment is 12 per cent, more than double the national average.

We know that the economy is not hunky-dory, as the Treasurer likes to pretend, because the Reserve Bank have had to cut interest rates to one per cent. The cash rate is just one per cent. That's a third of what it was in the darkest days of the global financial crisis. The Reserve Bank have been crying out for some help. They've made the understandable point—indeed the obvious point—that monetary policy can't do all of the heavy lifting in the economy and that the best way to deal with the slowing economy that we have now is for fiscal policy and monetary policy to be working hand in hand, but, unfortunately, the Reserve Bank have had to do so much of the heavy lifting without any substantial assistance from those opposite.

Remember when interest rates were three per cent and Joe Hockey, the former Treasurer, described them as being at emergency levels? Now they're a third of that. The reason the Reserve Bank have had to do that is that, principally, in their own words, the chief domestic economic challenge that we have is weak consumption, which is a function of a long period of very weak incomes growth. That is the nub of the problem that we have, which is being neglected in this economy by this third-term government.

This debate is on the appropriations bills—largely about the budget. At the same time as we've got all of these failures in the macroeconomy, all this data which shows that things are not as good as the Treasurer likes to pretend, we've see in the budget itself that net debt has more than doubled. It is well over double what was inherited by those opposite in 2013. Gross debt has only ever been higher than half a trillion dollars under one government—this one—and it's been over half a trillion dollars for some years and will be for some years to come as well.

This is the report card after six years and into the third term of this Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison government. This is what we're seeing in the economy. I'll make two additional points about that. The outgoing Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet made a very sensible contribution the other day about productivity. As I mentioned before, productivity growth has gone backwards for four consecutive quarters and it's been very weak for five years now. The point that the secretary made on his departure from PM&C was that one of the reasons we've got such an appalling performance on productivity is that there isn't a plan to lift it. Productivity is about people having the skills to adapt and to adopt new technology. It's about making sure that people can keep those skills up to date. It's about having the right kind of public infrastructure soon enough to make a difference to this soft economy, not in 10 years time. Productivity is the crucially important missing piece from what is served up and pitched up by those opposite.

The other point I wanted to make is about Australia's standing in the global economy. One of the things that we are most proud of on this side of the House is that, during the global financial crisis, Australia led the world in its policy response and in the outcomes that we were able to achieve. The response was not just the government's, although I pay tribute to Rudd, Gillard, Swan and Tanner and to everyone else involved in that response, including Albanese, Bowen and others. The policy response has been recognised the world over as the best policy response in the developed world, but it wasn't government on its own—businesses held onto workers where they could. We worked together and we came up with an amazing outcome for Australia.

My concern is that we've gone from being a leader in the global economy 10 years ago to now being a laggard. If you look at the unemployment numbers I mentioned before, you'll see that a lot of comparable countries have unemployment rates with a three or four in front of it, and ours has a five. In the global financial crisis ours had a five, and many of theirs had a 10, a 12 or even a 15. If you compare our performance against the United States, for example, we started the crisis with unemployment at around five per cent. At its worst it got to 10 per cent in the US, I think, but it stayed around the same level, five per cent, in Australia. That's something we should be really proud of. But now under those opposite we've diminished in the global economy. After six years, we have fallen far down the league table, whether it be in GDP growth or a whole range of other indicators—unemployment and the like. That is a real shame. After all that this country did to withstand the worst that the world could throw at us during the GFC, to see that peter out under those opposite is a very disappointing development when it comes to the economy.

We've done our best to ask the Prime Minister, the Treasurer and other ministers very factual questions about the underperformance of the economy, whether it be about the living standards data today or data around growth or other important indicators. When we ask about these issues, it's disappointing but not especially surprising, unfortunately, that all we hear from the Treasurer in particular, but also from the Prime Minister and others, is them banging on about the Labor Party. When they go back to their offices after question time and they wonder how the economy has gotten so soft, wages have gotten so stagnant and living standards have gone backwards so dramatically, perhaps they could reflect on the fact that maybe if they spent a little bit less time focused on us in the opposition and a bit more time coming up with a plan to grow the economy and to get wages and living
standards moving in the right direction again they'd be more successful than they have been. More of the same is not going to cut it.

This economy, after six years of those opposite, is soft in all of the ways I've mentioned. It needn't be so soft. It's soft because those opposite spent so much time trying to design little wedges for us in the parliament, playing a political game, coming up with names to call people and coming up with neat little glib lines to say when the cameras are on.

What the Australian people really expect from those opposite—what they want from them and what they deserve from them—is a government which looks at the data on productivity, growth, wages, living standards, consumption, retail and confidence and all of the other things which have headed in the wrong direction. They deserve, need and expect a government which will take those challenges seriously, not one which will spend all of its time playing politics and spending all of its time talking about the Labor Party.

We had an election. We lost the election; those opposite won it. It's time for them to behave like they won it and take responsibility for the economy, which is floundering on their watch. They are in their third term now. It is long past time for their reflex reaction to any question about the economy to be a long, unhinged and breathless rant about the Labor Party and our views on the economy.

My view is that the reason we don't have sufficient growth in this economy to get wages, jobs and living standards going in the right direction is that those opposite got through an election with very little by way of an agenda. They got to the other side, they didn't expect to win, and so they just reached for the shelf and dusted off the old playbook. So you had this pathetic prime ministerial speech—I think it was in Perth—about their war on red tape, which only amounted to a war on legislative punctuation, and saying the same old stuff about unions. We had it in parliament this week and last week as well. They don't really have an agenda for the future. They dust off the old rhetoric, but they don't know what they can do to turn the economy around, and they don't really know what the future of this country should look like.

They won't grow the economy by pointing the finger or playing those political games. They won't grow wages by cutting penalty rates or making it harder for people to organise and speak up for themselves. They won't grow retirement incomes by attacking super or adopting the member for Hughes' idea, which is to include the family home in the pension asset test. This third-term government, in conclusion, needs to spend less time on political strategy and more time on economic policy, because, for as long as they are in denial about growth, living standards, wages and all of the rest of it, they give themselves and this country absolutely no chance of turning things around.

Debate adjourned.

**Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2019-2020**

**Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2019-2020**

**Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Bill (No. 1) 2019-2020**

**Reference to Federation Chamber**

**Mrs MARINO** (Forrest—Assistant Minister for Regional Development and Territories) (18:36): by leave—I move:

That the bills be referred to the Federation Chamber for further consideration.

Question agreed to.

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE: ADDITIONAL ANSWERS**

**Medicare: Magnetic Resonance Imaging Licences**

**Mr HUNT** (Flinders—Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Cabinet) (18:37): In question time today, I undertook to check the details on a question. I can confirm that the information available to the government, as I said in question time, is that the Adelaide PHN region had a ratio of 0.7 MRIs per 100,000 population. In total, South Australia received four MRI licences; two in country South Australia and two in metropolitan areas. In particular, Sound Radiology MRI provides paediatric imaging which has the benefit of providing paediatric patients with access to MRIs without the need for sedation, and improves access to paediatric MRI offerings in South Australia. I am also advised that each application was assessed by the department against the mandatory and substantive criteria outlined in the ITA documentation, and all MRI licences allocated under the expansion round met the department's criteria.
Bills

Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Amendment (Sunsetting of Special Powers Relating to Terrorism Offences) Bill 2019

Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr DREYFUS (Isaacs—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (18:38): Every debate about national security legislation in this country should begin with a recognition that the powers we have given our security agencies in Australia are broader and subject to fewer restrictions and less oversight than the powers that have been given to agencies in any similar country anywhere in the world. There are no greater examples of this than ASIO's questioning and detention warrant powers. No comparable jurisdiction in the world—by that I mean Western democracies—gives such powers to its intelligence agencies.

Both powers are due to sunset on 7 September 2019 as recommended in March 2018 by the bipartisan and government-majority Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security. Yet, under this bill, both powers would be extended for another year. In its current form, the bill constitutes a serious breach, the second in two weeks, of the bipartisan working arrangements between the government and the Labor Party which had been premised on an understanding that the recommendations of the Intelligence and Security Committee are to be respected and implemented.

The questioning and detention powers in the ASIO Act were first proposed in 2002 and first enacted in 2003. At that time, they were regarded as extraordinary. Because they were extraordinary powers, they were introduced as temporary measures rather than as a regime defining the new normal under which Australians would have to permanently live. There are two powers at issue here: one that allows ASIO to compulsorily question an individual for the purpose of obtaining intelligence in relation to a terrorism offence, which is the questioning warrant power, and another that allows ASIO to compulsorily detain and question a person for the same purposes, the questioning and detention warrant power.

I will start by saying something about the first of these powers, the questioning warrant power. Although it has been used sparingly, we believe that ASIO should continue to have the power to compulsorily question people in appropriate circumstances subject to appropriate safeguards and oversight. But, as ASIO itself has said, the current form of the questioning warrant power is not fit for purpose and needs to be amended. The best evidence of this is that, as at May 2018, the questioning warrant power had not been used since 2010. There has been no suggestion from the government that it has been used since.

ASIO made numerous submissions to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security about how it would like to see the power amended. One of the key amendments that ASIO has asked for would enable the questioning warrant power to be used to gather intelligence in relation to espionage and foreign interference investigations. Currently, it can only be used to gather counterterrorism intelligence. ASIO has for some time been sounding the alarm over the threat of espionage and foreign interference. It is a threat that the Director-General of Security and head of ASIO, Duncan Lewis, has described as one that can 'inflict catastrophic harm on our country's interests'. In May 2018, a few months after the intelligence and security committee handed down its report in relation to the questioning warrant power, Mr Lewis said in relation to counter-espionage:

... as I've stated publicly, foreign powers are actively undertaking espionage and foreign interference in Australia. I've said before ASIO assesses that the current scale of foreign intelligence activity against Australian interest is unprecedented. Espionage, interference, sabotage and malicious insider activities can inflict catastrophic harm on our country's interests. They potentially undermine our sovereignty, our security and our prosperity. Foreign actors covertly attempt to influence and shape the views of members of the Australian public, the Australian media, officials in the Australian government and members of the diaspora communities here in Australia. Foreign states maintain an enduring interest in a range of strategically important commercial, political, economic, defence, security, foreign policy and diaspora issues. Clandestine interference is designed to advance the objectives of the foreign actor, to the detriment of Australia and to our national interests. In some instances, the harm from espionage and foreign interference is immediately evident and in other instances, of course, the harm doesn't materialise for years and potentially for decades.

In a recent interview, Mr Lewis said that the threat of terrorism has 'plateaued' and reiterated that foreign interference in Australia is at 'an unprecedented level of activity'.

It is against this backdrop that the bipartisan intelligence and security committee gave the Minister for Home Affairs until 7 September 2019 to propose appropriate amendments to the questioning warrant power to empower ASIO to better respond to this rapidly growing threat to our national interest. With the 7 September 2019 deadline fast approaching, the minister has finally provided his response to the bipartisan intelligence and security
committee's—and ASIO's—recommendations. And what is that response? In essence, the Minister for Home Affairs says—and it's the Minister for Home Affairs in what can only be regarded as a very tired, third-term government—'I haven't got around to giving ASIO the powers it needs, but maybe I'll get around to doing it in another year.' Perhaps the minister was too busy planning his career advancement by bringing down Prime Minister Turnbull rather than focusing on his urgent ministerial responsibilities.

This bill highlights two things very clearly: the Minister for Home Affairs' incompetence as the minister responsible for Australia's national security, and the minister's indifference to the role of parliament and fundamental democratic principles. In relation to the minister's competence, the House should note that the then Independent National Security Legislation Monitor, Roger Gyles QC, told the government more than three years ago that the questioning warrant power needed to be updated, and offered detailed guidance as to how to do this—that was three years ago. And it's worth repeating that the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security told the Minister for Home Affairs in March 2018 that the questioning warrant power needed to be updated urgently, with a deadline of 7 September 2019. ASIO told the Minister for Home Affairs that the questioning warrant power needed to be updated by 7 September 2019. The intelligence and security committee and ASIO also offered the minister detailed guidance about how to do this. For well over a year, the Labor and Liberal members of the intelligence and security committee have been waiting for the minister to introduce a bill that would make the necessary amendments to the questioning warrant power. He has failed to do so.

I now turn to the second of the powers in question, the questioning and detention warrant power, and this minister's indifference to parliament and foundational democratic principles. The intelligence and security committee—which, it's worth saying again, is a government majority committee that, up until now, has been able to proceed on a bipartisan basis, with the government accepting its recommendations—also told the minister in March 2018 that the questioning and detention warrant power should be repealed on 7 September 2019. Three different Independent National Security Legislation Monitors—that's every Independent National Security Legislation Monitor since that office was created—and ASIO itself have also said that the questioning and detention warrant power should be repealed.

Under the questioning and detention warrant power, the executive government of Australia has the power to pick up a person without warning, detain them in a secret security facility and question them there for up to seven days. This power can be exercised against any Australian resident without any requirement that the person be suspected of any wrongdoing. The detained person may also be imprisoned if he or she fails to give any information required by the government, and they enjoy no privilege against self-incrimination and may be sent to prison for disclosing the fact that he or she has been detained or questioned. So an Australian woman could be taken off the street for seven days, held and questioned in a secret detention facility and then be sent to prison for five years for simply telling her boss why she couldn't come to work for a week. Even if her boss threatened to fire her for her absence, she couldn't say anything. A man could be sent to prison for telling his wife why he hadn't come home for seven nights. Even if she threatened to leave him, he couldn't say anything about where he'd been without committing a very serious criminal offence. The power is wrong in principle.

The national security legislation monitor appointed by Tony Abbott as Prime Minister, the Hon. Roger Gyles AO QC, described the power in the following terms:

A warrant enabling a person to be detained in custody, virtually incommunicado, without even being accused of involvement in terrorist activity, on grounds which are kept secret and without effective opportunity to challenge the basis of his or her detention.

To use the words of former High Court Chief Justice Sir Gerard Brennan: 'on the basis of intelligence' in relation to a terrorism offence is an extraordinary power. Further, the decision on whether the grounds to make a questioning and detention warrant application, rather than a questioning warrant application, lies with a member of the executive. No precedent in any comparable country has been identified. Mr Gyles went on to describe the power as 'odious'—and, as a practical matter, the power has never been used. It has played no role in keeping Australians safe since it became part of Australian law in 2003. Let me repeat that: the questioning and detention warrant power has never been is by the government—not once. It has played no role in keeping Australians safe.

As a result of his own rank incompetence the Minister for Home Affairs and his Prime Minister have unconscionably sought to place the Parliament of Australia in the position of having to choose between rejecting this bill, and thereby leaving ASIO without any questioning power at all for however long it takes the Minister for Home Affairs to get his act together, or agreeing to the bill and, in so doing, leaving an extraordinary, odious and totally unnecessary power on the statute books for another year despite receiving and accepting multiple recommendations for its repeal. Labor will not help the government cover up for the Minister for Home Affairs' incompetence, but nor will we allow ASIO or the Australian people to bear the consequences of that incompetence. That's why I'll be moving an amendment to the bill to extend the sunset date on the questioning
power—a power ASIO has used before and for which ASIO has said there is a continuing need—to December of this year. That will give the Minister for Home Affairs, and the 20,000 or so people who work for him, time to propose a revised questioning framework as recommended by the intelligence and security committee, as recommended by the government's own national security legislation monitors and as recommended by ASIO.

If there is a very good reason why the minister has not done anything in the three years he has had notice of this, since Mr Gyles told him that this needed to be done—or, to take a lesser period, in the 18 months or so since the minister has been told by the intelligence and security committee that this power needs to be amended—if there is some reason why he needs more time, he needs to make that case. And he hasn't made that case. Contemptuously, the Minister for Home Affairs has simply failed to explain anything about why this bill is before the parliament and about why he is not following the recommendations he has had from multiple sources. The amendment I will move will also ensure the repeal of the odious questioning and detention warrant power on 7 September 2019—a power which has never been used, has played no role in keeping Australian safe and has no place in Australian law.

No doubt, the minister and his mates will seek to falsely characterise Labor's position on this bill as an attack on the agencies or as undermining national security. There is apparently no limit to what the Liberal Party will say in order to cover for the incompetence of this Minister for Home Affairs. The truth, of course, is that Labor has an extraordinarily good record on national security and we support the work of our agencies. It was a Labor government that established ASIO. It was a Labor government that had the courage and foresight to establish the first and second Hope royal commissions in the 1970s and 1980s. As every independent review of Australia's security and intelligence framework in the last three decades has acknowledged, the governance framework of the entire Australian intelligence community is based on the findings and recommendations of those Labor established royal commissions. The strength of our intelligence agencies, including ASIO, is built in those foundations.

It was a Labor government that established the Office of the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security. It was a Labor government that established the Office of the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor and that successfully resisted an attempt, in the first term of this terrible third-term government, to repeal that vital office as mere 'red tape'. It was a Labor government that established a parliamentary committee in relation to intelligence and security committees. Today, that committee is called the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security. The irresponsible and ignorant suggestion by the Minister for Home Affairs that Labor's record on national security is anything but outstanding does not withstand even the slightest scrutiny.

As I said last week, all of us in this parliament love Australia. All of us in this parliament want Australia to be safe and secure. All of us want to see Australians prosper. None of us want to see Australia lose its character as a confident, free and democratic country. All we in Labor are asking the government to do today is to stop seeking to exploit national security matters for a base marketing ploy to pump up the government's flaccid tyres and to stop trashing longstanding bipartisanship and cooperation on national security matters in an attempt to continue to promote its party political interests, because bipartisanship on national security matters has served our nation well for many years and bipartisanship—including the recent denigration of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security as 'just another committee', the recommendations of which the government thinks it can ignore—does not serve our nation's interests. We are asking the government to quietly and efficiently get on with doing its job—no more, no less.

Finally, in terms of what a revised questioning warrant framework might look like, the Intelligence and Security Committee and the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor, Mr Gyles, have provided the minister with considerable guidance. In fact, the Intelligence and Security Committee has an entire chapter in its report which considers the principles that should underpin a future compulsory questioning model. The 2016 Independent National Security Legislation Monitor, the Hon. Roger Gyles AO QC, recommended that the questioning warrant power be replaced with a questioning power following the model available to the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission. The Law Council of Australia supported that recommendation, partly on the basis that it would be desirable to have consistent, compulsory questioning models across agencies. There is considerable merit in that proposal. That said, and as I noted earlier, ASIO itself put forward a preferred model, which is set out in summary form in the intelligence committee's report. That proposal also warrants careful consideration.

I encourage the Minister for Home Affairs to read the committee's report. Perhaps I should encourage the Minister for Home Affairs to also read the report of the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor. I implore the minister to stop making excuses and to get on with the job of designing a revised questioning warrant framework for 2019. When he does so, I give my commitment that Labor members of the parliament will engage
in the task of assessing that framework in the spirit of constructive bipartisanship on national security that has served our nation for many years. I now move the amendment to the motion for the second reading:

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

"whilst not declining to give the bill a second reading, the House:

(1) notes that:

(a) the Government has failed to implement any of the recommendations made by the bipartisan Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security in relation to the Act in March 2018;

(b) the committee recommended that the questioning and detention warrant power be repealed by 7 September 2019;

(c) the committee and ASIO also told the Government that the questioning warrant power needed to be amended by 7 September 2019 because, in its current form, it is not fit for purpose; and

(d) the Minister for Home Affairs has failed to produce a revised framework for the questioning warrant power; and

(2) is of the view that:

(a) this bill highlights the Minister for Home Affairs' incompetence as the minister responsible for Australia's national security and his indifference to Parliament and foundational democratic principles;

(b) the Government should get on with the job of amending the questioning warrant power as a priority, as recommended by the Committee and by ASIO;

(c) legislation to amend the questioning warrant power framework in the Act should be introduced during the first sitting week of September 2019 and referred to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security for inquiry and report by 18 November 2019, with a view to the legislation being considered by the House during the last sitting fortnight of 2019; and

(d) the Government should repeal the questioning and detention warrant power, which ASIO has never used".

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

Mr Butler: I second the amendment and reserve my right to speak.

Mr TIM WILSON (Goldstein) (19:00): The Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Amendment (Sunsetting of Special Powers Relating to Terrorism Offences) Bill 2019 deals with the fundamental issue of national security and intelligence. We heard in the speech from the shadow Attorney-General a series of allegations against the Minister for Home Affairs, the government, 20,000 bureaucrats and their agencies and about the cheapness and partisanship that sit behind this piece of legislation. He then proceeded to move an amendment that was cheap and partisan and that served no purpose other than to extend the sound of his voice echoing in this chamber for his own enjoyment. It was a sad and tragic effort by the shadow Attorney-General, and it was beneath him to have gotten up and given such an address.

This piece of legislation is substantive. It matters. It goes to the heart of our national security. Don't misunderstand me: I share some of the reservations or concerns about the national security framework that we have in place. The right of citizens to be able to live their lives freely and to make sure there's proper accountability in the exercise of both executive and judicial power is something we should always scrutinise in this parliament. I have always been cautious about many of the parts of our national security legislation and the power the legislation gives our agencies. That won't change. In the end we face constant tests and challenges in this place around balancing liberties and protecting national security.

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr TIM WILSON: I hear some members on the other side of this chamber saying that, even though I raise my scepticism, I still vote for some legislation. That is resolutely true. I do—and so do you—because we all know that we in this place are the custodians of preserving and conserving the nation and its security. Belittling and demeaning it to the sound bites of the shadow Attorney-General doesn't just cheapen him, though it does; it cheapens the custodianship that we hold on behalf of the people of this great nation.

The purpose of this legislation is actually relatively straightforward. The legislation has been reviewed, recommendations have been made by a committee, those recommendations have been accepted by the government, and we are reviewing the legislation for amendment. But, to do so, we are taking prudent and responsible steps, where ASIO and IGIS, the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security, are engaging with stakeholders and partners to make sure we get it right.

One of the points made by the shadow Attorney-General, amongst others, is that we've got to get this stuff right, and he's right on that; we do. But his solution is to fast-forward the process, to speed it up, to come out with a resolution before we have clarity and, in the process, to compromise the integrity of the legislation that this nation so desperately needs. And he then belittles and cheapens it with an amendment, the objective of which seems largely driven by his personal frustration that he is sitting on that side of the chamber and not this one.
That's it—nine months and personal vendettas. So you can understand why so many people on this side of the chamber treat his long and verbose speeches about his own self-indulgence with such contempt.

This legislation has one purpose, which is to make sure that our agencies have the power they need, so that, as soon as we're in a position to be able to replace it with improved legislation that reflects the concerns of our agencies, of the parliament and its committees, we can do so without compromising national security. I would have thought that's a pretty basic expectation of legislation in this place. I would have thought that we could come to some sort of common agreement that that is in the best interests of our country. I would have thought that, for an opposition, that would have been the least they would expect of a government—not to blindly support it all but to recognise that there is a power in place and that, until the legislation has been developed and prudently amended, it would support the legislation in its place instead of what it has done.

Let's be clear: in the speech of the shadow Attorney-General, and I'm quite sure of those who will follow him, they have revealed their cards, and that is their choice. The people of Australia will assess it and judge it prudently and I've no doubt dismiss it, because, when it comes down to the importance of making sure this nation is safe, they always seem to gravitate their eyes to the side of the coalition rather than the cheap stunts of our Labor opponents.

Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (19:06): It is clear that there are no liberals— with a small 'l'—in the Liberal Party anymore. They come in here and rave about capitalism and freedom and say that they believe in individual rights but then they sign them away the very next day with a piece of legislation that was first passed in this parliament on the basis that it would temporarily suspend people's rights and liberties. But that was done back then when this legislation was tabled in 2002. We now have this legislation, the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Amendment (Sunsetting of Special Powers Relating to Terrorism Offences) Bill 2019, that's supposedly temporary, that gives agencies the power to detain people and question people even where they've done nothing wrong. We've now had that renewed and renewed and renewed to the point where this temporary suspension of our rights is now permanent.

This is happening under the watch of people who come in here and tell us how much they care about individual freedoms. But they're the first ones to take them away and to say that all the bleating about individuals' rights to do what they want counts for absolutely nothing as long as you write 'national security' on the front of a bill in crayon. If you do that, then this government says every individual right, every principle of the rule of law, can get trashed. We are witnessing under this government the death of the rule of law and the slow erosion of democracy as some pretty basic principles are taken away day after day.

This legislation gives agencies the power to question someone and remove the right to silence on the basis that they can provide information about something even when they've done nothing wrong, and the power to detain someone even when they've done nothing wrong. At the time that it was introduced, these powers were called 'extraordinary' and there was a sunset clause in it because they were extraordinary. It was meant to expire three years after being introduced. But what we find here is that, with these things that are meant to be temporary, the government just come in and say, 'We still need those powers,' and they give us one line to explain why. They say, 'We need to manage the ever-evolving terrorist threat'—and that's it; that's enough.

The same thing's happening in the United States. After the 11 September terrorist attacks, the President there declared a state of emergency and gave himself huge powers to bypass the law. President Trump has just renewed those powers as well, so the United States is still living in a state of emergency where it has those wide-ranging powers. And we're seeing the same principles applying here. When does the emergency end? When does the exceptional situation end? Apparently, according to this government, never! Never! It never ends. Those rights and liberties that were lost temporarily are now lost permanently.

So I'm sorry, Member for Goldstein, and all those freedom fighters who come in here and say that they believe in the cause of individual liberties: we do not believe you. We don't believe you, because you are the first ones to take them away from people and say it is okay for governments to detain people even when they haven't committed a crime. You've just trashed the rule of law, and so you have no credibility anymore. I say to those who have come before and made contributions here, saying that they believe in liberties, that they have no credibility anymore on this front, because they are the first ones to take away people's liberties.

So this is not a bill that can be supported, because there's no justification that the exceptional circumstances are continuing and there's no indication from the government whatsoever that they're ever going to wind this back. I say to the other members of this place and to the Australian public that this is going to happen time and time again. Time and time again we're going to be forced into giving up some basic principles of the rule of law, told it's temporary and then it becomes permanent.
And why are we here almost a decade afterwards, with one-line justifications for the extensions of these powers? Everyone in this chamber wants Australians to be safe. That is something that we all agree on; we all want Australians to be safe. The question is: do we make people safer by taking away their rights? And if we want to defend ourselves against terrorists and people who want to do us harm, why do we do the very thing—if you listen to the government's rhetoric, we are being attacked by terrorists because they disagree with our way of life and our system of government. That's what the government says. But is the right response to change our system of government to become more like the kinds of countries that we are supposedly opposed to? That's what happens time after time: take away some basic principles of individual liberties and the rule of law.

We'll make further contributions about this matter in the Senate, but I do make one last plea to other members of parliament who aren't on the government side: what is clear from this sitting fortnight is that this government will stop at nothing to try to find a wedge. That is all they're about; they are bereft of an agenda of their own and all they will do is try to find a wedge. There have been so many wedges flying around in this parliament in the last fortnight, the only thing that's missing is the sour cream and chili sauce! They have nothing. They didn't expect to win the election and all they're doing now is bringing in wedge after wedge after wedge. But there is a lesson here, which is that there is nothing they won't do. There is nothing they won't do, and whilst others in this place may want to show some good faith towards the government and believe that we can negotiate sensible amendments and so on, it all counts for nought. It all counts for nought if they think they can wedge people.

They will come in here time and time again, and what we've seen in this sitting fortnight is essentially a rolling over in the face of that. The problem with these people is that if you do that once they'll just keep coming back and back. We're going to have wedge after wedge for the next three years because there sure as heck ain't anything else that the government have on their agenda. So at some point we're going to need to recognise that they don't care about agreements that they breach and they don't care about following good process. This government just cares about finding a wedge, and we've got to stand up to them. We've got to stop them from trashing basic principles of the rule of law and stop them from trashing our democratic institutions.

That means standing up to them in this place and understanding that, yes, they will then go out and hold a press conference and say, 'All of those people who voted against us are responsible for the end of the world'—but they're going to do that anyway. They're going to do that consistently for the next three years, and they'll come up with some other rubbish to spin next election time. It will be something else that they will pull out of a hat, some other low, dredging-at-the-bottom-of-the-barrel piece of work that says, 'We've got to remove more peoples' rights and put some more people in prison and take away some other peoples' dignity because there's someone that we haven't kicked yet.' There's always something that these guys will find.

So let's stand up to them. Let's hold them to account for not having any agenda other than to attack people who can't defend themselves. Let's stop rolling over, because once it becomes clear that they've got no agenda other than wedge after wedge then not only will we be in a position to defend basic principles of the rule of law and of democracy but we'll start to hold this government to account and people will see them for what they are.

Mr WOOD (La Trobe—Assistant Minister for Customs, Community Safety and Multicultural Affairs) (19:16): I would like to thank my colleagues for their contribution to this debate. Ensuring the safety and protection of the Australian community is a key priority for this government. The persistent and evolving threat faced by Australia's law enforcement and security agencies makes it critical they have access to effective tools and capabilities to counter the threat of terrorism. The Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Amendment (Sunsetting of Special Powers Relating to Terrorism Offences) Bill 2019 ensures that the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, ASIO, retains its strong counterterrorism capabilities while the government progresses more detailed reforms on ASIO's questioning and detention powers.

Following the review of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security and the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor, the passage of this bill will extend the sunset date of ASIO's questioning and detention powers in division 3 of part III of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act 1979 for 12 months until 7 September 2020. I commend the bill to the House.

Question negatived.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Bill—by leave—taken as a whole.

Mr DREYFUS (Isaacs—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (19:18): I move the opposition amendment circulated in my name:

(1) Schedule 1, item 1, page 3 (lines 4 and 5), omit the item, substitute:
1 Section 34ZZ

Repeal the section, substitute:

34ZZ Cessation of effect of Division

(1) This Division (apart from Subdivision C of this Division) ceases to have effect on 7 December 2019.

(2) Subdivision C of this Division ceases to have effect on 7 September 2019.

It's a very simple amendment. The effect of it would be to extend the sunset date for the questioning warrant power until 7 December 2019 and to retain the existing sunset date for the questioning and detention warrant power of 7 September 2019. That's the power that's never been used.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the amendment moved by the member for Isaacs be agreed to.

The House divided. [19:23]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .....................64
Noes .....................76
Majority ....................12

AYES

Albanese, AN
Bandt, AP
Bowen, CE
Burney, LJ
Butler, MC
Byrne, AM
Champion, ND
Claydon, SC
Collins, JM
Dick, MD
Elliot, MJ
Freelander, MR
Giles, AJ
Gosling, LJ
Hill, JC
Jones, SP
Kelly, MJ
Khalil, P
King, MMH
Marles, RD
Mitchell, BK
Mulino, D
O'Connor, BPJ
Owens, JA
Perrett, GD
Pilcher, TJ
Ryan, JC (teller)
Stanley, AM (teller)
Thistlethwaite, MJ
Vamvakoumi, M
Wells, AS
Wilson, JH

NOES

Alexander, JG
Andrews, KJ
Archer, BK
Broadbent, RE
Chester, D
Coleman, DB
Connelly, V
Drum, DK (teller)
Evans, TM
Fletcher, PW
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Haines, H
Hastie, AW

Allen, K
Andrews, KL
Bell, AM
Buchholz, S
Christensen, GR
Conaghan, PJ
Coulton, M
Entsch, WG
Falinski, JG
Flint, NJ
Gee, AR
Goodenough, IR
Hammond, CM
Hawke, AG
Question negatived.
Bill agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr WOOD (La Trobe—Assistant Minister for Customs, Community Safety and Multicultural Affairs) (19:29): by leave—I move:
That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.
Bill read a third time.

ADJOURNMENT

The SPEAKER (19:30): It now being 7.30 pm, I propose the question:
That the House do now adjourn.

Shortland Electorate: Broadband

Mr CONROY (Shortland) (19:30): One of the many complaints coming from my constituents is still about the National Broadband Network, the delivery of which is now four years behind schedule and over $21 billion over budget. Let me repeat that: four years over schedule and $21 billion over budget. The people I represent in this place continue to be frustrated by the sheer incompetence and ineptitude of the coalition and their second-rate NBN.

A very common complaint from constituents is that all their neighbours are connected to the network and that they cannot connect. For example, Adrian lives in Charlestown and has been told that his property should be NBN ready by October. Most of Charlestown has been connected for well over a year, and the other residents in the cul-de-sac that Adrian lives in are connected. The reason the NBN has given my office for not being able to connect his property is: ‘because of the length of copper’. That is not a joke. Not only is this second-rate network relying on copper but the NBN does not have enough copper to connect Adrian, and this is in spite of the government buying thousands of miles of extra copper. Another constituent had terrible problems in having his property connected, as the NBN were unable to find the actual property. This is despite being a standalone house in a suburban street. There were even difficulties, after my office became involved, with the NBN actually locating the house physically. Finally, I’ve recently been contacted by a constituent in an apartment block at Mount Hutton, not 10 minutes from my electorate office, whose complaint—justifiably so—is that all her neighbours in the block are connected and she is not.

As always, constituents try and sort out their problems for themselves and only after months of trying turn to their MP out of sheer desperation requesting assistance. These examples clearly expose the government’s shallow boasts about the rollout of the network as completely and utterly false.
Another major complaint I receive is about internet speed. People are flabbergasted that they often had faster speeds with ADSL. This is not what Australians were promised by the coalition, and they expect and are entitled to much better. Australia is ranked 57th in the world for broadband speed. Trinidad and Tobago has faster broadband speeds, Panama has faster broadband speeds and Moldova has faster broadband speeds. This is not a joke. Although communication companies love to use these facts in their advertisements for their products, it really is a damning indictment of the government. The fact that developing countries have superior broadband speeds to an advanced economy like ours is certainly not a joke; it is a national disgrace.

My office regularly receives complaints regarding the NBN, and telecommunications generally, from the suburb of Caves Beach about 10 minutes south from my office—a beautiful spot. One of my constituents in Caves Beach has contacted me to complain that his download data rate is between 16 and 22 megabits. The NBN committed to providing broadband services with a minimum download rate of 25 megabits by the end of 2016. They've definitely missed this target. The whole intent of the NBN was to revolutionise our daily lives. One way that it should improve the way we communicate is in people's ability to work from home. This constituent is employed by a state government department and often needs to work from home and access his employer's network remotely. Because of both the unreliability of this service and the shocking speeds he experiences, it makes working from home very difficult to do.

The NBN offered so much. It provided great options for telecommuting to ease congestion on our roads. It offered the breakthroughs of telehealth to improve the strain on our health system. This government, because it cut corners and because the then opposition leader, Tony Abbott, tried to weaponise it in the lead-up to the 2013 campaign, in the end delivered a second-rate system and a second-rate network that will have to be fixed over time by whoever is in power in the decades to come. That is a great shame, because it would have been much cheaper and more efficient to do it properly the first time. As I said, it is now four years over schedule and $21 billion over budget.

The Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison government has let Australians down with the rollout of the National Broadband Network, and all members of this House are aware of this because our offices continue to receive regular complaints about the NBN. So many of my constituents are missing out on the hugely significant benefits of the NBN because of the problems I've outlined today, and the Liberals should be ashamed of their shocking and negligent oversight of this vital and necessary infrastructure.

**Organ and Tissue Donation**

**Drought Communities Program**

**Mr PASIN** (Barker) (19:35): This week is Donate Life Week. It's about raising awareness and inspiring Australians to make a real difference to the lives of others by registering and telling their families that they want to be an organ donor. In this Donate Life Week, across Australia, agencies and community stakeholders are holding events and activities in their local areas to help promote the life-changing gift of organ and tissue donation. Organ donation is an amazing gift. It's a selfless act that can never be repaid.

The federal government is supporting organisations around the country to spread this message about the importance of organ donation, encouraging Australians to register. The Herd of Hope is one such organisation which is spreading the good word. It was founded in 2017 by Megan McLoughlin, herself an organ recipient and a resident of the Barossa Valley in my electorate of Barker.

Megan is an inspirational Australian. As a child, she was diagnosed with juvenile diabetes. Later, she became legally blind and received an urgent life-saving transplant before being diagnosed with cervical cancer in 2015. Megan is passionate about rural Australia and is helping those who are in need of treatment who live in rural and regional Australia.

One in three rurally based residents will need transplants in their lifetime, but many do not have the ability to stay at home to receive that treatment. The organisation has recently partnered with the University of South Australia to fund a study into the impacts of transplant processes on recipients and their carers when regionally based.

Herd of Hope is an amazing organisation founded by an inspirational woman. I commend Megan and her team for all they're doing, not just this week but every week, for regional Australians.

Finally on this issue, can I say: I encourage all Australians to register for organ and tissue donation and talk to your family about that choice. It's one of the greatest gifts you can give.

Much of rural and regional Australia has, for some time, been in the grip of drought. Many communities in my electorate have been experiencing rainfall which is far below the average. These are communities whose economies rely on primary production. In short, without rain our regional communities suffer.
Our government of course is committed to helping these communities get through these tough times. Our drought support package is multifaceted, but tonight I want to focus on one aspect, the Drought Communities Program. Local governments, of course, are closest to their communities. The Drought Communities Program provides short-term support, including giving a boost to local employment and procurement and addressing social and community needs.

In my electorate, eight councils were deemed to be eligible for a million dollar commitment to undertake projects that will deliver real outcomes for those communities struggling with the effects of drought. While each of these eight are in various stages in relation to this program, from planning to completion, I'm extremely proud that I can point to the projects they've prioritised in their communities that are making a real and direct difference for the people in my electorate and their communities.

We have projects for childcare facility upgrades in Karoonda and Pinnaroo. We've got work going on on rural roads, for farming access in Kapunda and to increase the tourism industry in towns along the River Murray. I'm seeing these projects roll out. I'm seeing the local employment they're generating. I'm seeing the stimulation of the economy but also people having that sense that there are others willing to help them with these tough times.

Nothing truer has been said in this place than, 'We can't make it rain.' We absolutely can't. Whilst government can't make it rain, we can support communities that are struggling with the effects of there being very little rainfall. As you've heard me say in the party room, in the halls and in other places, we're backing our farmers and we'll continue to stand up for them whether it comes to droughts, rain, hail or shine.

Queensland Government

Water Infrastructure

Mr KATTER (Kennedy) (19:40): Speaking about water, I think it's very naive of the federal government to be attempting to deal with the state government in Queensland—(a) because they have never been in favour of any development of an agricultural nature in their history and are not likely to be in the future; and (b) because they're not going to be the government in eight or nine months time. If they continue with their current leadership, they are going to be annihilated. They are going to be annihilated, because they hold all of the seats north of Bundaberg. The LNP in Queensland have been so totally incompetent that they've lost every seat bar one of the 16 seats north of Bundaberg. That's a pretty good achievement! With the only other one they had, they kicked the bloke out. So they have got one. They are going to all switch over. Have a look at the federal results and extrapolate them onto the state results and they will be annihilated at the forthcoming election.

This does not suit the interests of small parties such as the one I belong to, because we have a very real chance of getting the balance of power. We have absolutely no chance of getting the balance of power whilst those two ladies are leading the party. One is notorious for her hatred of coalmining. In my union, the CFMMEU, we've really had quite enough of the anti-coalmining rhetoric of the state government. Then, having antagonised North Queensland, the coalmining capital of the world, they proceeded to antagonise Brisbane by saying that they're for coalmining. So they've managed to antagonise both sides of the argument. The old saying that Bjelke-Petersen used to quote all the time was, 'If you don't believe in anything, you'll fall for everything.' There would be a classic example of it. But we would hope that some sanity prevails in the Labor Party in Queensland.

The Hells Gate project comes from Dr JC Bradfield. For those who know your Australian history, he provided the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the big bridge in Brisbane across the Brisbane River. The water supply for Sydney today is principally the water supply he provided for Sydney nearly 100 years ago. The underground railway system won the international prize for engineering in the year it was built in Sydney. This is a great builder of Australian history. But he's most famous for what he didn't build, which was the Bradfield Scheme. The Bradfield scheme says that we send water to Lake Eyre, there's giant evaporation, and three times the amount of water in the Murray-Darling will evaporate over the Murray-Darling and be blown up against the inside of the range and what is now the desert of Australia, and the 'dead heart', to quote Dr Bradfield, will be what he called 'Ghirraween', a land of flowers. Reading the reports, I don't doubt for a moment that that will occur.

The revised Bradfield Scheme was developed by an outstanding academic—maybe one of the leading academics in the country for his intelligence and intellectual capacity—and one of the smartest blokes I've ever known in my life. Sir Leo Hielscher was offered the World Bank position in the Reserve Bank three times and was the great architect of the economic success story in Queensland. Sir Leo Hielscher, even at the age of 92, is still ringing up the Prime Minister and people advocating that we get on with it. But the revised Bradfield Scheme said that we bring the water up from Spencer Gulf and fill Lake Eyre with seawater and get our freshwater that way over the Murray-Darling and we use the water from the high elevation, where it rains all the time.

In the electorate of Kennedy, my electorate, we have 200-inch rainfall in a lot of our towns and we take some of that water—we can only get a little tiny bit of it—and put it out onto the great inland plain. We've now turned
what was a desolation, a bowl of weeds, into one of the most prolific farming areas in the world. That can be done. It's being undertaken by the current federal government. We had a very positive attitude from the Rudd-Swan government and a very positive attitude from the current leader of the Labor Party. So we have a very enlightened view coming from here.

Of course, I don't think we have to worry too much about the leadership in Queensland, because they aren't going to be there this time next year—that's for certain. We hope we get more enlightened leadership by both parties in Queensland to proceed with this wonderful scheme.

Energy

Mr PITT (Hinkler) (19:45): I rise to inform the House of the hapless case of Minister Cameron Dick, the Queensland minister who has once again gone out on local media in my electorate—in fact, on ABC Wide Bay, with David Dowsett the presenter—running a scare campaign on nuclear reactors. Once again, the Labor Party are generally pretty good at scare campaigns, but they need to base some of these things around facts if they want to be successful.

I just want to give some quotes from his interview this morning with the ABC. Mr Dick said: 'If you ask the people of Fukushima, they'll give you a very clear answer. We know up to a thousand workers died after that nuclear power plant went into meltdown, and that's in the recent past. Going on about how technology has improved, and we had that terrible incident in Fukushima.'

I've actually done some research and what it says is this: there have been no deaths or cases of radiation sickness from the nuclear accident, but over 100,000 people were evacuated, also as part of a 15-metre tsunami. I believe that has been updated. There has now been one incident of lung cancer which resulted in a fatality, and that is a terrible outcome. But I would say to Minister Dick that we want to have an adult conversation with the Australian people. If you want to run a scare campaign, you should grow up. The quotes that he has put forward are factually incorrect.

If we want to talk about modern technology, that nuclear power plant consisted of six GE light-water-boiling reactors with a combined capacity of 4.7 gigawatts. That is an enormous generator—very, very large. But we want to compare this with the technology of today. The No. 1 reactor commenced construction in July 1967 and commenced operation in March 1971. Reactors 2 and 3 commenced in July 1974 and March 1976. In between, man landed on the moon. I think things have moved on from that hippie stage in terms of technology. It's just completely incomparable. I would say to Minister Dick that he really should inform himself. There is an opportunity here to act like an adult and, unfortunately, it doesn't appear that is to be the case.

But all is not lost. I thought I should do some more research, given the member for Oxley's close relationship with Minister Dick. I was interested in what the member for Oxley might have said. In fact, would you believe that he is a true believer! In his maiden speech he said:

No other nation is better positioned than Australia to supply the world with its growing demand for resources. Whilst there are no doubt challenges facing the resources sector, we must continue to be steadfast in our support of the sector, as our neighbours China and India, in particular, grow to be 21st century superpowers and pull millions out of poverty.

I agree with the member for Oxley. It's unusual; it's a surprise. I think that if the member for Maribyrnong had listened to the member for Oxley there could well have been a different result at the last election.

Minister Dick banged on for quite some time, but this is an absolute clanger: 'Energy prices are coming down,' was the claim from Minister Dick. I would say to Minister Dick: bring yourself back up to the electorate. I'm more than happy to put a hundred people in a room who will suggest that their bills haven't gone down. If we look at who is responsible for the cost of electricity in regional Queensland, it is 100 per cent the Queensland state Labor government. They own 70 per cent of the generators, all of the transmission and the only retailer in town. And the latest, Mr Deputy Speaker Andrews—I'm sure you're listening because you really want to hear about this—is that they've now invented a demand charge. If you use over 100,000 kilowatt hours of energy in a year, you'll get slammed for use in peak periods by up to 48c a kilowatt hour. I don't know anyone who thinks that is a decrease in cost. I've been approached by small businesses, from coffee shops all the way through to major energy users. The price has not gone down; it has increased.

So I say to Minister Dick: you have an opportunity to correct the record. You should walk into your own parliament, withdraw those statements and be factual with the people you represent. There is an opportunity here for us all to act like adults and have a conversation. No-one is suggesting we are out to construct nuclear reactors in the middle of Queensland. We need to have a conversation about changing the technology, and the opportunities for Queenslanders and all Australians to get involved with an industry which is used around the world. Is the minister seriously saying that Queensland researchers, Queensland universities, Queensland manufacturers and Queensland individuals who might produce this product and concentrate it for use in other

CHAMBER
places are not as good as others around the world? I think that is a nonsense. He is letting down the people he represents. He should stop scaring those people—and the horses. We just want to have an adult conversation, but it seems that it may well be impossible.

**Pensions and Benefits**

Mr CHAMPION (Spence) (19:50): Newstart must rise, and it must rise by $75 per week. In this country, and in my electorate, one cannot help but be confronted by the poverty that the current rate of Newstart causes. This is not just a terrible waste of human capital and a terrible blight on the local community and on the nation; it is also an attack on economic growth. If we want to prevent poverty, if we want to stop that dreadful waste of human capital, if we want to boost economic growth, the government must act.

I have been confronted, both before the election and since that time, by people approaching me in my local electorate telling me just how desperate their lives are on this payment. They go into pretty graphic detail of the desperation they feel, and it is a very confronting thing. The observation I would make about Newstart is that it is set not just at subsistence levels but a couple of ratchet levels below that. People simply cannot survive on it.

I think this parliament and, in particular, this government has a desperate moral imperative to address this issue. It is not just me saying this. Of course, ACOSS is saying it. The ACTU is saying it. The Country Women's Association of New South Wales is saying it. Barnaby Joyce is saying it. The Business Council of Australia is saying it. The Business Council of Australia's plan for a stronger Australia—its to-do list—says we should lift the single rate of Newstart for those who remain on Newstart for a long period of time and are unlikely to return to sustained work. It says it has supported increasing Newstart since 2011 because it is the right thing to do. So business itself recognises that when you can't feed yourself, when you can't pay the rent, when you can't maintain a car, when you can't maintain your own health, when you can't buy a decent set of clothes to go to a job interview, your chances of getting a job diminish significantly.

There are those who find that they and their skills are unsuited to the modern labour market. I meet these people all the time. They have often worked from the age of 15 or 16. They have left school at year 10 and gone to work in a manufacturing plant. They have worked pretty steadily until they are over 40. They have been the subject of a redundancy and they find themselves unable to get back into work. That is a desperately bad situation to be in. Under the current Newstart rules, the liquid asset test and other tests are applied. That mean your asset base gets diminished before you can go on to Newstart. So you are already pretty skint before you get onto it and, once you really get onto it, things get more and more desperate over time.

There is an obligation on this government. They won in unexpected fashion. They are doing their level best not to become arrogant. But the critical thing, when you sit on the Treasury benches, is that you inherit a whole lot of responsibilities, and they have the responsibility to address the poverty, the waste of human capital and the waste of economic capacity that the low rate of Newstart causes today. I just hope that they listen to reason, that they listen to John Howard—I mean, there couldn't be a greater conservative in the country. He says that this rate has been left too low for too long. Howard says it. For all of those people who talk about being great conservatives, here is a conservative cause that perhaps you can get behind and find some popular acclaim for doing so.

**Queensland: Infrastructure**

Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (19:55): It was published today in The Australian newspaper that the Melbourne Institute's most recent household survey had the people of Brisbane experiencing the second longest commute in the country. This is the first time Brisbane came in second—behind Sydney, of course, but before Melbourne. It is reflective of the pressure of an increased population not only on Queensland's capital city but also on the south-east corner of Queensland. The population trajectory has Queensland growing enormously over the years ahead. In South-East Queensland projections are that the population will reach around about 6.3 million people by 2050.

A challenge, therefore, for all governments is to have infrastructure catch up with and, ideally, get ahead of the population curve. Thanks to the strong economy of this Morrison government, we're doing our bit. Over the forward estimates, the next four years alone, about $9.7 billion will be spent in Queensland. It will be going to vitally important infrastructure, in particular roads and rail. Unfortunately, a challenge we have is the Queensland state Labor government and their complete absence of an understanding of infrastructure. This is sad. We know the reason. It's no secret. They don't know how to run the economy and they don't have money; therefore they can't spend it. But it means that even our plans to bust congestion within the south-east corner of our state are being held back, because a lot of the major projects are actually on roads and rail that are owned by the state but to which the federal government is making a serious financial contribution. We have to keep fighting the good fight as much as we can even though we're the ones that are carrying the load.

The Infrastructure New South Wales team did an analysis recently that compared the spend on infrastructure of different states and territories. The House would be interested to know the conclusion they reached—that there is
no state or territory spending less on infrastructure as a percentage of their revenue than the state of Queensland, bar none. On as good an apples-to-apples comparison as you can get, no state government spends less on infrastructure than Queensland does. Of course there's hope that next October, when there's an election, the people of Queensland will finally say no to the Labor government and we'll have an LNP government in town.

But there's also hope because we need to ensure we are working on long-term solutions. Right now we're working on three things together with the state government and the SEQ Council of Mayors. The first is that we have a city deal. A statement of intent was signed earlier this year between the federal government, the Queensland state government and the SEQ Council of Mayors for a 20-year vision to be mapped out for the southeast corner of the state and for that vision to articulate key major projects, infrastructure amongst them. The second is a bid for the 2032 Olympics. Here again we must see the three tiers of government working as one team. It is the only way we can prosecute that case. The third is fast rail. There are three business cases currently underway: one from the Sunshine Coast to Brisbane; another one from Gold Coast to Brisbane, which is soon to begin; and the third from Toowoomba through Ipswich to Brisbane. We need those three business cases to come together as an SEQ fast rail network. With those three components pulled together—city deal, Olympic bid and SEQ fast rail network—we can plan for the long-term future as three tiers of government while we try to get the short-term stuff done.

House adjourned at 20:00

NOTICES

The following notices were given:

**Mr Fletcher** to present a Bill for an Act to amend the Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983, and for other purposes. *(Australian Broadcasting Corporation Amendment (Rural and Regional Measures) Bill 2019)*

**Mr Fletcher** to present a Bill for an Act to amend the law relating to family assistance, and for related purposes. *(Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Extend Family Assistance to ABSTUDY Secondary School Boarding Students Aged 16 and Over) Bill 2019)*

**Mr Coleman** to present a Bill for an Act to amend the law consequential to the creation of certain visas, and for related purposes. *(New Skilled Regional Visas (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2019)*

**Mr Hawke** to present a Bill for an Act to amend the Australian Passports Act 2005, and for related purposes. *(Australian Passports Amendment (Identity-matching Services) Bill 2019)*

**Mr Coleman** to present a Bill for an Act about dealing with information for providing identity-matching services and for carrying on certain identity or community protection activities, and for related purposes. *(Identity-matching Services Bill 2019)*

**Mr Bandt** to present a Bill for an Act to establish the National Integrity Commission, and for related purposes. *(National Integrity Commission Bill 2019)*

**Mr Hayes** to move:

That this House:

(1) acknowledges Australia is a major contributor to the Syria humanitarian response plan, designating approximately $220 million dollars to Syria and neighbouring countries between 2016 and 2019;

(2) notes that:

(a) western Sydney is a primary settlement region and has received one-fifth of Australia's recent humanitarian intake, as a result of years of ongoing conflict in the Middle East; and

(b) local health, education and migrant service providers, particularly in Fairfield and Liverpool, are running beyond their funded capacity and as a result, have been put under considerable pressure when trying to assist families to settle and integrate into our local community; and

(3) further acknowledges:

(a) that the insufficient funding to support these frontline services has widened the gap between supply of and demand for settlement services to support vulnerable individuals, particularly from the minority Christian, Assyrian, Chaldean and Mandaean communities; and

(b) the need to effectively invest in the settlement of refugees to enable them into integrate into the community, fulfil their potential and make a positive contribution to this country.

**Mr Dick** to move:

That this House:

(1) notes that:
(a) it has been more than four years since the Government established the independent Review of Small Amount Credit Contracts (SACC);

(b) the review panel provided the final report to the Government on 3 March 2016, listing 24 recommendations relating to the SACC and consumer leasing laws;

(c) the Government released its response to the report on 28 November 2016, in which it agreed with the vast majority of recommendations in part or in full;

(d) the Minister for Revenue and Financial Services at the time said 'the implementation of these recommendations will ensure that vulnerable consumers are afforded appropriate levels of consumer protection while continuing to access SACCs and leases';

(e) the Government released draft legislation on 23 October 2017, whereby the Minister for Small Business and now Deputy Prime Minister said that the 'Government will introduce legislation this year to implement the SACC and consumer lease reforms';

(f) the Assistant Minister to the Treasurer pledged in May 2018 that SACC and consumer leasing laws would be progressed in 2018;

(g) former Prime Minister Turnbull confirmed the Government supported the vast majority of recommendations from the independent Review of SACC and also pledged to introduce legislation enacting the recommendations in 2018;

(h) the Assistant Treasurer in December 2018 also noted the importance of protecting vulnerable consumers from harmful financial practices, but would wait until the conclusion of the Royal Commission into Misconduct in the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industry;

(i) the Royal Commission has now been completed, however there is still no legislation before the house to enact the 24 recommendations from the independent Review of SACC;

(j) on 22 February 2019 the Senate Economics References Committee completed an inquiry into credit and financial services targeted at Australians at risk of financial hardship, which recommended that the National Consumer Credit Protection Amendment (Small Amount Credit Contract and Consumer Lease Reforms) Bill 2017 exposure draft released by Treasury be introduced, and passage facilitated by the Government; and

(k) the Government has continuously broken its promises to legislate these important reforms; and

(2) calls on the Government to introduce legislation without any further delay so that Australians are given the protections they need from harmful pay day lending practices.

Mr Zappia to move:
That this House:

(1) notes that:

(a) as at 30 June 2019 there were 221,415 applications for Australian citizenship by conferral;

(b) under this Government the backlog has risen from 27,037 in 2013-14;

(c) the timeframe for finalisation of 90 per cent of applications is now within 24 months;

(d) some applicants wait longer than two years for their applications to be finalised; and

(e) Australian Citizenship provides a number of important benefits including,

   (i) the right to enrol and vote,

   (ii) eligibility for a HECS-HELP loan for university,

   (iii) access to an Australian passport, and

   (iv) sometimes satisfying a requirement for employment; and

(2) calls on the Government to immediately address the backlog and lengthy wait times for citizenship applications so that people who want to fully participate in Australian civic life are able to do so.

Dr Allen to move:
That this House:

(1) recognises National Science Week took place from 10 to 18 August 2019;

(2) acknowledges:

(a) National Science Week is an opportunity to recognise the economic and social contribution of those working in science disciplines;

(b) National Science Week highlights the importance of sparking an interest in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects from an early age and maintaining participation by students throughout primary and secondary schooling;

(c) last year almost 1.2 million people participated in more than 2,100 events around the country; and

(d) Questacon's leadership role during National Science Week and throughout the year in inspiring young people and promoting STEM study; and

(3) notes the Government's ongoing investment in science, research and innovation, which totalled $9.6 billion in 2018-19.
**Mr Thompson** to move:

That this House:

(1) notes the important role Australian small business has in the future of our national and economic security through its integral role in our defence industry;

(2) recognises the defence industry's potential for growth in electoral divisions like Herbert and other regional electoral divisions across Australia;

(3) supports opportunities to maximise the participation of Australian companies in all facets of defence procurement; and

(4) acknowledges the Government's commitment to deliver a robust, resilient and internationally competitive Australian defence industry.

**Mr Entsch** to move:

That this House:

(1) notes that 31 July 2019 is World Ranger Day;

(2) acknowledges the significant contribution that indigenous rangers make to our national parks, including environmental management, restoration and education;

(3) pays tribute to rangers that have lost their lives while at work;

(4) supports the Government's funding of indigenous ranger groups with $254.6 million invested through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy over three years from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2021, including $61.8 million in the state of Queensland; and

(5) welcomes the work of 123 ranger groups nationally, which provided 2,160 jobs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in 2016-17.
CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Bruce Electorate: Wellsprings for Women

Mr Hill (Bruce) (16:00): I want to congratulate Wellsprings for Women on its 25th anniversary. Wellsprings for Women was started 25 years ago by the Kildare Ministries. It is a wonderful local community centre for women in Dandenong, in my electorate, almost a neighbourhood house. But perhaps the thing I value above all else is that in such a multicultural community, the most multicultural city in the whole of Australia, you do tend to see that people divide and commune, if you like, in different ethnicities and religions. The wonderful thing about Wellsprings is it actually brings women together from every part of the community, from every age, from every background, including those who have been here a long time and those who have been here a short time. The women there do such wonderful work connecting particularly newer Australians, many of whom may be socially isolated, through English classes, starting small businesses and so on. It is also a gateway to referral to other services, be they financial counselling, domestic violence support and so on.

I recently opened the Rose Room, a new computer classroom set up to provide computer literacy. It needed a new classroom because, some months ago, it was decided to close one of the old classrooms and turn it into a children's room, because that was identified as one of the great barriers for women to coming and participating and getting out of the house, so that's a wonderful thing in accordance with Wellsprings' values. Through a series of grants they managed to get together, they now have a computer lab.

I want to honour Rose Elias, who the room is named after. For 14 years, she was the community development coordinator, and she died suddenly in March this year, and the local community decided to honour her memory in that way. I secured a small amount of money towards the $117,000 from the Stronger Communities grants program, which was a good thing—there is $150,000 per electorate.

In the closing moments here, I want to record here that I have mixed feelings about that program. Like all members, you want to get the money for your constituency and for your electorate, which was particularly important for us given the government gave us zero specific election commitments, not one dollar in the second most disadvantaged municipality in Victoria—thanks for that, Liberals! I'm particularly worried about the emergence of similar programs, where funding is cut by electorate, so on. They are more focused around providing photo opportunities for politicians than genuinely allocating scarce taxpayer funds according to community needs. And I do think that people should be very suspicious of programs where they are cut by electorate, because the deciding point, fundamentally, is a political unit. These are political programs. I can't believe that schools in my electorate have the same needs as in the rich areas of Sydney or, indeed, in rural electorates where there are 200 schools and they would be lucky to get $1,000 each. So I do want to call out the government for these political programs.

Higgins Electorate: Health

Dr Allen (Higgins) (16:03): Clinical trials benefit patients. Advancing medical knowledge is absolutely core to advancing care for patients and such trials are essential for that. I'm proud that my electorate of Higgins is one such place that contributes to scientific innovation and medical research. As a professor and medical researcher and having led clinical trials myself, I know how important they are not only to improving the lives of patients here in Australia but also in contributing to our leadership on the global stage. Our nation's strong economy, appetite for innovation and understanding of the importance of investment in medical research make Australia an ideal place to carry out these important human clinical trials. Each year, approximately 1,000 new clinical trials are commenced in Australia, from phase 1—first human trials—to phase 5—postmarket trials for medicines and devices.

There are five key factors to make sure that Australia continues to be par excellence for clinical trials. Those favourable environments include internationally recognised standards. We are governed by the Australian Therapeutic Goods Act 1989, under which all clinical trials are conducted. That level of trust in the Australian environment is very important worldwide. We've also had record-high government investment and support under our current Morrison Liberal-Nationals government. We also have, incredibly importantly, efficient regulatory processes, and they allow the pharmaceutical companies that want to undertake trials in Australia some sense of comfort. We have industry approved standard form contracts—that's very important from a business sense—and
willing and informed participants. We know that there's a high level of trust from the Australian public in participating in clinical trials, and that is very helpful with ensuring that we have diverse patients participating in these clinical trials.

Indeed, clinical trials are an important source of employment, training, knowledge and early access to innovative medicines so that Australian patients can access these important new therapies as they come online. In Higgins alone there are currently 75 clinical trials underway. Many patients in Higgins benefit from these trials, and I'm very proud that we've had investment by the Morrison government, with, most recently, Minister Hunt announcing $6 million to be invested in Cabrini Health, which is the only hospital in Higgins, for a new institute of cancer. That will enable us to have 180 new patients participating in trials in Higgins itself.

Ultimately, it's our government's strong economic management that can deliver these important new health initiatives, and I'm very proud to be part of a government that is delivering.

Perth Electorate

Pensions and Benefits

Mr GORMAN (Perth) (16:06): The great CBD of Perth, which sits in my electorate, is currently going through a tough time. It turns 190 years old on 12 August this year, but retailers are closing their doors. One in three retailers expect to lay off staff in the next three months. Retail trade is down 0.7 per cent year on year. Western Australian wages growth in the year to March was the lowest in the country, growing just 1.6 per cent. Western Australian construction is down a massive 18.7 per cent on 2018 figures. Home prices have dropped a huge 9.3 per cent in the last year. And, sadly, there is an increasing incidence of homelessness and people sleeping rough in our CBD.

These things haven't been helped by the divisive rhetoric of the Western Australian Liberal Party leader, who has attacked the City of Perth. I, on the other hand, stand up for the city of Perth. It is a great city with a proud history and a very bright future. The City of Perth should be commended for their initiatives to rejuvenate the city: free parking on weekends and public holidays, a forum for retailers to raise their concerns with the city and working towards a central homeless shelter for the most vulnerable in our community. It is a shame that Perth missed out on the opportunity for a Common Ground facility when they were being funded by the federal government a number of years ago, but I hope that in the future we'll be able to build one of those great transitional assets that allows people to go from homelessness to permanent housing.

Homelessness is such a terrible waste for our community. The census tells us that, on census night 2016, some 9,000 Western Australians were homeless. Anecdotal evidence and what comes through my office tell me that that figure is, sadly, increasing. The cycle of poverty and disadvantage isn't solved by cheap slogans and is not something that can or should be spun.

I want to finish by sharing the story of someone. We've spoken a lot in this place about the importance of increasing Newstart and a lot about what that would really mean. It would obviously address many of those economic challenges that I just spoke about. I want to share one of the stories that I received. This is from Clare. Clare wrote to me on behalf of her brother. It's a fact that people who are on Newstart are often those who can't advocate for themselves or don't feel empowered to advocate for themselves. Due to illness, Clare's brother Frank has been out of work since his late 50s. He's now 64. The Newstart allowance barely allows Fred to feed himself, and stay sheltered. That's the reality of Newstart. It's something we should do more about and something I hope we do in the future.

Stop the Coward's Punch Campaign

Mr WOOD (La Trobe—Assistant Minister for Customs, Community Safety and Multicultural Affairs) (16:09): Imagine this: you're a parent of a teenage son, or a son in their early 20s, and they say they're going out on a Friday or Saturday night. They say goodbye, and you say, 'Be careful when you're going out with your mates.' Then, in the early hours of the morning, you get a knock on the door from the police to pass on the sad news that your son has been killed in a fight. Then you eventually find out it's because of what's known as a coward's punch. As a veteran police officer, I've been firsthand the damage caused to the victims and the families of the victims of the coward's punch. In fatal cases it's so heartbreaking for the parents, the friends and the families.

Coward's punch assaults have claimed at least a hundred lives across Australia in the last 15 years. Can I make the point that it's not a king hit; it's a coward's punch. I was very proud to join a fundraiser and be part of the government's commitment of $750,000 to support the incredible work of boxing legend Danny Green and his Stop the Coward's Punch Campaign. This campaign is designed as a national awareness campaign about the dangers of the coward's punch. The campaign has a very impressive digital marketing strategy, along with billboard and
television adverts which are targeted towards young people, especially 14-year-old to 35-year-old males, who are the most at risk, with research showing that up to 99 per cent of these attacks were committed by men, with 49 per cent of them aged between 18 and 23.

Danny has some hot tips, and they are: first of all, walk away from conflict—you have a choice. Drink responsibly and know your limits. Stay alert and stay in well-lit public places with good security. Use your common sense. Assess venues and leave when they become too rowdy or risky. Report any aggressive or suspicious behaviour to security or authorities. Take care of your friends and remove your friends from potential conflict situations before they develop. Know when to stop—call it a night and go home. Agitated? Breathe and calm yourself down. It's just not worth it.

Can I say a big congratulations to Danny Green. He's a legendary, world champion boxer—a three-time world champion—and it's great to have someone like this, a tough guy, leading the campaign to call out the coward's punch. Well done, Danny, and well done to all his supporters. Can I say that we're right behind you to target and attack the coward's punch.

Pensions and Benefits

Mr BRIAN MITCHELL (Lyons) (16:12): I stand here today with a simple plea to those opposite: kill robo-debt. Burn it to the ground and scatter its ashes to the wind. Robo-debt is a program that has no place in civilised society. It is a racket. It is a criminal undertaking that would make a Mafioso weep with envy. Robo-debt steals money from people. It coerces Australians into handing over money they do not owe and which, in too many cases, they can ill afford to lose. Robo-debt is government-sponsored, government-authorised theft. It is theft of the worst kind—it takes from those who have the least to give.

The intentions behind robo-debt may have been simple enough: to issue demands of repayment of moneys that should not have been paid in the first place. It's a fair enough proposition. Few would dispute that should be pursued to repay moneys they were not entitled to. But the implementation of this scheme has been flawed. At the heart of that flaw is an imprecise algorithm which demands repayment of moneys despite little evidence the money is actually owed. Too many people who've received income support have been told to repay money they have been perfectly entitled to receive. Many have repaid the money upon receiving the government's demand, believing, not unreasonably, that government, with all the resources at its disposal, would surely know better than them what they do or do not owe. But, no—

A division having been called in the House of Representatives—

Sitting suspended from 16:14 to 16:31

Mr BRIAN MITCHELL: But, no, this government has proven itself too lazy, too inept or too scheming to ensure that, before generating hundreds of thousands of letters of demand, people actually owe the money being demanded of them. Tens of thousands of Australians with the courage to dispute the demand have been vindicated. For many it's been a time-consuming and expensive process. It turns out the algorithm that estimated their repayment compared data apples with data oranges to come up with a data pumpkin. Unbelievably, despite the flaw having been proven, the government simply continues with this scam, this fraud against the Australian people, because it's a nice little earner. This government continues to call in the bullying debt collectors and takes Australians to court to demand repayments only to back off when it comes to the crunch because it knows it's on shaky ground. The stories are shocking, heart-rending, and I encourage members to visit the website and Twitter handle @not_my_debt, which has done a terrific job highlighting the human wreckage of this policy disaster. There's no limit to the depravity of this policy. It needs to end and it needs to end now.

McDonnell, Mr Leslie James

Mr PASIN (Barker) (16:32): I rise to pay tribute to a great figure within the Limestone Coast community. Les McDonnell was born into a timber family in 1928. His father, Newman, hauled hardwood logs out of the Grampians in Victoria during the Great Depression. It was a bushfire at Mount Burr in South Australia that saw the family move to the Limestone Coast region as part of a team that set up falling, hauling and sawmilling operations to extract and mill burnt timber following the bushfire. It was the beginning of NF McDonnell & Sons, formally established in 1946. Les and his brother, Don, were very much hands-on in driving log trucks and felling trees. He could drive anything from a motorcycle to a semitrailer to a grader to a bulldozer. These were skills that proved very useful as the business expanded into log haulage, sawmilling, farming and freight transport. After establishing mills in Mount Burr, Millicent and Kalangadoo, in 1956 the operation moved to its present premises in Sutton Town, Mt Gambier in South Australia.

Les, like his father before him, was an innovator. Prior to the introduction of forwarers and tired of the virtually impossible task of keeping the old crane-type log trucks up to legal roadworthiness, he adapted an old
Mack truck with a front end loader. The logs were held in place on the trailer by large pins similar to what is used today. During the 1950s and the 1960s, NF McDonnell & Sons became the first to introduce mechanisation into the timber-felling industry in the south-east of South Australia, purchasing a timberjack skidder. Early in the 1960s, Les and the company became the first to introduce a forwarder to government forests in the district. Les was always keen to introduce innovative machinery, and this played a significant role in the success of the company.

Les was a leader in the business community also. President of the South Eastern Log Hauliers Association for many years, Les was instrumental in getting logging contractors to join an independent insurance pool which operates to this day. Following the disastrous Ash Wednesday bushfires, a business opportunity presented itself, and Les and the company took a gamble and became the first Australian company to export woodchips to Japan. This operation began in 1984 and still continues today. NF McDonnell & Sons were leaders in their own right and were the first logging operators to introduce B-doubles in the logging industry.

It has been said that Les was the last of the original timbermen in the Green Triangle. He was a stalwart in his community, contributing to the Lions club and others. He will be greatly missed. Vale, Les McDonnell, one of the last original timbermen.

**Homelessness**

Ms McBRIDE (Dobell) (16:35): Homelessness Week next week, coordinated by Homelessness Australia, is to raise awareness of people experiencing homelessness, the issues they face and the action needed to achieve enduring solutions. This year's theme is 'Housing ends homelessness'. In my community on the Central Coast of New South Wales, many people and families are living in housing crisis and are at risk of homelessness. Between 2011 and 2016, the number of people homeless on the coast increased by 34.6 per cent. In my home town of Wyong, the homelessness rate is twice the state average, and we're going backwards across Australia. Today's HILDA survey shows that the percentage of people living in relative poverty increased to 10.4 per cent in 2017.

This third-term government must act. What is this government's record on homelessness? This government defunded the National Rental Affordability Scheme in 2014. This government cut $44 million from homelessness funding in its 2014-15 budget. They defunded Homelessness Australia and abolished the National Housing Supply Council. In regions like ours on the Central Coast of New South Wales, homelessness may not be as visible as it is on city streets, but couch surfing is common, and women and children are living in cars to escape family violence. I saw this in my mental health work. Thankfully, not-for-profits and charities are doing their best in the face of savage government cuts.

Coast Shelter has been operating for over 25 years and is the largest provider of accommodation services on the coast. It runs five youth refuges as well as refuges for men and women. It also has 25 outreach beds where people moving into permanent housing can stay for up to 12 months. On Wednesday next week, I'll be joining Coast Shelter for its annual homelessness memorial service to remember those who have died while homeless or while suffering extreme hardship. CEO of Coast Shelter, Rachel Willis, said the memorial service followed by a march has been attracting more community support every year since it was started in 2013. Rachel said:

Last year, we had a family turn up and it was their first opportunity to farewell their daughter who was homeless and they had lost contact with, so it was very emotional.

When you are homeless it is very difficult to have a formal funeral with the flowers and family and friends, it just doesn't happen, so homeless people often pass without having the ceremony they deserve.

I also want to commend the work of local sisters Rebecca and Sheridan, who kickstarted the Shoebox Revolution. Shoebox Revolution fills shoeboxes with essential items to make life a little easier for people living on the streets. They're distributing about 400 a month, and each shoebox contains socks, a beanie, gloves and a scarf to keep people warm, shampoo and soap, and breakfast cereal, tinned fruit and noodles. I'm pleased to support Shoebox Revolution to help other people by wearing their Australian-made socks. All proceeds from each sale help Shoebox Revolution help those in need right on the coast. As they say: 'Warm feet, full heart.'

**Stirling Electorate**

Mr CONNELLY (Stirling) (16:38): Having delivered my maiden speech last night, it is now a pleasure to deliver my first constituency statement to the Federation Chamber. The Morrison government understands the needs of families and businesses in Stirling, and is getting on with the job of delivering for all Australians. I want to focus my attention today on the projects and commitments that I have made to the people of Stirling.

Firstly, there's our commitment to our coastline with $4 million being invested in Surfing WA to upgrade their Trigg headquarters; $20,000 for Trigg Island Surf Life Saving Club upgrades; and $20,000 for Stirling Natural Environment Coastcare.
Next, we're committed to local sporting facility upgrades, with $500,000 going to the Coolbinia Bombers Junior Football Club to install lights, which will mean that those kids will enjoy significantly more field time. There is $455,000 for the Stirling Lions sports club to install new lights, as well as renovate the clubhouse and the kitchen; $300,000 towards a new clubhouse for the Carine Cats; and $180,000 to renovate a green at the Yokine Districts Bowling Club.

I am really passionate about supporting those sporting, religious and community groups which form the beating hearts of our communities. The Morrison government is also committed to local cultural, religious and community hubs, with $300,000 promised to the Jewish community centre in Dianella, $85,000 for the Mirrabooka mosque to fund security upgrades, $20,000 for the Wadjak Northside Aboriginal Community Group centre, $15,000 for defibrillators across the city of Stirling to make community centres safer, and $8,000 of facilities upgrades at the Macedonian Cultural Centre. Approximately $6 million is going to intersection upgrades to get people home more safely and quickly.

The Morrison government was returned because people, like those I represent in Stirling, understand that we are fighting for them. They know that we are on their side and are delivering the projects and outcomes that will make our local community a better place to live, work and raise a family. I look forward to working with my colleagues and constituents to deliver these important projects for Stirling.

**Jagajaga Electorate: Infrastructure**

Ms THWAITES (Jagajaga) (16:41): As our economy shows signs of slowing, the Morrison government must deliver infrastructure projects to support local jobs and businesses. We have three shovel-ready projects in Jagajaga that have the support of our community.

The first is the completion of the missing link in the Diamond Creek Trail to connect the townships of Diamond Creek, Wattle Glen and Hurstbridge. A completed trail link will connect Yarra Ranges all the way to the Melbourne CBD and be used by 360,000 people yearly. It is expected to generate more than $30 million in economic activity over 30 years and create the equivalent of 30 full-time jobs. With a total project cost of $12 million, I was proud that Labor promised $4 million for this at the election, if we were elected. There has already been $8 million committed to the project, with $4 million from the Andrews Labor government and $4 million from Nillumbik Shire Council—and this project is Nillumbik council's highest infrastructure priority. It has strong community support, notably from the Trail Blazers group, as well as a dozen other community and sports groups. I commend Helen Legg, Rex Niven and all the Trail Blazers for their passion and years of advocacy to get the project so close to being fully funded.

Another project in Jagajaga that is ready to go is the redevelopment of the iconic Olympic Park precinct in West Heidelberg, home to Heidelberg United Football Club. This project has huge community support. The ground is used by other groups and the general public throughout the year. Banyule City Council has completed a master plan of the precinct and has set aside $3.1 million for the project. The Victorian Labor government has also committed $3.5 million. I was proud that federal Labor promised $2.5 million for this project at the last election, if we are elected. Importantly, the upgrades at the ground will include unisex change rooms to expand girls' and women's participation in sport, something that is so important for our community; expanded clubrooms and a new pavilion; a floodlit synthetic pitch for the club and for community use; and also a community recreation space so that more people in our community can use the ground, with a basketball-netball court there. Due to its sheer size, this project is planned to be delivered in stages. It deserves an investment from the Commonwealth to support its completion. I commend the team of champions at Heidy United for their advocacy, energy and passion to make this redevelopment a reality for our community.

The final project I bring today is a new bike path along the local Hurstbridge rail line. Labor promised $7 million for this project if elected. The project will link Greensborough and Montmorency train stations along the rail corridor to the broader path network. If the government is serious about supporting local jobs, these projects are the ones to start with.

**Flynn Electorate: Port of Gladstone**

Mr O'DOWD (Flynn—Deputy Nationals Whip) (16:44): The federal government has granted conditional approval to the Port of Gladstone to dredge a further 800,000 cubic metres of the harbour. Gladstone's Clinton Vessel Interaction Project, CVIP, was lodged two years ago. Gladstone is the largest commodity port in Queensland. Last year it sent $122 million worth of freight out of its waters. The federal government has given approval for this $80 million project. The CVIP is consistent with the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan. With 20 new conditions from the Department of Environment and Energy, the acting CEO, Craig Walker, has marked this as another milestone for the project. When the job is completed, capesize vessels with draughts of more than 14 metres will now be able to pass other ships which are tied up on other wharves. With two ships...
passing alongside each other with an 80-metre span between the ships, there's an awful pull on the mooring lines. It can actually snap the mooring lines. Of course, this is something we don't want. For any vessel berthing at the RG Tanna terminal, there is a danger of this occurring and breaking the mooring lines.

This is going to be a great thing for the Gladstone port. It will make the movement of ships much easier for the tugboats and the captains of the ships. Increasing the width of the channel will make the channel about 100 metres wider. That will give the channel about 180 metres of width. Conditions of the approval include that the dredging must not occur outside the Clinton Channel or the western basin; no more than 800,000 cubic metres of material can be removed; no uncontrolled releases of dredged material from the reclamation area are allowed; and the Gladstone Ports Corporation also needs to complete an annual compliance report. A dredging compliance report is required within six months of the project finishing. The department said the GPC may also deliver offsets in contributions to the Reef Trust.

The GPC is committed to ensuring the safety of vessels transiting the port. The approval comes into effect as of now, and the project has until 30 June 2026 to be completed. (Time expired)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Wicks): In accordance with standing order 193, the time for members' constituency statements has concluded.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

Consideration resumed of the motion:
That grievances be noted.

Media

Newstart Allowance

Ms TEMPLEMAN (Macquarie) (16:48): Thirty years ago, the thing I feared most as a young journalist was the public humiliation of being singled out by the ABC's Media Watch for having in some way stepped outside the journalists' code of ethics, or maybe getting something wrong, or perhaps being sued for defamation by a litigious high-profile person. Those things still happen. But these days the stakes are so much higher. As we saw from the Australian Federal Police raids on the home of News Corp journalist Annika Smethurst and on the offices of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, the attempt to fingerprint and palm-print two ABC journo's, the threat to raid Ben Fordham at 2GB plus the plan to raid the News Corp headquarters in Surry Hills, there's a grave threat to press freedom in Australia.

Last month the AFP all but confirmed that ABC and News Corp journalists could be charged for publishing protected information in two different stories—the alleged unlawful killings by Australian troops in Afghanistan, and plans to expand powers for spying on Australian citizens. An article reports:

… the AFP is 'a strong supporter of press freedom' but …

What it's really saying is that the laws have moved to no longer protect press freedoms. What does it mean for democracy and transparency if journalists can be jailed for exposing government and agency plans that it is in the public interest to know? Journalists and whistleblowers who are prepared to speak about things they consider unlawful, unethical or just plain awful are a vital part of a free, democratic society.

The journey to this point has not been without warning. The 2018 survey by the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance, which represents journalists—and of which both my husband and I have been members since becoming journalists in the early 1980s—showed journalistic freedoms had deteriorated over the previous decade. As the MEAA said:

Journalism is under attack with national security laws, metadata retention, poor protections for whistleblowers, the over-use of suppression orders by courts and flawed freedom of information processes all combining to make it harder for journalists to do their job.

The MEAA goes on to point out that legislating for Australia's national security has drifted a long way from the fight against terrorism. And when you have governments criminalise the innocent receiving of information, it's hard to see how investigative journalists will hold anyone to account.

I agree with the MEAA that journalists need to be able to bring to light uncomfortable truths to scrutinise the powerful and inform communities. Investigative journalism can't survive without the courage of whistleblowers, who typically sacrifice their careers and often much more as they seek to bring light to instances of wrongdoing, illegal activities, fraud, corruption and threats to public health and safety. These sentiments are supported in my own electorate by many, including Blue Mountains Unions and Community, who are concerned about the effect of the AFP approach on the future of public interest journalism and freedom of the press.
I think the actions also reinforce the need for strong oversight powers by parliamentary committees on security agencies. In the words of Doug Cameron, who has pushed for a standing committee to provide oversight:

In a democracy you can't hand over to the AFP and security services complete and unequivocal independence from parliamentary oversight … Once you start giving these agencies more power we have to have more oversight.

I note that in the UK the Intelligence and Security Committee can review operational information where it's provided voluntarily, and the United States Senate Select Committee on Intelligence can review operations as part of its day-to-day brief.

Before I finish, I'd like to make note of the ABC's John Lyons. John and I crossed paths briefly in the mid-eighties in the Canberra press gallery and I congratulate him on his tweeting of the ABC raids. I was riveted by his moment-by-moment coverage and by his incredulity at the implications of a warrant that allowed the AFP to add, copy, delete or alter material in the ABC's computers. We need journos to stay unflinching, fearless and free.

The calls and emails to my office that we get from people trying to survive on Newstart are among the most challenging that we receive. People speak without hope. We're often their last resort and they don't expect anything to change. They just want someone to know how difficult it is not only to get by but to retain your dignity and look for work when there is simply not enough money to pay for the basics, let alone for the train fares to take you to where there might be a job. I'm not at all surprised to read in The Guardian this week that people report they often go without food. Our local community food programs are booming because of the demand, and volunteers are unable to keep up. These are not programs I want to see expanded. I'd like to see them go out of business due to lack of customers, but I can't see it happening any time soon. Organisations like Hawkesbury Community Kitchen, Hawkesbury's Helping Hands, the Salvation Army in Windsor, Gateway Family Services in Blaxland, Earth Recovery in Katoomba and neighbourhood centres across the electorate are just a few of the groups doing incredible work.

I don't understand why those opposite are so reluctant to admit there's a desperate need for Newstart to increase. One volunteer of St Vincent de Paul Society in Windsor told me:

As an active member of the society, I have seen countless Newstart recipients call on us for help because they simply cannot afford the day-to-day cost of living. The current rate pushes too many into poverty, financial stress and housing insecurity, and diminishes their health and wellbeing. Payments have not kept pace with rising living expenses, and, unless they are increased and properly indexed, vulnerable members of our society will continue to be left behind.

That sums up how many feel, including Christians in my electorate, including congregation members from Springwood Baptist, who say they see a need for the rate to be raised. Carmel from Blackheath tells a similar story:

I'm aware of many people in the upper mountains, 55 years and over, who have become unemployed or sick through no fault of their own and are trying to live on Newstart. They comply with the undertaking of their 15 hours of volunteer work each week and contribute in various other ways to the local community and to their grandchildren.

As we all know, this group have no expectations of ever finding work. They must live frugally, possibly until they hit pension age, and it's a life where there's no extra money for a haircut or movie ticket, so maintaining a positive mental attitude is the challenge.

And Carmel is spot-on in describing this group. Despite the mythology that the Prime Minister and his conservative buddies like to perpetuate, the majority of people receiving Newstart are between 55 and 64 years of age. They're people who may have been made redundant; women who may have spent their lives raising a family, or they've lost their jobs or left them at some point due to illness or caring responsibilities. I know of several instances where people were previously on a disability payment, reflecting an injury or illness, and they've now been shifted to Newstart. But when you consider that there are eight people for every job available, their chances of landing one are slim. Older men who come to speak with me talk of the despair of being out of work, with job agencies offering them little if any prospect of a job. This tells me we're creating a bigger problem by failing to treat them with dignity.

MPs are often asked if they could live on $40 a day. In fact, it's $39.30. And in spite of some subsidies for housing, it's still inadequate to live on—not just for a week and not even for the year that those opposite have been claiming the average. In fact, the average length of time for all people on Newstart is 156 weeks, or three years. I'm grateful to AAP FactCheck for that data.

An OECD study shows that more than half of Australia's unemployed are now living in poverty. That puts our jobless population as the second poorest in the world when judged against 13 comparable nations. I've also heard the argument from the Prime Minister that Newstart is increased in line with the CPI. Well, any economist will tell you that doesn't cut it. We have a situation where costs of essentials are rising; things like rent or a mortgage,
medical costs, insurance, power bills, child care and education. It feels like a Monty Python sketch, where we have a government so intent on ignoring economic logic.

Increasing Newstart doesn't just alleviate poverty; it would stimulate the economy exactly where it needs to—in local shopping centres right across the country. And it would create jobs. When you have people like former Prime Minister John Howard, the Business Council of Australia, Deloitte Access Economics, small business groups, a parliamentary inquiry made up of all parties and a raft of conservative politicians—including the former leader of the National Party the member for New England—all calling for an increase in Newstart, it's time to show mercy and raise the rate. I'd really urge those opposite to think about the damage we are doing to people who are trying to survive on payments on which they cannot subsist. I had the experience of having 16 days in limbo, and therefore about six weeks of not being sure how to cover bills. Now I knew I was coming into a job that was incredibly well paid. Our wages have gone up extraordinarily in the last 15 or 20 years, yet Newstart hasn't.

**Women in Sport**

Mr SIMMONDS (Ryan) (16:58): I spoke in my maiden speech about the importance of stronger communities, how this Morrison government understands the importance of having strong communities and fostering strong communities, and how I wanted to do that in the Ryan electorate. Such an important part of our strong communities are our sporting clubs, because they are part of the lifeblood. They make up much of the family weekend; they're so important.

There is a grassroots movement happening within our local sporting clubs, and that's around female participation. Not a week goes by that I do not have a sporting club either in my office or at an event talking to me about the explosion in the number of young girls who are trying to get involved in their clubs. Now those clubs are accommodating them as best they can, but they are talking about a waitlist of many hundreds of young girls and young women. They should be participating in those sports, particularly soccer, but those clubs aren't yet able to accommodate them. To accommodate this explosion of female participation they are really looking for new or upgraded facilities. A lot of them have facilities that were built a long time ago, which of course suited the circumstances of that time—that is, a lot of them were men-only clubs or had very low female participation rates. As a result, the change room is normally an open, single room, and there is normally only one referee's room. This is not conducive to having both male and female participation in the club.

Some of my proudest achievements during the recent election campaign was being able to secure funding for a couple of clubs. First of all, there was the Bardon Latrobe Football Club, and then there was the Toowong Football Club. Now, both of these clubs are perfect examples of that experience. The Bardon Latrobe Football Club, for example, has a single room as the change room. The $500,000 that will be provided by the Morrison government will help deliver them new change rooms, extra change rooms, a dedicated female referee room and upgraded kitchen and clubhouse facilities to cater for, again, the explosion of numbers that they are trying to accommodate that are currently on the waiting list.

The Toowong Football Club will receive a similar grant of $500,000, which they are going to put into new change rooms and referee rooms, particularly to accommodate the hundreds of young girls and young women who are wanting to get into the club who currently can't be accommodated. I was just at an event on the weekend with the Taringa Rovers Soccer Football Club, and, again, they are one that has hundreds of people on the waiting list. They are also now looking for a grant for new facilities, which will allow them to upgrade their change room and referee room facilities and their toilet facilities.

The Morrison government have done a lot. We have put a focus on this, and I will talk a little bit more about some of the overall achievements of the government in this space. But we can do more, and I think we should. We shouldn't lose this opportunity whereby this grassroots movement is coming through in order to grow our clubs, to grow our community participation and to build stronger communities, and we can do that with relatively modest investments in these local community clubs.

I look forward to seeing the projects in Bardon Latrobe Football Club and the Toowong Football Club come to fruition. I look forward to working with those communities to work them through. I particularly look forward to working with Phil, the President of the Bardon Latrobe Football Club, who described this project that we're currently working on as 'a game changer for us and wonderful for the local community'. They already have 500 members and are currently catering for women and men of ages four to 55. I look forward to working with the Toowong Football Club as well, and Phil and the team, who I know are doing a great job to see their project not only funded but also designed and through to fruition to get more people through those tremendous clubs.

The Ryan electorate has a strong tradition of producing sportsmen and sportswomen of enormous talent. We have some fantastic training facilities in St Peters Western Swim Club and also the John Carew Swim School,
which have produced previous Olympians. We have some current constituents—for example, two living in Chapel Hill—who are talented athletes. There is Megan Ross, a talented athlete who competes all across Australia in half ironman events and is sponsored by Ride Indooroopilly. These are incredibly gruelling events—far more than I could ever manage. They include a 1.9-kilometre swim, a 90-kilometre cycle and a 21-kilometre run—extraordinary! There is also Fiona Nichols, who plays for the University of Queensland Hockey Club. Fiona took up playing hockey when she was just seven, and her passion for the sport means that now, at the age of 33, she still looks forward to representing the University of Queensland Hockey Club each Saturday. I pay tribute to both of these very talented and remarkable sportswomen in the electorate of Ryan and want to see many, many more of them come through. We've already seen a very strong performance from the Matildas at the FIFA World Cup recently, and wouldn't it be great to get the next crop of Matildas through the Bardon Latrobe and Toowong Football Clubs as well?

As I said, I want to do more in this space in order to provide extra facilities to accommodate female participation in our local sporting clubs. We've soon got round 5 of the Stronger Communities Program opening, and I'll be working with my local organisations on local projects that do exactly this. I think it fits very well with the program's goals of bringing our communities together and strengthening that social connection that these local sporting clubs provide. In particular, I'm proud the Morrison government recognises how vital this is and how vital sport in general is to health and wellbeing, and is actively supporting women's sport.

The Australian government continues to actively support the Women Leaders in Sport program, with funding of over $814,000 in the 2019-20 budget, through the Women's Leadership and Development Program and Sport Australia. Thirty million dollars is provided in 2018-19 to support the construction of a new Brisbane Lions AFL Women's facility in Queensland, for which I know they've been lobbying very hard for a long time—it was tremendous to see that as the centrepiece of the recent election—and to support the redevelopment of the Carlton Football Club's Ikon Park in Victoria, building on its existing AFLW facilities. I know a lot of young girls in the Ryan electorate are following in the AFLW footsteps.

The government also committed $5 million to support Football Federation Australia's bid to host the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup in Australia, and the Morrison government is also providing $150 million to support the development of female change room facilities at sporting grounds and community swimming facilities across Australia.

With some fantastic individual performances by our sportswomen, like Ash Barty, dominating the news at the moment, we're currently having a discussion about whether the South-East Queensland region should be hosting a future Olympics. Wouldn't that be a fantastic opportunity to showcase to the world what our sportswomen can do and really encourage female participation among those girls who are coming through in the various sports, to see their heroes in action as part of the Olympics? I think putting forward a very successful bid, a very strong bid, would really build on the momentum that South-East Queensland has. We have a lot of the infrastructure already in place in South-East Queensland. We seem to have the political will. We certainly have it amongst the South-East Queensland mayors, who are working as one—and I pay tribute to Graham Quirk, who is currently leading the bid on their behalf. We certainly have the will amongst the Morrison government, where we not only have a firm commitment from the Prime Minister himself but have Ted O'Brien in Queensland, who is leading the charge on that particular project. I hope that we will get a firmer commitment from the Palaszczuk government as well. Currently there are a lot of words, but it would be good to see more money on the table, because we have a fantastic opportunity to bring the paramount sporting competition in the world to South-East Queensland so that we can further encourage sport participation in Ryan, in the whole of South-East Queensland and in the whole of Australia.

Congratulations again to all the tremendous sportswomen in the Ryan electorate. I look forward to seeing these projects through, which will encourage more female participation in our local clubs. If there are any local clubs looking to encourage more female participation and have projects that will do that, I encourage them to get in touch with me so that we can get on with fighting for extra funding and a grant through round 5 of the Stronger Communities Program, which will be opening very soon.

Cunningham Electorate

Ms BIRD (Cunningham) (17:08): I'm very keen to use this opportunity in the grievance debate to put some serious grievances on behalf of my own electorate on the record in this place. In particular, I want to talk firstly about some serious issues we have around the need for investment in transport infrastructure and then, more broadly, some of the areas around education and community, where we need some support from the government to achieve objectives.
First of all, with the significance of transport infrastructure, I hope many of my colleagues in this place would know that Wollongong is the third-largest city in New South Wales. We have extensive connections into the Sydney CBD and suburbs and also across to Western Sydney. We have a significant port with capacity for development and, I would argue, capacity to be an important link to the new aerotropolis that's planned—and to the task that the port of Sydney itself has to deal with. These things are real opportunities not only for economic development in the Wollongong region but also for the jobs that would flow from that.

There are three major transport infrastructure links that are significantly important to our region that the Labor Party made commitments on in the lead-up to the election. I'm seeking support from the minister, given that we didn't win the election, to have this government invest into our region. I note that the Deputy Prime Minister, in answer to many questions in question time over recent days, has said that congestion-busting infrastructure is being rolled out across the nation. I'm going to draw his attention to the fact that Wollongong is part of the nation and we don't have a single cent committed, despite the strategic significance we play in New South Wales.

The first project I want to talk to members about is the Maldon-Dombarton rail link, which is in effect a half built rail link that was stopped in the eighties. It has been significantly researched; there have been a significant number of reports written on this link and on how important it is to move freight linked to the port. I thank my state colleague Paul Scully, the member for Wollongong, who was able to get released a business case of the state government that tells us how critically important getting this rail link completed is. That business case tells us that the freight trains, which at the moment come on the Illawarra line, which is the main commuter line, will be cut from 60 paths per day to just eight over coming years, and that freight operations could be confined to night-time only by 2031. Many of us, I'm sure, are conscious that 2031 is coming much sooner than we might have thought, and when you're building major infrastructure, you have to be ready to get underway, because it's not a short-term project.

This business case specifically warns that the consequences of deferral of the completion of this Maldon-Dombarton rail link project include: lack of capacity on the Illawarra line due to deployment of Sydney's Rail Future, which prioritises passenger services and converting the Hurstville line to rapid transit; congestion on the existing Unanderra-Conston Junction; lack of capacity for passenger services; increasing construction costs; a less viable and more environmentally sensitive existing corridor; and risk of existing assets, such as bridges, cuttings, embankments and civil structures becoming dilapidated. So this is clearly a really important piece of transport infrastructure, required for the servicing of the freight task into our region.

Prior to the election, federal Labor committed $50 million to progress a public-private type partnership to get that line built, but we haven't seen a matching commitment from the federal government. Given how important freight is, I'm certainly seeking the support of the minister for an investment in getting that rail line progressed.

The other two key parts of the story are the Appin Road and the Picton Road, which are the two main roads that feed into Wollongong. We gave a commitment for $55 million for safety upgrades to the Appin Road, which included construction of a koala pass. There is a very rare local koala colony along Appin Road, which is obviously a very busy road, and we need to ensure that that colony has the capacity to pass safely. Labor also committed $50 million for safety upgrades on the Picton Road.

So, all up, we've got three very heavily used significant pieces of transport infrastructure into the third-largest city in New South Wales. I'm putting the argument to the minister that if he's serious about congestion busting he cannot ignore Wollongong. He cannot ignore our region if he's serious about being responsible for congestion-busting commitments across the nation. Please do not forget that we exist. Please look seriously at these projects.

There is a range of other federal commitments that Labor took to the election. I have to say my Liberal counterpart promised that he would have some commitments from a Liberal government if they were elected, which of course they were, but we didn't get a single one—not a single one. So it's pretty galling for my electorate when we hear members opposite get up and talk about all the commitments they've funded. You're a national government. You're not just the national government for your own members; you're a national government for the people of the nation, and that includes all of my electors and the population in my area.

There was a really important range of commitments we made to the University of Wollongong for teaching and research facilities. When Labor was in government, there was just over $100 million committed by the Labor government to the University of Wollongong for teaching and research facilities, and they've been driving important diversification and support for economic development in our region. To build on that, we made commitments of $13½ million for the university. This included $10 million for the Facility for Intelligent Fabrication. It is really important for our manufacturing sectors to have those skills developed in terms of advanced manufacturing, and that's exactly what that was about. It also included $1 million to establish a 3D bioprinting facility, an area of innovation this country could really do well in. I'm very proud of my university's...
world-leading work in this space, and that would have been an important addition to it. There was also $2½ million for an Early Start discovery bus. This would have been an opportunity to take education for preschoolers about science and technology out of the excellent facility that’s available at the University of Wollongong—if you’re ever in town and you’ve got littlies, bring them along to visit; it’s a very exciting place—and across our region to children who are in small areas or who don’t have the financial capacity to get to Wollongong to go to see it. The idea was to create a bus of exciting exploration of these things and take it out to these small communities. I’d ask the government to have a look at that as well.

I also want to highlight the fact that we had a $1½ million commitment for the Illawarra Women’s Health Centre. They were going to do really important youth service to support women escaping and recovering from domestic and family violence. It was quite innovative, and I’ll be following up with the relevant minister on that as well.

I have another minute to go through the variety of issues we would like to see supported in our local region. There were a lot of other commitments that I was able to make—in particular, for example, in one of my most disadvantaged communities reopening a Centrelink Medicare office which had been shut by the government. I would ask the government to have a look at the delivery of those services in our region.

I just want to finish up by making the point that it’s very easy to say, ‘You didn’t win the election and you made a lot of commitments.’ That is true, but it’s not just about me. Those in my community have a right to vote for who they want to vote for and to expect whoever wins at the national government level to deliver services to them like every other Australian. We don’t have a single commitment—not one—from this government. In the interests of my constituents, I would really ask some of those ministers who have responsibilities for these areas to have a look at those and see if there is something we can do in a bipartisan fashion to progress those. I thank the House.

Live Animal Exports

Mr RICK WILSON (O’Connor) (17:18): I rise today to use this grievance debate to put on the record some of the developments in the continuing battle for the future of the live export trade, which is critical to the Western Australian sheep industry and the livestock industry more generally. The bulk of the sheep that are exported out of Australia come from my electorate of O’Connor. The trade is worth around $180 million per annum, and about 40 per cent of the sheep turned off in Western Australia—that is, the lambs and those animals that are bred to be sold in Western Australia—find their way into the live export trade.

As many people in this place would be aware, last year there was some footage aired on the 60 Minutes program which brought the industry into disrepute. The government reacted very strongly with some new measures to ensure that those sorts of events didn’t occur again. The industry was in a state of flux between May and November last year. Finally, in November, we saw the boats resume again. Since then, I can report to the House that we have had 11 voyages and 718,000 sheep exported for 1,800 mortalities. That is an extraordinary result. As a lifelong sheep farmer, I can tell you that you don’t get those sorts of results running sheep in a paddock, so the trade has really turned things around and is operating very efficiently and effectively. Currently, we are in a three-month voluntary moratorium over the three hottest months of the Northern Hemisphere summer. That was an initiative which I supported and the industry brought forward, and we are looking forward to seeing the boats commence again on 1 September.

However, the footage that was provided to the 60 Minutes program was provided by a whistleblower who was a ship worker on the Awassi Express by the name of Faisal Ullah. On 17 January this year, very highly regarded journalists Sharri Markson and Annabel Hennessy published an article revealing that Mr Ullah, the whistleblower, had been paid a considerable amount of money. The article quotes $38,000. That's actually wrong. I have since obtained copies of bank statements which show the whistleblower was in fact paid slightly under A$175,000. The article also included a series of emails between Animals Australia and not Mr Ullah but some other whistleblowers or potential whistleblowers—ship workers that are in contact. I want to read out some of those emails.

On 2 May 2018, Animals Australia emailed the ship worker:

Hi, I just wanted to let you know, that such is the importance of the opportunity over the next few months, that our Board would provide another $1000 to your school if you can find someone willing to assist on any of the vessels doing Middle East runs.

So that is clearly offering money to the potential whistleblower. From Animals Australia on 4 June, 2018, to a ship worker:

… I know that I have sent you some of this before, but for ease of finding have put this all in one email to you.

Key instructions re filming—

There’s a little bit of preamble, but then it’s numbered.
1. Heat stress - this is sheep with their mouths open panting as per this video 2. Piles of dead sheep (the larger the better - but even a pile of three is worth filming) 3. Dead or dying animals in pens or alley ways 4. Sheep standing or lying in melted faeces (as per the video) 5. Over crowded pens

Those were the instructions from Animals Australia to this potential whistleblower. On 4 January, 2019, the ship worker responds to Animals Australia, saying:

What do you say that during loaded voyage XXXX switch off supply/exhaust fan for 1-2 hours so that the sheeps /cattles will be in more distress.

This is published in The West Australian, so I can't vouch for the veracity of this, but I assume the journalists and the editors at The West Australian did their due diligence on this.

This greatly concerned me because of the damage that this has done to my industry and my people in my electorate, and so I sought an investigation by the Australian Federal Police. The reason I sought an investigation by the Australian Federal Police was because they have stronger investigative powers, I believe, than the compliance unit of the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources. So I passed on the information that I had in my possession, which includes these bank statements here, which clearly show that $174,715 was paid into Mr Ullah's series of accounts. Most disturbingly the payments started on 22 June 2017, fully two months before the Awassi Express voyage took place. A Mr Jack F Anderson of the AMP bank Australia deposited $5,850 in the Bank of Baroda. This is the first of a series of payments that arrived in Mr Ullah's bank account from Australian based people.

I provided that information to the Australian Federal Police, and they determined that it was outside their jurisdiction. These events took place in the Middle East. They then handed this information on to the Department of Agriculture's investigative unit. Disappointingly, on Friday afternoon, 26 July, the department concluded their investigation into 'allegations that whistleblowers had offered to cut off ventilation and switch off exhaust fans to distress sheep on voyages in order to receive payment'. That is what the investigation was about. According to the department's statement, the department 'sought information from a wide range of sources … some of whom co-operated and others who chose not to'—surprisingly enough. The department concluded that they had 'not found any evidence to suggest breaches of Commonwealth laws had been committed in relation to alleged payments', and 'the investigation did not uncover any evidence to suggest the footage obtained in 2017 by the crew members was contrived or that ventilation fans were turned off'. Those are the findings of the investigation.

But I have some questions which I will be putting to the Department of Agriculture investigative unit. Firstly, what powers do the department's investigators have to compel witness statements? They clearly say that some people chose not to cooperate. One assumes that people with vital information weren't compelled to provide that information. Did the department verify whether the bank statements that I provided to the AFP are in fact legitimate? I don't know. I have been provided with them and they look legitimate. I would have thought that that was fairly germane to the investigation. Did the department speak to the generous benefactors who deposited the money into Mr Ullah's account to establish why they were randomly dropping money into this fellow's account? And did the department review the emails from Animals Australia to verify their authenticity?

These are the questions that I will be putting to the department. In relation to not finding any criminality, let me just say that my industry, the industry that underpins the livestock industry in Western Australia and that supports thousands of farmers across our state, was tried in the court of public opinion. I believe that my farmers and the public of Australia are owed the facts of this matter. If $175,000 was paid to a whistleblower to provide that footage, I think that not only my farmers but the Australian public have a right to know. I will pursue this to the bitter end to find out whether that was in fact the case.

Morrison Government

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (17:28): It is 340 days since Prime Minister Morrison took office—nudging a year. I wonder what Australians have learned about our Prime Minister during that time? What has the current Prime Minister achieved, and what will his legacy be for Australia? They are the questions I ask as we approach the one year mark since he bundled Malcolm Turnbull out of the Lodge.

I will start from the beginning, or shortly before the beginning, to be precise. Remember that quote: 'I'm ambitious for him.' That's what the now Prime Minister said about former Prime Minister Turnbull. Two days later he was sitting in Malcolm's chair. To the outside world, the then Treasurer appeared the loyal servant of the Turnbull ministry, but reports have since emerged, in Niki Savva's book and elsewhere, that the boy from Bronte was already sounding out potential supporters for a tilt at the leadership. He was a chameleon—the loyal servant to some, and the potential successor to those who were already in his camp.

The following anecdote is telling. Australians take their sport seriously. We're tribal. Loyalty to your code or team is essential. The State of Origin rugby league series is a case in point. I have fierce loyalty to the Maroons,
and others support the Blues, on three nights of the year. We can be friends on other nights, but on those three nights we're loyal.

Everybody knows that the Prime Minister now is a huge NRL Cronulla Sharks fan, but he's the boy from Bronte, which is right in the heart of Easts territory. He was born a chook but is now often photographed with a Sharks cap on. It is quite a transmogrification to go from a rooster to a shark. In the first week of his prime ministership he was interviewed while holding a rugby league ball. He is an advertising man; he knows symbols. Portraying himself as the everyman rugby league fan could not have provided a starker contrast to the previous Prime Minister, Mr Turnbull. But the member for Cook, previously the boy from Bronte, has tweeted, in his own words, that he grew up on rugby—rugby union, not Rugby League. In 2010 the Prime Minister said he preferred rugby union to rugby league. In 2012 he said rugby union will 'always be my game'. In 2015 he said, 'I'm more of a rugby fan.' It's interesting that we don't hear the Prime Minister championing rugby union these days. He seems to be happy to have ditched his beliefs because it's politically expedient for the advertising man to be an NRL fan. It's an insight into a person's character that they can discard loyalty to sporting teams when convenient. You can photoshop your life to make it more presentable.

Last week, we heard the Prime Minister announce that he wants to see a dramatic drop in the number of people who take their own lives. He has appointed a new adviser to tackle mental health issues. This is something that I and Labor support 100 per cent. The Prime Minister said he is working towards a zero-suicide goal. I applaud that sentiment and the work that will go towards it. Suicide is a major public health issue which kills more than 3,000 Australians in a typical year. Suicide is the leading cause of death for people aged between 15 and 44, which is perhaps a shocking indictment of a society working towards experiencing a hope drought. However, unless Prime Minister Morrison is prepared to tackle the underlying disadvantage that accompanies many suicides, the member for Cook's sentiments will be worth noting but will achieve little. Studies have shown that people in the most-disadvantaged communities are 71 per cent more likely to suicide than those in the most advantaged.

Let's compare the Prime Minister's sentiments about preventing suicide—they are noble words—to his comments in question time in the latest parliamentary fortnight. He called the desire to raise the rate of Newstart 'unfunded empathy'. What sort of dry-hearted brute would approach empathy that way? The Prime Minister continues to say, 'The best form of welfare is a job.' All those hoping to advance on the Prime Minister's watch loudly parrot those lines, but for those who can't get a job the Newstart payment is $277.85 a week. I know that I definitely couldn't live on $277.85 a week.

New data out today shows that our economy is floundering. That is evident, with wages stagnating and living standards declining. The HILDA survey reveals that real median household income declined by almost $500 in 2017. It is lower than when the Liberals and Nationals took office back in 2013. In contrast, the biggest annual increases in real median household income occurred under the Rudd and Gillard governments, with annual increases of over $4,000 in both 2009 and 2012. The HILDA report showed that the percentage of the population in relative poverty increased to 10.4 per cent in 2017. That figure is disgraceful.

In September, the coalition government kicks off its seventh year in office. For two-thirds of that time the member for Cook has been either Treasurer or Prime Minister, so on his watch Australians are going backwards. The boy from Bronte has no plan to turn things around. If he were truly worried about mental health issues, he would be doing something about reducing the financial stress that working Australians face. Australians are worried about their wages, and if they have a job they're worried about the security of their job. Many can't get ahead, no matter how hard they work. Penalty rates have been cut under this government, so many who work weekends have even less take-home pay.

The Prime Minister's oft-quoted mantra is: 'If you're having a go, you'll get a go,' and I've heard it in many first speeches in the last few weeks. But where does that leave those who, no matter how hard they try, just can't get a go? Australians who are out of work or are relying on Newstart, that $277.85, are not going to go very far. They're flat out finding a place to stay and finding adequate sustenance. Trying to find work costs money: money to travel to interviews; money to access the internet to put in applications and send resumes; and money to look presentable, by having your hair cut, for example. Yet we hear members of the coalition complaining, even when they're pulling in $230,000 plus a year.

If you have a job, getting to work can be as stressful as your work day. The time that it takes Australians to get to work has risen 23 per cent since 2002. On average, Australians spend 4.5 hours a week getting to and from work. I know many of my constituents sit in traffic at some of the local bottlenecks every day on their way to work or study. For commuters in Sydney, the average journey to and from work each day is 71 minutes, and in Melbourne it is 65 minutes. The report notes that longer commute times can reduce worker wellbeing through diminished job satisfaction and flexibility between work and non-work commitments, and obviously it's bad for productivity. Even more concerning, long commutes can lead to negative family outcomes. Parents are prevented
from spending precious time with their families. The frustrating thing is we know how to fix this. We need infrastructure and we need it now.

The Morrison government has made a big song and dance every day in question time about their $100 billion infrastructure pipeline. It sounds like something from an Austin Powers movie, but less than 30 per cent of this money is budgeted to be spent in the next four years. In my electorate of Moreton, the Coopers Plains crossing is a major headache for commuters and—I am reliably told—has been an issue for nearly 50 years, and it sadly can be very dangerous. The Morrison government have promised to fix it but can't say when. I asked the Deputy Prime Minister a question about it last week.

The government's record on infrastructure spending is dismal, having actually spent $5.1 billion less than they promised in their first six years in office. So bringing forward infrastructure spending would not only help the commute of many thousands of Australians, busting congestion and improving their wellbeing, but, importantly, stimulate this floundering economy. If the Prime Minister wants to do more than talk about the mental health and wellbeing of Australians, he needs to fast track some economic policy to boost growth, wages and living standards.

Just four days before the May election, the Prime Minister, in a narrow-cast message that was broadcast by the mainstream media, committed to 'providing Australians of religious belief with protections equivalent to those guaranteed in relation to other protected attributes under Commonwealth anti-discrimination law'. Understandably, many people of faith were concerned amidst this campaign that they did not already have any protection for their religious beliefs. It is true that federal antidiscrimination law does not make discrimination solely on the basis of religion unlawful—as I'm sure the member for Goldstein would know from his days in the commission. However, in Queensland and also in the ACT, Northern Territory, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia, discrimination related to religion, religious conviction, religious belief or religious activity can be unlawful. In South Australia, discrimination on the basis of religious dress or appearance in work or study can be unlawful.

So, sadly, we see in this parliament under Prime Minister Morrison a common theme emerging: social division. The mantra from the Morrison government is divisive and harmful—workers against the unemployed, taxpayers against the nontaxpayers, high-income earners against low-income earners, religious against non-religious or those just not accepted by religions, those living in the regions against those living in urban areas.

Over the past generation, inequality in Australia has risen markedly; that means more social immobility. My colleague the member for Fenner used the example of a ladder with rungs where the rungs are spaced a long way apart—it's harder to climb up than down. We need to do much more to tackle inequality; we need to boost growth, wages and living standards.

**Rotary Australia**

**Mr TIM WILSON** (Goldstein) (17:38): Unlike the previous speaker, I'm going to talk to the aspiration of the nation for its sense of unity and purpose and those people who make that happen every day. Since 1921 Australian Rotary clubs have united men and women with a shared belief in securing a more inclusive society which promotes fellowship, integrity and goodwill. Building our social fabric is critical to securing our nation's great future.

Our government has invested a record amount of money in local projects that help associations build that sense of community, because at the heart of this government—at the heart of liberalism—is an understanding that the success of our nation does not come down from Canberra and bureaucrats; it comes up from citizens and communities through strength, empowerment and possibility. Critically, as Liberals, we realise these values must be put into action and we must work with our community partners to be able to do so. It is for this reason that we celebrate the Rotary clubs of Australia. All of Australia's 30,000 Rotarians deserve recognition for their incredible contribution day in, day out, year in, year out. Today, I would like to acknowledge some of the leaders of Goldstein's exceptional Rotary club community whom we are all in awe of. We thank them for their incredible service to our community.

At the Sandringham Rotary Club, I'd like to congratulate Ian Wells and Garry Thompson who were elected president and vice-president of the club this year. I understand they've done a role switch, which shows you their commitment to their club and, of course, to the Sandy community. And I know I was lucky to attend, only last week, their Rotary club meeting to discuss the development of a community garden just behind the Sandy bowls club. The friendly atmosphere and community spirit on display from the Sandy Rotary club community has always been a joy, and I've enjoyed going when I can to their changeover evenings to see the peaceful transition of Rotary club power from one committee to the next. I'm sure they are an exemplar of all the Rotary clubs who do great work.
At the Rotary Club of Beaumaris, I'd like to give particular thanks to the outgoing executive including, but not limited to, President Heather Chisholm and Secretary Roy Seager. Their commitment and dedication to the club does not go unnoticed. They regularly organise a local market at Beaumaris North Primary School, and, from time to time, I'm a visitor at that Rotary market. It's always a joyous affair, particularly if the weather is pleasant, with not just coffee but also local produce. And there always seems to be somebody there who sells an enormous amount of strawberries, which is not a criticism! I congratulate their work and the money they raise in supporting the Bowie community. I congratulate the new leadership team consisting of President David Hone and Secretary Trish Smyth. David has an illustrious past as the head of Bayside U3A, so I'm glad to see him continuing his important community work. I'd also like to acknowledge Treasurer Lynda Doutch for continuing her role into the new year. I'm sure this new team will continue to lead the Bowie club from strength to strength, working with other community organisations like the traders and schools.

At the Rotary Club of Glen Eira, I'd like to acknowledge the outgoing president, Alan Samuel, who has done a fantastic job leading the club over the 2018-19 year. The new executive team of President Lili Teichman, President-elect Martin Verhoeven and Secretary Joan Luscak. I'm sure they will have an exciting year of events and campaign activity planned to enhance and bring together that community to be able to do good charitable works. Furthermore, I would also like to acknowledge Treasurer Geoff Asher for continuing his role into the new year. As I'm sure you will understand, there's always something about the treasurer in a community organisation; it is a thankless task, often doing the hard yards with the other committee members, and we always thank them for standing up and taking on that important responsibility.

At the Bentleigh Moorabbin Central Rotary Club which regularly organises the local Bentleigh markets, I would like to thank the outgoing president, Ian Ballantine, for his tremendous service last year and welcome the newly elected councillor, Geoff Gledhill. I have known Geoff for many years now and I know he'll perform a wonderful role as president of the Rotary club. It builds on his past experience as a councillor in the City of Kingston and, of course, as a vibrant broad community contributor. I wish all success to him and his executive. Just recently the Bentleigh Moorabbin Central Rotary Club held a night where club member Tony Grusd spoke about the experience on March of the Living, which is an annual educational program in Poland and Israel that seeks to inform participants about the scourge of bigotry and prejudice through exploring the remnants of the Holocaust.

Like with the Sandy and the Beaumaris clubs, I have also spoken at the Bentleigh Moorabbin Central Rotary Club and always enjoyed the opportunity to share moments with them. This is one of many examples of the work these Rotary clubs do and particularly the work the Bentleigh Moorabbin Central Rotary Club does in promoting Rotary's values and taking them into practice.

At the Rotary Club of Hampton, I would also like to congratulate the new executive consisting of President Stuart Le Gros, Treasurer Rosalind Bodley and Secretary Liz Ware. Already the Hampton Rotary Club along with the Beaumaris, Cheltenham and Sandringham branches have taken an initiative and planted 200 trees in Bayside. This fantastic project demonstrates the impact grassroots campaigns can have and highlights the important role that the Rotary movement has in the environmental stewardship of their community. And I have a soft spot for Hampton Rotary because, almost the day after I was first elected to this parliament, I attended an event with them and with Gabriel Gate to explain the wonders of travelling France and cheese and wine—something I'm sure we can all become accustomed to.

At the Rotary Club of Brighton—the mighty and very strong Rotary Club of Brighton—I'd like to give thanks to the outgoing executives; president Norman Thomas, vice president Barry Hickman, treasurer Kien Teh and secretary John Schmoll. And congratulations are in order for the new leadership team, consisting of president Keith Cameron, vice presidents David Efron and Ronald Sher, treasurer Chris Tuck and secretary Anthony Langley. Only a month ago the Rotary Club of Brighton received not one but two Rotary District Awards. The club received recognition in vocational service for their RMIT mentoring program and recognition in youth service for their Marine Industry Preparation Program.

The Rotary Club of Brighton is also famous for its annual art exhibition at Sandringham Yacht Club, which is coming up. As always, it's an exciting opportunity not only to celebrate local artists and those people who particularly like to capture the beauty of Port Phillip but also to lighten your wallets to contribute towards the good charitable works that they engage in. They have a long history, with other Rotary charity groups, in supporting important community works locally and as part of the global projects that Rotary work on, like the eradication of polio. Whether I can get to the opening night or not, because it's often on the Thursday of a parliamentary sitting week, I always endeavour to get down to Sandringham Yacht Club to celebrate this important art show—and celebrate the success of our Rotary clubs. It's initiatives such as these that highlight the integral role that Rotary clubs play, and will continue to play, in the wonderful Goldstein electorate.
Finally, at the Rotary Club of Brighton North, I'd like to congratulate the incoming leadership team consisting of president John Blangiardo, president-elect Peter Killey, vice president Peter Harris, treasurer Neil Graham and secretary Cheryl Cox. The Rotary Club of Brighton North should be commended for its considerable contribution to charitable works. Earlier this year, the club co-hosted the annual Women in Rotary International Women's Day Breakfast and raised an incredible $30,000 for charity.

The Rotary movement has a cherished role in the Goldstein community. I've spoken at the Rotary Club of Brighton North on some of my experiences in my former capacity as Australian Human Rights Commissioner and as the federal member for Goldstein. I've always found them, as I have found every other Rotary club, to be warm, embracing and full of model citizens—people who stand on their own two feet and understand that the greatest responsibility of doing so is to assist others to do the same. That goes to the core values and beliefs that I represent in this chamber, the values that underpin the community of Goldstein, the values that underpin the cause and the mission of Rotary International, and, of course, the role and aspiration and values that we should want for our great country. It's with these congratulations that I send my best wishes to all the Rotary clubs in Goldstein—to their outgoing executives and to those who have stepped up to the challenge. You embody the best of our nation. You stand up where others won't. You give of yourself—your time and your resources—to the benefit of our community, and for that we give our thanks.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Andrews): As an honorary member of Rotary, I thank the member for Goldstein. The time for the grievance debate has expired. The debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 192B. The debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Federation Chamber adjourned at 17:49