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SITTING DAYS—2014

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FORTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—SECOND PERIOD

Governor-General
Her Excellency the Hon. Quentin Bryce AC, CVO

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

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

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

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

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

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<tr>
<td>Vasta, Mr Ross Xavier</td>
<td>Bonner, QLD</td>
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<td>Watts, Mr Timothy Graham</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wicks, Mrs Lucy Elizabeth</td>
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<td>Wilkie, Mr Andrew Damien</td>
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<td>Williams, Mr Matthew</td>
<td>Hindmarsh, SA</td>
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<td>Wilson, Mr Richard James</td>
<td>O'Connor, WA</td>
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<td>Wood, Mr Jason Peter</td>
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<td>Wyatt, Mr Kenneth George AM</td>
<td>Hasluck, WA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zappia, Mr Antonio</td>
<td>Makin, SA</td>
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**PARTY ABBREVIATIONS**

ALP—Australian Labor Party; LP—Liberal Party of Australia; NATS—The Nationals; IND—Independent; NATSWA—The Nationals WA; CLP—Country Liberal Party; AUS—Katters Australia Party; AG—Australian Greens; PUP—Palmer United Party

### Heads of Parliamentary Departments

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- Clerk of the House of Representatives—D Elder
- Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—C Mills
- Parliamentary Budget Officer—P Bowen
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<td>The Hon. Tony Abbott MP</td>
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<td><strong>Senator the Hon. Eric Abetz</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Senator the Hon. Michaelia Cash</strong></td>
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<td>The Hon. Josh Frydenberg MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>The Hon. Jamie Briggs MP</td>
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<td>The Hon. Michael Keenan MP</td>
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<td><strong>Senator the Hon. George Brandis QC</strong></td>
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<tr>
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Each box represents a portfolio. **Cabinet Ministers are shown in bold type.** As a general rule, there is one department in each portfolio. However, there is a Department of Human Services in the Social Services portfolio and a Department of Veterans’ Affairs in the Defence portfolio. The title of a department does not necessarily reflect the title of a minister in all cases.
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Cabinet Secretary</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Jacinta Collins</td>
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<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Opposition</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Senator the Hon Penny Wong</td>
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<td>Education Funding</td>
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<td>Cruise Tourism</td>
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<td>Workplace Relations</td>
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<td>Moore Electorate: Education</td>
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<td>Climate Change</td>
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<td>O'Connor Electorate: Grain Harvest</td>
<td>1974</td>
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<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>1976</td>
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<td>Great Artesian Basin Sustainability Initiative</td>
<td>1977</td>
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The SPEAKER (Hon. Bronwyn Bishop) took the chair at 09:00, made an acknowledgement of country and read prayers.

BILLS

Qantas Sale Amendment Bill 2014

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Mr TRUSS (Wide Bay—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development) (09:01): I move:
That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill is a key part of the government's commitment to ensuring a strong Australian-based aviation industry in, and for, this country.

That means providing an environment for aviation businesses in Australia to manage their own affairs on an equal footing.

Good government is not about playing favourites or being a banker for major companies when times are tough.

It's about providing the environment for them to succeed free of unreasonable government impediments.

That is what this bill about. Helping the Australian aviation industry to grow in an environment that is safe, fair, competitive and productive.

The purpose of the bill is to remove the regulatory handcuffs that apply to Qantas but to no other Australian-based airline—including in relation to accessing foreign capital.

As the House will be well aware, last week Qantas announced a loss of $252 million for the first half of the 2013-14 financial year.

The company has taken difficult decisions to return the airline to profitability—most distressingly for all in this place the shedding of 4,000 jobs on top of the 1,000 job losses Qantas announced in December.

The government recognises that the best possible way it can assist Qantas is by removing the regulatory imbalance in Australia's aviation industry—in effect, to free Qantas from the regulations that hold it back and which are a remnant of the previous century.

Currently, there is one set of rules for Qantas and another set of rules for other Australian-based airlines.

Part 3 of the Qantas Sale Act, which the government proposes to repeal, requires Qantas to include a range of outdated restrictions in its articles of association.

Under part 3 of the act, foreign ownership is limited to 49 per cent, a single investor cannot own more than 25 per cent and foreign airlines are limited to aggregate ownership of 35 per cent.
In contrast, under the Air Navigation Act, foreign persons can own up to 49 per cent of other Australian international airlines, with no restriction on foreign ownership for Australian domestic airlines, subject to consideration by the Foreign Investment Review Board.

In order to provide a 'level playing field' and balance the regulatory rules for all Australian airlines, this bill seeks to repeal part 3 of the QSA.

This will free Qantas from the restrictions it and, indeed, its competitors in Virgin Australia and Rex, agree belong to a bygone era.

The bill also makes amendments to definitions in the Air Navigation Act to ensure that Qantas is subject to the provisions regarding foreign ownership, thereby creating a consistent regulatory framework for all Australian international airlines.

Australia's air services agreements with other countries require an airline seeking to exercise Australia's air traffic rights to be designated by government.

This means they must satisfy a range of requirements, including:

- Substantial ownership and effective control by Australian nationals;
- Two-thirds of the board members must be Australian citizens, as must be the chairperson; and
- The airline's head office and operational base must also be in Australia.

The government does not propose to change these criteria.

I, again, note that Qantas's main domestic competitors, Virgin Australia and Regional Express, support changes to the act, expressing their desire to compete with Qantas on a fair and equal footing.

In summary, this legislation means that Qantas will no longer operate at a competitive disadvantage and that government regulation will no longer stand in the way of Qantas's efforts to return to profitability.

I commend the bill to the House.

The SPEAKER: The debate must now be adjourned. I call the Manager of Opposition Business.

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (09:06): Madam Speaker, the opposition would welcome the opportunity to seek leave to allow this debate to proceed immediately.

The SPEAKER: Is leave granted?

Mr TRUSS (Wide Bay—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development) (09:06): Leave is not granted. The opposition did not choose to inform the government of this proposal. We are prepared to bring the debate on at the earliest possible opportunity, but if the opposition intended that there would be a full-scale debate they should have done us the courtesy of discussing that with us. The shadow minister has asked me to defer debate on other bills. I have been cooperative with him and have agreed to delay debate so that he could prepare himself for it. This was a very limited debate and, for that reason, leave is not granted.

The SPEAKER: Then the debate must be adjourned.
BUSINESS

Consideration of Legislation

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (09:07): I move:
That so much of the standing and sessional orders be suspended as would prevent the debate on the Qantas Sale Amendment Bill 2014 proceeding immediately.
This debate should happen now. There should not be a delay in—

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) (09:07): I move:
That the member no longer be heard.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the member be no longer heard.
The House divided. [09:12]
(The Speaker—Hon. Bronwyn Bishop)

Ayes .................79
Noes ..................52
Majority...............27

AYES

Alexander, JG
Baldwin, RC
Bishop, JI
Broad, AJ
Brough, MT
Chester, D
Ciobo, SM
Coleman, DB
Entsch, WG
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Griggs, NL
Hawke, AG
Hockey, JB
Howarth, LR
Hutchinson, ER
Jensen, DG
Joyce, BT
Kelly, C
Laundy, C
Macfarlane, IE
Markus, LE
McCormack, MF
Morrison, SJ
O’Dowd, KD
Pitt, KJ
Prentice, J
Randall, DJ
Robert, SR
Ruddock, PM
Scott, FM
Smith, ADH
Stone, SN

Andrews, KJ
Billson, BF
Briggs, JE
Broadbent, RE
Buchholz, S (teller)
Christensen, GR
Cobb, JK
Coulton, M (teller)
Fletcher, PW
Gambaro, T
Goodenough, IR
Hartseyker, L
Hendy, PW
Hogan, KJ
Hunt, GA
Irons, SJ
Jones, ET
Keenan, M
Laming, A
Ley, SP
Marino, NB
Matheson, RG
McNamara, KJ
Nikolic, AA
Pasin, A
Porter, CC
Pyne, CM
Robb, AJ
Roy, WB
Scott, BC
Simpkins, LXL
Southcott, AJ
Sudmalis, AE

CHAMBER
The motion was seconded by Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler). The Speaker asked if there were any objections to the motion. There were none, so the motion was carried.

The Speaker then addressed the House, stating that there were meetings between Qantas management and its workforce about the loss of 5,000 jobs. He pointed out that the Leader of the Opposition had asked the Prime Minister about the government’s action in providing assistance to Qantas workers.

He concluded by saying that the government’s decision to reject the debt guarantee was due to an internal battle within the government between the Prime Minister and the Treasurer. He noted that the government had previously indicated support for a debt guarantee in November and December, and that Qantas management, the Qantas workforce, and Qantas shareholders had relied on that support. However, the cabinet decision to reject the guarantee was made on Monday night, despite the previous indication of support.

The Speaker reminded the House that the motion had been carried, and that there had been discussions about the government’s action in providing assistance to Qantas workers.

The Speaker then adjourned the House.
There was nothing. What we got from the Prime Minister was just more politics. In terms of why this debate should be begun today—

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Education) (09:23): I move:

That the member be no longer heard.

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

A division having been called and the bells being rung—

Mr PYNE: Madam Speaker, to assist the House, you might wish to exercise your discretion. The government are going to support the suspension of standing orders because we are quite happy to debate the Qantas Sale Act, so I am happy to give leave for the suspension motion to be moved and passed. So we do not actually need to debate the suspension of standing orders. We have always, since the beginning, been of the same view. I am happy to withdraw the gag, not have the division and allow the member for Grayndler to finish his speech, and then to have the motion put, debate it and pass it.

The SPEAKER: In the circumstances, we will call the division off. I accept that the Leader of the House has said that the government will accept the suspension motion and that the debate on the bill will proceed. If the member wishes to use the rest of his time, I give the call to the member for Grayndler.

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler) (09:25): I do indeed. The fact is that this government does not have legislation this week. We have had, in this chamber, the longest ever address-in-reply debate in the history of the parliament, since Federation. We will have gone through two Governor-Generals before it is finished!

The SPEAKER: I do not see how this is in relation to the suspension motion. I draw the minister's attention to the motion.

Mr ALBANESE: That is why they are prepared to bring on this debate. We have seen a shambles. We asked leave so the debate could begin. Leave was knocked off. We then moved to a suspension. They gagged the mover of the suspension. The Manager of Opposition Business—

Mr Hawke: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Under standing order 88, it is not appropriate for the member to speak disrespectfully of the Governor-General.

Mr Albanese interjecting—

Mr Pyne: I have not spoken yet on the address-in-reply.

Mr ALBANESE: It would almost have been completed and given to the Governor-General by now. That is a fact. That is the disrespect from this bloke because he cannot run the parliament. (Time expired)

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Education) (09:27): Madam Speaker, I want to speak briefly on the motion to suspend standing orders in order to explain the government's position. Obviously we are absolutely delighted—

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: There will be silence on my left.
Mr PYNE: to debate the Qantas Sale Amendment Bill 2014. The only reason we would not have debated it this morning is that, usually, the opposition want to go through their party processes and bills sit on the table for a week to allow them to do that. The government has gone through its party processes. We support the Qantas Sale Amendment Bill 2014. We are very happy to pass it, and we will pass it this morning.

This is one of the most extraordinary own goals that I have seen in 21 years in politics. The opposition is facilitating the government passing—in fact, demanding that it pass—its agenda, and we will. We will pass it this morning. The Qantas Sale Amendment Bill will then be in the Senate, and the Senate can debate it. Quite frankly, if Labor want to stand in the way of putting Qantas on the same footing as Virgin, that will hang around their necks, and every job that is lost at Qantas will be the opposition's fault.

The poor old Leader of the Opposition, who is a wholly owned subsidiary of the union movement, is displaying all the reasons why he should not be Prime Minister of Australia: he is a weak Leader of the Opposition, he is a wholly owned subsidiary and he is a small person when it comes to leadership. We are very happy to pass this motion to debate the Qantas Sale Amendment Bill, to pass it today and to have it in the Senate by lunchtime.

Question agreed to.

BILLS
Qantas Sale Amendment Bill 2014
Second Reading

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

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler) (09:29): I am pleased to be able to make a contribution to this debate. I do note that those opposite have indicated that, whilst they are prepared to have a debate, they are not prepared to have a proper debate. They intend to move a gag motion on this bill to put it through the House—even though, of course, it has no prospect of passing the Senate. Let us look at how we got here. In November and in December—

Government members interjecting—

Mr ALBANESE: I am asked why. Well, the Leader of the National Party, the Deputy Prime Minister and former shadow minister for transport, very clearly indicated why: because there was not support of the Australian people for this. He said that in December. And why is there not support of the Australian people? It is because it is not in the national interest and not in the interests of Australian employment for this to be carried.

We had a process in 2009 that led to an aviation white paper. We had a green paper and then a full discussion with the transport and tourism sector—an open process of consultation. In December 2009, it recommended that Qantas should stay in majority Australian hands but that we should consider repealing the sections of the act that require a 35 per cent and 25 per cent rule—the limited restrictions on a single owner who is not Australian and also on ownership by other airlines of Qantas. We did that in a practical way. We were prepared to consider that.

What did those opposite do? On day one, the shadow transport minister and the shadow Treasurer, who are now the two key people for the passage of this legislation, rejected it, and
they rejected it on the basis that it was not in the national interest. The shadow Treasurer outlined very, very clearly that it was his view that any diminution of the restrictions on foreign ownership was not in the national interest because the obligations of Qantas as an Australian company would mean that that was diminished, and he rejected the 35 per cent/25 per cent amendments. The shadow transport minister of the time did the same thing, particularly pointing towards the role that Qantas plays in regional Australia. So that was the position of the opposition back then.

As to the then government's position, we had, after that proper consultative process, fully put forward the view that we were prepared to make that minor change to the position but were not prepared to go further. Here is what the shadow transport minister said:

The Government's decision to allow a single foreign investor to own 49 per cent of Qantas would deliver effective control to a foreign investor, including possibly a competitor airline. Lost of effective Australian control could leave Australia without an airline primarily committed to our interests. What safeguards will be put in place for the Australian flying public, particularly those in regional areas? What else did they go on to say? The shadow Treasurer said this:

Well this is something I have previously been on the record about. Very concerned about any dilution of Australian control of Qantas. Qantas has, over the years, tried to increase foreign investment in the airline. We have been very concerned for a number of reasons. First and foremost, Qantas is an Australian icon and Qantas undertakes significant tasks in the national interest and there have been numerous examples where Qantas—an Australian-owned airline and an airline that relies heavily on government regulation has undertaken tasks in the national interest. Our experience has been that when companies have majority foreign ownership or majority foreign control—not necessarily the same thing—but when they have majority foreign control, then it actually has an impact on the social responsibilities of those companies here in Australia. So, in short, we’ll see where we’re going.

These were not newly elected members of parliament. The shadow transport minister had been the transport minister, with responsibility for aviation and regulation in this country, prior to the 2007 election. The shadow Treasurer, now the Treasurer, was a senior member of the Howard government as well. They had thought through those issues. They had thought them through in a way which then determined the position of the coalition on the very day that the white paper was released. That was a very public process. They were on the record about that.

Then the coalition came to office in September last year. Prior to that, of course, Qantas had had difficulties. As to some of the decisions of the Qantas management, I maintain the view that I had at the time: that the grounding of Qantas by the management damaged the Qantas brand and was an error of judgement on the part of that management.

But I have worked constructively with Qantas. I have also worked constructively with Virgin and the other airlines that are based in Australia. Virgin, of course, have successfully expanded—and I supported their actions in expanding—their operations through the effective takeover of Skywest and Tiger. There is no doubt that, had the takeover of Tiger not been approved, it simply would have disappeared from the Australian aviation landscape.

Last year I provided, as the minister for transport, a letter which indicated that Qantas had a special relationship with the Australian people and a special role in terms of the national economic interest. That letter of comfort, which was requested—worked out in consultation
with the appropriate bureaucracies in government—was successful. It was successful in ensuring that Qantas maintained its credit rating.

In November, Virgin, because of the pressures that had been placed on it in terms of capacity, needed an injection of capital. It received that injection of capital of around $380 million from partner airlines Etihad, Air New Zealand and Singapore Airlines. All three of those airlines are government backed. So effectively you had a transfer of support from the governments of New Zealand, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates for Virgin. Why did that occur? It is in the commercial interests of those airlines to provide that support to Virgin, which, of course, is primarily a domestic carrier. They have an interest, as shareholders in Virgin, in Virgin's success, but they also have an indirect interest because they benefit in terms of the codeshare operations that occur with Virgin as a domestic carrier and feeding in passengers through those three international government backed airlines.

That was the first thing that changed, in November. In December, Qantas received a downgrade in its credit rating to junk status. They are the two events that changed the political landscape in terms of whether government should go further in providing support for Qantas. Every indication was made by the Treasurer that that support would be forthcoming. The Treasurer outlined four principles which that would be based upon. He said this. This is the first principle:

… has the Parliament and the Government imposed restrictions on that … business that are not imposed on other businesses in the same industry?

He said:
The answer in relation to Qantas is yes.

Secondly, is that business fundamental to the economy, is it providing an essential service to the economy, such that if it were to have significant issues that inhibited its day to day operations, it would have a detrimental impact on the economy?

The Treasurer said:
In the case of Qantas, the answer is yes.

He went on to say:
The third factor that needs to be considered is; are other Governments actively supporting other players in that industry?

There he said:
The answer in relation to Qantas is yes. These are crucial tests we apply.

And he said:
The fourth hugely important test is, is the enterprise trying to fix up its own balance sheet? Quite obviously Qantas is trying to do it.

There is nothing equivocal about the statement of the Treasurer on 13 February—nothing equivocal at all.

And there was a response to that. There was a response by Qantas management. There was a response, of course, in the impact on the Qantas workforce, where 5,000 people will lose their jobs. And there was a response by Qantas shareholders which saw the share price rise by more than 10 per cent. That was the response.
The Treasurer was arguing, as late as Monday night, in the cabinet room for that proposition. What did the opposition do? We indicated very clearly from day one and consistently that we would be constructive. We indicated where the line would be drawn. The line is very clearly drawn in terms of majority Australian ownership. We indicated and continue to indicate to the government that we are prepared to consider supporting other options—other than that—for the very reasons outlined so eloquently by people such as the Treasurer and the transport minister in the past.

This legislation being brought before this chamber is legislation not only that we oppose but that those opposite, in their heart of hearts—people such as the Treasurer—also have not been arguing for. Indeed, they have rejected in the past any dilution. Even the 35-25 per cent rules, a relatively minor change, were rejected.

So what did they come up with on Monday night, where we know—because the Prime Minister indicated it in his press conference—that every single member of cabinet made a contribution? I have sat around a cabinet room. Every member only makes a contribution where there is a lot of conflict, where there is real conflict about a way forward. That is not surprising given the contradictions that are there from those opposite. The fact is the Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development said just now in his second reading speech:

The government recognises that the best possible way it can assist Qantas is by removing the regulatory imbalance in Australia's aviation industry—in effect, to free Qantas from the regulations that hold it back and which are a remnant of the previous century.

The problem for this bloke is he was the transport minister in this century. He was the transport minister; he was responsible for these regulations.

The other problem is that we know what Qantas wanted because Qantas stated it, the Treasurer stated it and the transport minister stated it: they wanted a debt guarantee. You have had every red herring thrown up in this debate, including the red herring of the carbon price, even though we know that both Qantas and Virgin actually asked to be included in the carbon pricing scheme. We know from the statements that were leaked from the cabinet meeting on Monday night—the cabinet is leaking and they have not been there that long—that they had a discussion in the cabinet room about the Qantas statement on Monday that carbon pricing was not the real issue here, that it was not what they were talking about. We know the Treasurer read out the Qantas statement at the cabinet meeting on Monday. So they read it out, leaked it and clearly they then had discussions with Qantas about that view.

Why is the inconsistency there? I go back to Joe Hockey's four criteria that it is worthwhile in terms of support for the national carrier. In terms of support for the national carrier, we know that there is a position whereby the three government backed airlines have made the injection into Virgin. We know also that when we talk about aviation we are not talking about an area where the free market operates. It is not actually the way it works. Aviation is regulated by the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation. Agreements are made between nation-states. The agreements are made government to government. This is not an area whereby you have the private sector going off, having negotiations and coming up with agreements without government regulation. The air services agreements are not between Qantas, Virgin and United—they have their own arrangements; the air services agreements are between the Australian government and the US government, the Australian government and the Japanese government, the Australian government and the Chinese government. They
are based upon the principle of where the airlines are based, the majority ownership of that country in order to access those traffic rights between countries.

Let us have a look at the Skytrax ranking of the top airlines around the world. Skytrax is the world airline awards. Emirates is 91 per cent owned by the UAE government and comes in at No.1; Qatar Airways, 50 per cent owned by the Qatari government, comes in at No. 2; and Singapore Airlines, 54.5 per cent owned by the Singaporean government, comes in at No. 3. When you look around the world including at the future giants of aviation, there are at least three but there are many more. The three very big carriers from China are getting bigger every day. They are supported by government.

What we had here was a request from the national carrier for government support, an indication by the government that that would be forthcoming. Then at the last minute that was withdrawn and legislation was put forward which has no prospect of passing this Senate or the future Senate. So I say to government again, as I have said since December, we are prepared to be constructive. We clearly indicated that from 2009 we have had a position on the 25 per cent and 35 per cent rules and we would be prepared to have constructive discussions about that or any other support that would be available.

Why is that the case? What has this come down to? At the end of the day, this is not about the people who sit in this place. At the end of the day, this is about two things. The first issue is the national interest, where national governments around the world recognise that aviation is worthy of support. The second issue is that it is about the workforce, those 5,000 people who are losing their jobs at Qantas. We asked the Prime Minister yesterday what response there was from the government for those 5,000 workers. Did we get a commitment about retraining, about income support, about counselling or about any of a range of options that should be there when you have people who, in many cases, will have worked for decades for the company known as the flying kangaroo? No, we did not. We just got more politics. This is completely unacceptable.

Look at what the consequences of this legislation. The consequences of passing this legislation is that what you would have is a break-up of Qantas. That is what the legislation is designed to do—to separate out the company so that you will have Qantas international separated from Qantas domestic and Qantas domestic completely freed up in terms of foreign ownership. So you are freeing up to foreign capital the profitable section of the airline—and you are saying that the international arm will be able to continue as it is as a separate entity with different owners.

Qantas is very different in terms of its corporate structure from Virgin. Virgin have the big owners—the three government-backed airlines and of course Virgin international through Richard Branson. Qantas's ownership structure is very different. If you split the company and you have a profitable arm with up to 100 per cent foreign ownership, why should there be that cross-relationship in terms of shareholder interests with Qantas international? And yet the national interest and the whole of Qantas's interest is often served particularly by routes in regional Australia being protected, because whilst they may not be delivering a positive return in the short term, they deliver that in the longer term. That is what the Treasurer was talking about and the transport minister when they spoke about the national interest.

What we know is that when this has occurred, such as in Air Canada, the potential for a hostile takeover essentially and a breaking up of the company would be very much there.
Why is that the case? In terms of the ownership provisions that are there providing some
defence of the national interest being protected, at the moment the Qantas share price is
hovering just above a dollar. We know that the value of assets that Qantas has—the Frequent
Flyer program, key terminals, Jetstar—is certainly many times more than the total share
value. So the consequences in terms of a break-up—and I think the Treasurer gets this, which
is why he took a different position, to be fair to him—and the potential for a break-up of this
company with consequences for the national interest are ones that we take very seriously
indeed.

Then the government says, 'But don't worry, because for the potential buyers the FIRB
provisions will ensure that there can't be a takeover that isn't in the Australian national
interest.' Which are the airlines that will potentially invest? Are there any of them that are not
government backed? The two obvious places are from China and the UAE. That is the
strength of global aviation at the moment. Singapore, of course, is also very strong, but they
are in partnership with Virgin. So the government is going down this road but saying, 'Don't
worry, cause we'll stop it—there is another process.' But, of course, FIRB make
recommendations to the Treasurer, so it will end up back with him.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Vasta):** Order! The member for Hughes is seeking to
make a point of order?

**Mr Craig Kelly:** Mr Deputy Speaker, under standing order 66A, Interventions, I request
you ask the member for Grayndler if he would accept an intervention.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Is the member for Grayndler willing to give away?

**Mr ALBANESE:** No. In terms of our position, we unequivocally stand for Australian
jobs. Qantas has the safest record of airlines around the world—it is known for it. Are we
really saying that there is no relationship between that safety record and the skills of those
Australians who maintain the aircraft and those engineers who work for Qantas, that there is
no difference between where

Someone said to me yesterday that this is about sentiment; it is not. This is about cold, hard
analysis of Australia's economic interests. But it is also about who we are as Australians. I
make no apology for acknowledging the fact that the flying kangaroo is a source of national
pride. It is a source of national pride which brings jobs to Australia, because every time
people see the flying kangaroo, wherever in the world, it is an ad for Australian tourism.
Qantas, of course, play a critical role in Australian tourism through programs like G'DAY
USA, G'day China now—those programs that have received support. Qantas back our
national teams—the Wallabies, the Australian cricket team. They do all of that because they
are an Australian company. If you remove that, there is a difference between the flying
kangaroo and replacing that with an emblem of another country. It is about Australian jobs; it
is about the national interest. The government needs to rethink its position, get out of the
trenches and actually start acting like a government that is prepared to govern rather than just
act like an opposition.

**Mr MORRISON** (Cook—Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) (09:59): I rise
particularly today as the member for Cook, which represents the Sutherland shire—as does
the member for Hughes in part. There are two things about my community that I think are
very relevant to this debate. The first one is that in the shire we are a very self-reliant
community. People work hard, they have started businesses, they have established family businesses that continue to this day employing hundreds if not thousands of people, and they have always understood that the hard work and the investment that they put in is where their reward comes from and where their future comes from. They have always understood that business can be tough, that markets can be tough, and the way they have always responded to this has not been to seek a handout but to put the work in and to apply themselves to the challenges before them, and this has created an incredibly strong community. This great strength that exists within our community, from an economic and small-business perspective in particular, translates into a strong social community as well—one of self-reliance, but also one of generosity to those around them. The other thing about my community is that it is argueable that it has the largest number of Qantas employees of any other electorate represented in this place. It is that resilience and self-reliance that I know my community will draw upon as they go through what I know is a very difficult time—and this is a difficult time for my community and for the many, many people in my electorate who are affected by what is happening with Qantas.

This has been happening for some time; this is not a new issue. There will be many newcomers to this debate today, I suspect, but in my community this has been a long-term debate. They have, for some period of time, watched as the commercial and international conditions that sit around how Qantas performs and is able to perform have changed. They have seen that change for them. They have seen the change in the market share, which the Treasurer spoke about in this place yesterday. They have seen these changes, and that has been an issue of concern for them for some time.

It is important that we understand and acknowledge in this debate, as I am sure those in my community would like to, that Qantas has played, and, indeed, continues to play, a central role in Australia's national life and in our economic life as well. It has served, and continues to serve, our country; all of its employees have served our country extremely well. In good times and bad, Qantas has always been a great Australian airline. And since 1992 it has been a great Australian company. Its traditions and its success are things I think all Australians should feel very proud of. It has set standards. It is innovative. It has been able to connect Australia with the world, and connect Australians with each other across this vast continent. It is an extraordinary story, an extraordinary Australian story, and I want that story to continue. I do not want it to come to the shuddering halt that would be the product of the way that those opposite would seek to see its future. I want to see a future for Qantas—for the people who work for Qantas, for the people who have always supported Qantas and for the future of our aviation industry—and a role for those many Australians who would like to play a part in that future in the years ahead.

I am a passionate advocate of Qantas, but I am a realist as well. I know that a government that is serious cannot govern by nostalgia and sentiment. It cannot govern by emotion. It must govern by the hard realities of the challenges that we face. Qantas is facing a difficult and challenging international aviation market. There is no doubt about that, and the shadow minister is right to point out that it has principally been government owned and supported carriers that have been the dominant force within the international aviation market for a long time. It is not a new phenomenon. Those who remember what happened with Ansett and other things many years ago will remember that as well. The commercial issues that go around
these challenging issues in the aviation industry understand that. It is not new. And so the question for us today is: how do we make Qantas stronger? How do we equip it to be able to combat the challenges that it faces in the future and to succeed—as it always has succeeded?

I and my colleagues on this side of the House have faith in Qantas's ability, and particularly the ability of the people in Qantas, the people who have always worked within Qantas. I have faith that in whatever aspect of their operations, they have the passion for and commitment to this business to make it succeed in the future. And to allow them to do that, we have to remove the constraints that are placed upon it. We cannot just pretend that the environment they are facing is some sort of myth. It is not; it is real. What Qantas needs is the ability to be able to work with equity partners that can play the role in the future that it needs them to play. We cannot keep those potential partners locked behind closed doors, as the Qantas Sale Act 1992 does. It prevents them from being able to engage in Qantas's future and to provide the support for that future. And by continuing to lock them out, we deny the opportunities that the Qantas employees will need to be part of a very successful Qantas in the future.

Qantas has the job of running this airline, not the government. That was decided by this place in 1992. Those opposite seem to be wanting to govern retrospectively now. They want to take us back to 1992. In fact, they want to take us back to before 1992. They want to say that the equity partner—default equity partner even—in Qantas should be the taxpayer. But we decided that back in 1992. So unless those opposite are suggesting that we should buy back Qantas—as they did, in large part, in New Zealand—and for the government to now be the controlling interest in Qantas, as the member for Gorton seems to think that somehow we still are, then they should put that view. And I think that is exactly what the shadow minister was doing today. He is suggesting, and those opposite are suggesting, that the equity partner that Qantas needs is the Australian taxpayer. Not only do we not agree with that position, but this parliament also did not agree with that position in 1992 when it decided—when Labor in government decided—to sell Qantas. And when you make that decision and you go forward and you decide that Qantas is going to be on a private path and not a government-run airline like so many others are, then you have to commit to a success as a private business into the future, and you have to give it the options and the opportunities that it needs to be successful in that environment. That means passing the measures in the Qantas Sale Amendment Bill, which is before parliament today, to enable Qantas to attract the equity partners it will need in its long-term future. We have decided that will not be the government. Those opposite voted for that back in 1992—unless they are now saying that they are going to recant. Having made that decision, we now need to lift those restrictions to enable Qantas to have a future, which will mean Australian jobs within Qantas in the future.

The other thing you have to do is to remove other restrictions that impede its ability to be profitable. The carbon tax bill for Qantas was $106 million—$106 million! The opposition sneezes that this is some trivial consequence for Qantas. Are they suggesting we should invest $106 million in Qantas? That is what the opposition seems to be suggesting. The opposition could do that effectively by getting rid of the carbon tax. There is $106 million support for Qantas today—year-on-year—$106 million and more because the amount will become greater under the previous government's carbon tax. There is some direct support, if you like, but delivered in a way that this government delivers support—by freeing up businesses in this country so that they are able to properly run their businesses. It is no different for Qantas than...
it is for the many thousands of Australian small businesses—I acknowledge the Minister for Small Business, Mr Billson, is here at the table—and the many small businesses in my community of the shire because they are doing the same thing. They do not come knocking on my door asking for a debt guarantee. They come to ask me to get regulation out of their way, which helps them to employ people and allows them to succeed. That is the spirit in small businesses in my electorate, as I know it is in small businesses around the country.

We have to let Qantas and its management take responsibility for future decisions, give them the things they need, the options they need to be able to put forward their plans for the company. The Qantas board runs the company. Boards, like governments, will be responsible, and managements will be responsible for the decisions they take and the impact they have on their shareholders and on their employees. That is the way we run the economy in this country and that is the way we should run the economy in this country. If those opposite are somehow suggesting something different, they should be very clear about that.

Qantas is a tremendous, wonderful, national airline. The good news is we have other national airlines today and Virgin is one of those. Protections already exist within the various legislation which governs aviation arrangements, which continue to apply equally not only to Qantas but also to any other national carriers that will be acting consistently with our international aviation agreements. The Navigation Act applies to other airlines including Virgin and Qantas' subsidiary Jetstar. Qantas international would stay majority Australian owned. As for their domestic operations, they are subject to review by the Foreign Investment Review Board—no changes there. Our international air service agreements impose ownership and control restrictions to ensure only Australian international airlines can access our traffic rights and under those restrictions, Australian international airlines must be substantially owned and effectively controlled by Australian nationals. At least two-thirds of the board members must be Australian citizens. The chairperson of the board must be an Australian citizen. The airline's head office must be in Australia. The airline's operation base must be in Australia. The government has no plans to change these criteria, which will continue to apply in Qantas' international operations—not to mention the Fair Work Act, the Corporations Act, immigration laws, for which I am responsible, and other regulations which affect every other Australian business. There are safeguards and there are protections regarding those operations.

Those opposite seem to be arguing that a foreign equity provider and shareholder in Qantas domestic is somehow going to run Australian domestic operations in another country. Apparently they are going to run a domestic aviation service in Australia by flying around some other country, which is absurd. As the minister for transport has argued very well in this place in recent days, Virgin is employing Australians in Australia. Australians are on those planes every day, moving millions of people around every single week. That is the future I want for Qantas as well because that has been Qantas' past, it is its present and it will be its future—so long as this place and the other place decide to put a vote of confidence in Australian business and in Australian employees. Qantas is a great airline. As a former managing director of Tourism Australia, I know from first-hand experience that Qantas has given unparalleled support to the Australian tourism industry. Sadly, under the previous government that went array and it will be for those who were responsible to explain that one day. Qantas always stumped up when it was in my field of operations. That will continue.
It will be a good future for Qantas. It will not be the same as its past. That is true for all businesses, as the Minister for Small Business would know. We cannot somehow wish away the circumstances that all businesses face today and pretend somehow we can be nostalgic and sentimental about these difficult decisions. For Qantas to go forward, this government and this parliament must get out of its way and free it up to find the partners in the future that it so richly deserves, its employees so richly deserve and await it. The only thing standing in between that is the Leader of the Opposition and his cohorts in the Senate. For my electors, I hope, the Leader of the Opposition will have a change of heart and will decide to support Qantas by supporting this bill.

Mr STEPHEN JONES (Throsby) (10:14): We have seen an extraordinary passage of events in the parliament this morning, where the government clearly do not have the confidence of their own convictions. What we have seen this morning is the minister responsible for this piece of legislation come into the House, read the bill and then have the opportunity to have that bill debated in full—the opposition granted the government the opportunity to have that bill debated in full. The government then tried to move a gag motion on a debate on their own bill. They tried to gag debate on their own piece of legislation. What this shows is that they do not have confidence in their legislation. They do not have confidence in their ability to manage this debate. It shows that the government are struggling to convert their seductive three-word slogans into serious policy, legislation and a legislative agenda to bring before the House.

It is actually a reflection of the haphazard decision-making process that has typified this whole matter. We have seen question time after question time being concentrated on the future of Qantas. There has not been a question time this year where the future of Qantas has not been debated. You would think, given all of that, they would be prepared to come into the House and defend the legislation which we argue is not in the national interest. That has not been the case.

The government has had many positions on this, as we have seen from the comments by the minister himself. He has obviously had a range of different positions on this matter over the last five years. In 2009, the then shadow minister had a position which was once in the interests of regional Australia, once in the interests of jobs and once in interests of the future of Qantas. At that point in time he had this to say:

The Government’s decision to allow a single foreign investor to own 49 percent of Qantas would deliver effective control to a foreign investor, including possibly a competitor airline. Lost of effective Australian control could leave Australia without an airline primarily committed to our interests. What safeguards will be put in place for the Australian flying public, particularly those in regional areas?

That is a very good question: what safeguards will be put in place for the Australian flying public, particularly those in regional areas? We see nothing in the Qantas Sale Amendment Bill 2014 which would protect the interests of those who are in regional Australia and relying on the services of Qantas—the interests that the minister once protected, once stood for but is now selling out as he stands here and moves this legislation before the House today.

Of course, he is not alone. In 2009 the Treasurer, who has shown a great interest in this particular debate, had this to say when he was asked about the 25-35 rule for Qantas:
… this is something I have previously been on the record about. Very concerned about any dilution of Australian control of Qantas … We have been very concerned for a number of reasons … Our experience has been that when companies have majority foreign ownership or majority foreign control … then it actually has an impact on the social responsibilities of those companies here in Australia.

That is what the Treasurer said in 2009. It is what he thought in 2009 and we would argue that he was spot-on. We would argue that both the Treasurer and the minister were spot-on in 2009 when they made those observations about the future of Qantas.

This has been a chaotic debate, and the way that this has been handled over the last month is nothing short of a disgrace. We have seen a cabinet minister backgrounding the media on what they intended to do. We have seen the Treasurer himself sending smoke signals about the possibility of a debt guarantee. Then we saw the Prime Minister himself on one day send signals about what they were intending to do, on the next day saying almost the exact opposite. So you can imagine what people in boardrooms around the country are thinking as they focus on this debate. They are very concerned, and they are right to be concerned, about the government's lack of consistency when it comes to handling issues like this.

In question time a few days ago we heard the Prime Minister pose the question: why should we do for one company what we are not prepared to do for another? What should we do for one company that we are not prepared to do for another? He said that in relation to government support for Qantas. You can only imagine the discussion that has gone on around the Qantas boardroom in the last 24 hours, trying to synchronise these two comments. You can only imagine the discussion that is going on around the Qantas boardroom. They would be saying to themselves: 'If only Qantas were a company that transported wheat and not people, then we would have a chance of government support. If only we were a company that transported wheat and not people, then we might have the support of the National Party on this issue.' We know that they went to the wall over the sale of GrainCorp. They went to the wall and they were the ones in the cabinet room and backgrounding the media saying it would be a national travesty if we allowed a foreign company to come in and take over GrainCorp because it would not be in the national interest.

In the boardrooms of Qantas today and around the executive hallways of Qantas they must be saying: 'If only we were a real transport company, transporting wheat and not people. Then we would have a chance of some government support.' You can imagine them saying: 'If only we were a real tourist business, then we would have a chance of government support. If only we were in the business of making chocolate instead of transporting people around the country and around the world to their holiday destinations, then we would have a chance of government support.' We know the government is willing to support a business that is in the tourism industry. 'Unfortunately, as a national airline, we're not in the tourism industry. We only transport people around the world and around the country to go on holidays. We're not making Freddo frogs or chocolate bars and therefore we're not going to get the sort of government support that Cadbury has been able to enjoy.'

You can imagine the conversations that are going on around their boardrooms today: government inconsistency; saying one thing before an election, doing another; setting out clear principles and then contradicting them; sending up smoke signals that we are willing to support Qantas, willing to give them a debt guarantee, only to have an unholy barney in the cabinet room with one cabinet minister backgrounding against another minister to undermine
a position that would have been in Qantas's interest. We have seen an absolute shambles and absolute chaos. That is the background to the bill that has come before the House today.

We have heard the Prime Minister, the Treasurer and the transport minister stand in this place today and ask: why should the government come in and support Qantas when they are in direct competition with Virgin? Why should we do this? Why should we do one thing for Qantas? Why should the government come in and support Qantas and at the same time not be supporting Virgin?

I have the highest regard for Virgin and the CEO of Virgin. I think he has done a fantastic job bringing that company, that airline, from nowhere to having a significant presence in this country. As a member of this place who, from time to time, has to travel for work, I make sure that I spend some of that time on a Virgin aircraft. I think they are a fine airline. I think they are doing a fine job. But the argument does not stack up, because if you look at the corporate ownership, if you look at the structure of the airline, you will see that Virgin, like the majority of airlines around the world, enjoys the backing of one, if not more, government. In Virgin's case, it enjoys the backing of three governments. So the difference between Virgin and Qantas is that Virgin enjoys the support of three governments and Qantas does not enjoy the support of any, so the argument of a level-playing field simply does not add up. It is just another of the inconsistencies that the government has stacked up in this debate.

The people are not buying it, because they know the consequences of this legislation which is before the House today. Because it is not just about the ownership, as important as that is; the Qantas Sale Act also has important protections about jobs. It has protections in it about where the headquarters will be. It has protections in it about the provision of certain functions within this country—maintenance functions, catering functions, reservations functions—to ensure that this iconic Australian business employs Australians, and it does that. The people of Australia are not going to be conned. They are seeing over 5,000 jobs going from this company. Just yesterday, they saw over 1,500 workers at Mascot headquarters being told that they are going to lose their jobs.

As the Prime Minister stands here and says, 'We're going to do nothing to help this airline and this industry,' those people will be going back to their homes and their electorates, saying: 'I am losing my job. It was a good job. It was a well-paid job in a great company. I am losing my job, and the government is doing absolutely nothing to assist me or my family.' This is important: over 35,000 Australians earn a living working for Qantas—good jobs, highly skilled jobs, the jobs of the future and jobs that we should be supporting. We should be doing everything we can as a government and, on this side of the House, as an opposition to ensure that we support those workers, that company and that industry.

It is an important industry. I made light earlier in my contribution: if only Qantas were producing chocolate and not providing airline services then maybe they would get tourism support. But tourism is a critical industry in this country. It employs over half a million Australians. It is a $1 billion sector and it has been identified as one of the five supergrowth sectors that are going to backfill the economic hole in terms of employment and GDP as the mining boom comes off. So it is important to our future. It deserves our support and our attention, and those of us on this side of the House who are committed to ensuring that we have a vibrant company, a vibrant industry, are willing to work constructively with the government to ensure that Qantas remains a vibrant, Australian owned company, employing
Australians and providing services throughout regional Australia and to the rest of the world. It is absolutely critical.

We understand that the airline industry not only in Australia but around the world is going through a tremendous shake-up. There are not many airline businesses in the world that are actually making money at the moment—very few in fact; you could count on one hand the number of airline companies in the world that are actually making money at the moment—so in this respect Qantas and Virgin are with the pack, not outside it.

But the people of Australia understand this. If this bill goes through the House with the government support then there will be one consequence and it will be on the heads of those opposite. There will be jobs lost. There will be jobs sent overseas. It will be inevitable that Qantas in two, three or four years time will be a company which is either owned directly or indirectly by a government of another country or the sovereign wealth fund of another country, and that will be a complete shame. We on this side of the House do not believe you can save jobs by sending them offshore. This legislation should be rejected.

Mr TEHAN (Wannon) (10:29): What a load of gobbledegook we heard from the member for Throsby! First of all he is saying that the government is doing nothing yet here we are this morning putting legislation through the House to assist and help Qantas. He says we are doing nothing but here we are, trying to get rid of the insidious carbon tax—which would help Qantas’s bottom line by $100 million—yet the member opposite is saying that we are sitting on our hands doing nothing. The problem in this debate and the problem at the moment is not the government; it is the opposition and its friends the Greens, who are trying to stop us at every turn from doing what is right for this nation. This bill before us today, the Qantas Sale Amendment Bill 2014, is the right thing for our nation.

Getting rid of the Qantas Sale Act is in the national interest. Qantas thinks it is a good idea, Virgin thinks it is a good idea and the government thinks it is a good idea. The only people who do not are those opposite, and it is about time that they changed their minds. It is about time that they understood that we now live in a global world and that means that our economy has to be open to capital, it means that our economy must be open to competition and it means that every decision the government takes to do with an industry has to have an eye to what is occurring in the rest of the world. The Abbott government understands that, and that is why it is clearly and methodically, with time, considering its options, issue by issue, and coming up with the right decisions for our nation.

It is very interesting to see that those opposite, while trying to stop us at every turn, are not being supported by people outside of this House who used to be on their side. We had an example yesterday in an extremely well-written opinion piece. David Epstein, a former adviser to the Prime Minister and someone with knowledge of Qantas, wrote a telling article saying that those opposite should get out of the way and support the government on this. Not only did he say that; he also said that it is time that the Labor Party modernised its thinking and realised that it is operating in the 21st century. I would say to those opposite: take the time to read that article, because it was a well-written piece and you could then come on board and help and support the government to undertake the important reforms that this nation needs to ensure that it grows its economy and grows our workforce in the next five to 20 years.
The Abbott government is going to be a reformist government. What we need to see, as we saw through the 1980s and the early 1990s, is bipartisan support. It was very indicative yesterday to see that there have been moments when the Labor Party have thought about it. We found out that the former minister for transport did have drafted legislation which would get rid of the Qantas Sale Act. He actually had it in his drawer. What I would like to know is: if you could have the legislation drafted, if you can get it into your drawer, why can't you then say, 'Okay, yes, we will support it in the parliament'? Let us be clear about this: Qantas wants us to undertake this course of action, Virgin wants us to undertake this course of action and the rest of the aviation sector wants us to undertake this course of action. So why couldn't the former minister for transport, who now sits on the other side—a little bit wounded from the process that occurred in the battle for the ALP leadership after the election, but he is still there—just bring out that legislation that he had drafted and say, 'Yes, actually we support this because we were thinking of doing the same thing'? That would be a principled position if they took that. I am sure that we on this side would be willing enough to admit that they were taking a principled position. But instead they are playing cheap, populist politics. Sadly, my view is that it is going to lead to a long term in opposition if they continue down this path, because the Australian people understand what is in the long-term national interest.

It was interesting to see, earlier on in this debate, that the Leader of the Opposition said we should look to other G20 countries to define what Australia should do. It is an interesting point, because if we look we can see that, since 1987, Japan, Canada, Britain, Italy, France, Germany, Mexico and South Korea have divested themselves of their state-owned airlines. Of the G20 countries, only Russia, India, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Argentina and China maintain any majority holding in airlines. I note with interest that, in that article, David Epstein actually suggested that maybe the Leader of the Opposition should go over to Argentina so that he could get a bit of a lesson on what not to do, how not to run the economy and how to understand that, if you head down these populist paths that the Labor Party seem hell-bent on, you actually harm your economy.

The time has come for us to not only declare that Australia is open for business but also get government out of the way. That is what we want to do—and we want to do it in all sectors. We want to do it in the aviation sector, because we understand how important the aviation sector is to this nation. We want to ensure that the growth that has occurred in this sector continues. If you look at the recent growth, according to the World Bank, in the past four years passengers carried both domestically and internationally by carriers registered in Australia increased from 50 million to 65 million. That is impressive growth, but we have to make sure it is sustainable and that the capital is there for our aviation industry to sustain and continue this growth—and that is what this bill is all about.

I find it bemusing that the Labor Party still seems to be stuck in this mentality that the only way that we can help industry is if government directs and dictates where that industry should go and what decisions it should take. That is not what government is about. Government is about getting out of the way and letting boards and shareholders decide the course that companies and industries should take. That is what this government wants to do. That is why we want to change the Qantas Sale Act.

One of the things which struck me when I looked at this issue in January and wrote an opinion piece saying that the Qantas Sale Act should go was that, when the Qantas Sale Act
was put in place, a fifth of the 50 sections had to be given exemptions from the Corporations Act. That shows that, when you have a modern aviation sector, there is something wrong with that act. It is acting as a regulatory straitjacket upon the company. That is why we need to make the changes to the Qantas Sale Act that we are proposing.

We on this side want to see the flying kangaroo fly. We want to see aviation jobs flourish. We want to make sure that Qantas continues to be a profitable airline. We as a government understand that Qantas is mature enough to stand on its own two feet. It does not need government shackling it in the pretence of trying to help it—because that actually has the opposite effect. The more the government has shackled and regulated Qantas, the worse the result has been.

I must commend all on our side—and, in particular, the Prime Minister—for the stance that has been taken by them. It would have been very easy for us to do what the opposition has done and just take the populist approach. But then we would have had more companies lining up for government assistance—and, when the budget is where it is, we cannot afford that. The mess that we have been left to clean up is of such a high level that we cannot afford to be doing that. We need to let the private sector grow the economy so that we can start paying down the debt, fixing the budget and ensuring that we have an economy which is sustainable into the future. We do not want to be like Argentina.

As David Epstein pointed out, maybe the Leader of the Opposition needs to have a look at what government trying to get involved with industry and trying to dictate what industry should do leads to. It does not lead to the creation of jobs. It does not lead to the creation of sustainable industries. It does not lead to industries growing so that they can employ people so that those people can ensure that their families have a sustainable living. That is what we want to do—and we are acting. We are not a do-nothing government. We are far from that; we are the opposite to that. We are acting.

We have two key pieces of legislation before this House which will significantly help Qantas and those workers that Qantas employ. The first is this bill before us today on the Qantas Sale Act. The second is the bill which is in the Senate to repeal the carbon tax. It is time that the Labor Party and the Greens woke up to themselves. Their unholy alliance is not doing the right thing by this nation. But this government, the Abbott government, is determined to do the right thing, and that is why we have this bill here before the House.

(Time expired)

Mr BOWEN (McMahon) (10:44): It is a good thing that the government has agreed, after some trepidation this morning, to have this debate now because this is an important debate and the opposition thinks it should be had now, not in a fortnight. That is a good thing because the government has had plenty of time to work out a position on the future of one of Australia's most important companies. It is an important company because of the 30,000 people it employs. It is an important company because of its role in tourism and promoting Australia. It is an important company in terms of its role in productivity and moving people around this country.

Of course, in December we saw the status of investment in our national carrier downgraded by Standard & Poor's to junk status. That is a significant event. Since then, we have seen thought bubbles, speculation, backgrounding and leaking from the government about how this would be dealt with. We were told by the Treasurer a couple of weeks ago that there were
four criteria for government intervention to assist Qantas, and they have been ticked one by one.

There was a very clear press conference from the Treasurer making clear to Qantas, and everybody else as well, his position as the Treasurer of the nation. So Qantas, believing that to be the case but knowing there were still tough decisions to be made, then embarked on the difficult restructuring process, which they have announced, and the loss of 5,000 jobs. The only problem is that the Treasurer either changed his position or had it changed for him. We do not know exactly what changed the Treasurer's mind—perhaps one day we will—but we know it changed. Therefore, I am fearful that Qantas may need to go even further than they have already announced.

We are now told that the only issue facing Qantas is access to capital and that that can be fixed in one fell swoop by the wholesale removal of part 3 of the Qantas Sale Act. So we have this legislation brought into the House today. I fear that we have more policy on the run. I read from the explanatory memorandum:

A detail-stage regulation impact statement has not been completed. An exception has been granted by the Prime Minister.

So we have a major piece of legislation before the House and no detail-stage regulation impact statement despite this government's rhetoric about being calm and methodical—we just heard it again from the member for Wannon. We have had months of speculation about what could be done. We have been told that we have had detailed due diligence about a debt guarantee. We have the Treasurer using changed language: it has gone from a debt guarantee to unsecured loans. There are all sorts of vagaries about what has gone on in the government's consideration, and this is the result.

This is a very significant change of position from the government. We have just had the member for Wannon lecturing the House on the need for a free-market approach, but that is not the approach the government told us they would be taking just a few months ago. On 5 December the Deputy Prime Minister said:

If the Labor Party is interested in looking at changes to the Qantas Sale Act well then they should talk to us—

and then we might be able to come to some kind of arrangement. But he said it is 'not even a subject that can be talked about'. It could not even be discussed, he said, 'because it would simply be a waste of time and political energy when it is obvious that I think the majority of the Australian people, and certainly the majority of the people elected to the parliament at the present time, especially in the Senate, do not favour that course of action'. So the parliament is meant to take in good faith the government's actions when the Deputy Prime Minister of Australia told the parliament and the people just a few months ago that this would be a complete waste of time, and we are meant to not be cynical.

Then, of course, we have the position of the Treasurer, who was at the dispatch box two days ago beating his chest in the typical huffing and puffing fashion that he excels in. He lectured the Labor Party about our position and pointed out some things Labor ministers said in 1992 when his position in 2009 was very clearly against amendments to the Qantas Sale Act that would not even have got rid of all the restrictions. This is the error that the member for Wannon just repeated in the House by alleging erroneously and—dare I say it—mischievously that the previous government had a secret plan to abolish the foreign
ownership restrictions for Qantas. It was not secret and it was not to abolish them. It was public and it was to relax them. Removing the restrictions of 25 per cent and 35 per cent of ownership in Qantas was in the aviation white paper. The Labor government thought that that was an idea worth pursuing, and it lasted a day before the then shadow Treasurer shot it down and said, 'No way; the Liberal Party won't go along with any change to foreign ownership rules for Qantas.' He told us that Qantas had important social obligations. Not only would the then opposition Liberal Party not go along with getting rid of the 51-49 rule, but they would not even countenance getting rid of the 25 and 35 per cent rules. And, again, we are meant to not be cynical.

We are now told by the government that foreign investment is so important and that access to capital is so important. There is one person in this House who has knocked a foreign investment application in the last 12 months, and it is not me; it is not member for Lilley; it is the member for North Sydney, the Treasurer. He had an investor in an Australian company, GrainCorp, ready to go and ready to invest in agribusiness—a business which has so much growth potential in Australia—and he said no because he was bullied by the National Party. He is the only one who has rejected foreign investment in Australia in recent times. So he is not in a position to lecture us about the importance of foreign investment.

If removing the Qantas Sale Act is the panacea, the thing that is so necessary for the future of Qantas, then the government has some explaining to do—not just about this change of position but about what comes next. Unlike ADM and GrainCorp, there is no investor in the wings that we are aware of. There is nobody saying, 'If these foreign investment restrictions were lifted, we would invest in Qantas immediately.' There is nobody saying: 'We'll be the white knight. We'll come in, invest in Qantas and save the jobs.' Such an investor just does not exist. The government is yet to explain how, even if one did, and the Qantas Sale Act amendments passed this House and the other place today, that would be the immediate assistance to Qantas which Qantas have said they need.

If there were a change in the ownership of Qantas, Qantas would be broken up. The government themselves accept that that would be the inevitable consequence of the passage of this bill. The government are not seeking to amend the Air Navigation Act in a way that would stop the breakup of Qantas. I would argue that the inevitable result of the passage of this act and an increase in foreign investment in Qantas over and above 49 per cent would be the breaking up of Qantas into separate companies—domestic, international, Jetstar and frequent flyer. That is the only foreseeable result. That would be a major change which would not only need Foreign Investment Review Board approval, which is a long process, but also require new licences to be issued, a change to Qantas which would take years to implement. It would not be implemented immediately.

There is another important point. Honourable members have pointed out, correctly, that the conditions in the Qantas Sale Act accompanied the privatisation of Qantas in 1992. Honourable members opposite have correctly pointed out that this was an initiative of the Keating government. It is one that we recognise, acknowledge and are proud of. But there was a covenant with the Australian people. There was an agreement with the Australian people about the conditions of the Qantas Sale Act—that we would remove this significant government asset into private hands with restrictions placed on it. It is, of course, the role of a parliament to amend, and what one government makes another government can unmake. That
is true. But this should not be done lightly when there has been a covenant entered into with the Australian people about an important asset like Qantas, which was in government ownership for so long, and which both sides of parliament agreed should be removed from government ownership.

We have made clear our threshold issues. We have made clear our views about what can and cannot be dealt with in this process. Now that the legislation is before the House, we can engage further in that conversation. We have made clear—just as when we proposed, in government, removing the 25 per cent and 35 per cent thresholds—that we are open to that conversation and we are prepared to be constructive in opposition, unlike the then shadow Treasurer, now Treasurer. He was not constructive in 2009. He did not say, 'Let's look at this.' He did not say, 'Qantas is being starved of capital so let's all work together as a parliament.' No, he waited 24 hours before shooting the idea down, meaning it would never pass the parliament and could not be progressed through the parliament. We are not taking that approach. Now that the legislation is before the House we will take a more constructive approach.

It is also important that this parliament, both this House and the other place, work very carefully and, dare I say it, methodically through the issues. I welcome the fact that the other place has decided to engage in a Senate inquiry which will report quite quickly—by the end of this month, as I understand it. That is an appropriate thing for the Senate to do. We will engage very constructively in this process because this issue should not be about political point scoring. It should not be about what the Deputy Prime Minister told us in December would be a complete 'waste of time and political energy'. It should be about working together to get a good future for Qantas.

We are up for that. We are prepared to do that. We acknowledge that we have a Prime Minister who is determined to play politics on this and so many other issues. Of course, in this House, politics will be played. But there is an overriding national responsibility on this House to work these issues through and to have a constructive engagement on them. The future of Qantas is far too important to Australia for us not to—not only for the 30,000 Australians who work for Qantas but for the millions of Australians who value Qantas's contribution to our economy. As far as we are concerned, in this House, we will do what it takes, as the government should do, to ensure that that contribution continues for many years to come.

Mr BALDWIN (Paterson—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Industry) (10:57): I rise to speak on the Qantas Sale Amendment Bill 2014 and this very important issue facing our nation. Whilst this may be referred to as the repealing of the Qantas act, it is actually a bill designed to save jobs in Australia. I am very concerned that the Labor opposition make much song and dance about saving Australian jobs but want to keep shackles on a company that restrict it from growing jobs. Obviously, because they have never been in business, they do not understand the requirements for capital and investment. I have seen no greater proof of their inability to understand business and balancing books than the position they left us in after six years on the Treasury benches. We have a Leader of the Opposition who is more about headlines than heavy lifting, who is not prepared to look at doing what is necessary to keep those jobs in Australia. This is evident in the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition on 3 March at a press conference:
Under Tony Abbott, Qantas will be Australian no more. Under Tony Abbott we will see thousands of jobs go overseas; cabin crew, flight attendants, maintenance workers, the majority of the board of director positions, the head office, even the chairman.

That is false.

To be able to operate in Australia and have the benefits of being an Australian based airline, there are requirements under the Air Navigation Act, which apply to Virgin and to Qantas's subsidiary Jetstar, and those requirements are that: it must be substantially owned and effectively controlled by Australian nationals; at least two-thirds of the board members must be Australian citizens; the chair of the board must be an Australian citizen; the head office must be in Australia; and the airline's operational base must be in Australia. These are critical facts. And those are facts, not just rhetoric.

The argument is being skewed by the opposition in certain directions, based on misleading. I will go to a statement from 3 March by the former transport minister Anthony Albanese, who is now the opposition's spokesperson on transport and who, one would have thought, would have had a solid and detailed understanding of the aviation industry. He said in a 7.30 interview:

There's a reason why around the world national governments have carriers that they support, either directly through government ownership—

and here is the point—

and eight out of 10 are majority government-owned of the world's top 10 airlines …

Much has been made during election campaigns about the importance of the ABC's fact checker and how correct it is. So I would like to quote the response from the ABC fact checker, which says:

The verdict: None of the top 10 rankings of airlines based on passenger traffic, capacity, financial results, fleet size, employee numbers and customer feedback consistently include a majority of government-owned airlines. Mr Albanese is wrong.

That is the ABC:

Mr Albanese is wrong.

If I think back to 95 years ago—of course, I was not born then but I have read the history from 95 years ago—I wonder: what would Fysh and McGinness, the founders of Qantas, be thinking today? These were the two people who started with enterprise and ambition, and built Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Services. Times have changed. In fact, in 1992, when the Labor government privatised Qantas, it set up restrictions which were valid at the time. A decade on, it was the then Labor transport spokesman, Martin Ferguson, who said, in 2002:

Labor is on the record as having an open mind on the relaxing of the 49% foreign ownership cap on Qantas as we recognise that without significant capital investment the airline is putting at risk its future international and domestic competitiveness.

Now, here we are, 12 years on from that point, and it is time again to have another major rethink.

I have some history with the airline industry. My very good friend Gerry McGowan asked me, when I lost my seat in parliament in 1998, to come on board and help with the establishment of Impulse Airlines. I know how tough it is to attract capital into an airline. I
know how difficult it is to grow market share—been there, done that, bought the T-shirt. Impulse Airlines, for those who have forgotten, is now Jetstar. So I saw the growth of that airline from the very beginning, and the market conditions today are vastly different. If you think about what is required to create jobs in Australia, you need only look at Virgin. It came into the marketplace at the same time as Impulse and has grown to be an airline that employs nearly 10,000 people, most based in Australia. It has created lots of jobs, lots of economic benefit, and, most importantly, choice for consumers.

What we do not need to do, as a government, or, indeed, as legislators looking to act in the national interest—and I love it when the Leader of the Opposition keeps talking about the national interest—is to put barriers in place or maintain barriers which stop jobs being created and grown. The national interest is to get the government out of the way and let enterprise create the opportunity for sustainable jobs.

You see, some of the people on the other side have never moved on from their union movement days where it was: 'Protect the union movement always, and sacrifice everyone else on the way through. As long as I am okay, burn anyone else.' We saw that with Craig Thomson and the HSU. He was taking care of himself—regularly, by the sound of it! So it was: 'Take care of myself; burn the rest.' What we are seeing now is headlines, not heavy lifting. We are not seeing any engagement with or any listening to Qantas on what it requires to achieve growth, and opportunity and sustainability as to jobs.

I was just having a look, and over the last five years Qantas share prices have plummeted—by 80 per cent in five years. Yet they have had enormous market share. They have had issues that they have had to deal with. They have had increased competition. That competition is not going to go away. In fact, that competition is going to increase and increase and increase. I congratulate Virgin for the actions that they have taken to grow consumer choice in the marketplace. I think it is healthy. The consumer benefits and the market benefits when you have people competing head-to-head for that market share.

The airlines are bound by the same restrictions under the Air Navigation Act. It applies to Jetstar, to Virgin and to Qantas, so there is a level playing field there. But you should not have Qantas's hands tied behind its back so it cannot compete. Otherwise, it is a race to the bottom. By the words, the rhetoric and the actions of members opposite, they would rather keep the shackles on Qantas, bring it to its knees, and see the airline destroyed and, more than likely, ultimately go belly up, rather than embrace change.

Yet this is the Labor Party that, in 1992, embraced change by privatising Qantas. This is the Labor Party whose opposition spokesperson on transport, Martin Ferguson, in 2002 was prepared to embrace change. He could see that if he did not take the shackles off it was going to cost jobs. A lot of things get said about Martin Ferguson, but I have never seen a person more dedicated to maintaining job opportunities in Australia than Martin Ferguson. That is why he was so well respected on our side of the parliament, because it was about jobs.

What we see now from a Labor opposition is headlines, not heavy lifting. We see that they are prepared to burn fellow Australians without delivering any result. I say to those opposite: if you truly understood the issue and you wanted to keep those jobs—Alan Joyce has already announced that 5,000 jobs will go, to try and get his books back into line—you should be doing everything you can to create greater competition, to give them the opportunity to compete on an equal footing, rather than keep the shackles on them.
I have gone through the Qantas Sale Act. In fact, over a decade ago I was on the record and at various meetings talking about the need to abolish the Qantas Sale Act. There is no reason that we do not allow foreign investment into this airline. In fact, in my discussions with the former CEO, Geoff Dixon, years ago, and the new CEO, Alan Joyce, they talked about the ability to attract foreign investment and the greater linkages and cooperation they will have through codesharing to provide more benefits to the consumer. It is, after all, all about consumer choice.

I am not going to labour the point on this debate other than to requote some of the statistics that our Treasurer put out yesterday. In 2003, Qantas's domestic market share was 74 per cent. Five years on, it had dropped to 51 per cent, and today, another five years on, it is 44 per cent. So they have gone from 74 per cent to 44 per cent in just over a decade. At an international level, their market share in 2003 was 33 per cent; in 2008 it was 26 per cent; and today it is 17 per cent. They have been continually losing market share.

It is true that allowing foreign investment does not immediately lift your market share, but it allows cash and capital to come into the business so that new fleets can be organised through cash injections and through increasing your capital holding, without burdening through debt arrangements. That is what the consumers want. Consumers want fresh aircraft, modern aircraft and modern services. What we need to do for a variety of reasons is take the monkey off the back of this business.

When I hear the Leader of the Opposition and all of the other speakers who are yet to speak on the need to sustain those jobs in Australia, I will remind them of the carbon tax that Qantas paid, a $106 million carbon tax; Virgin's carbon tax; and Rex's carbon tax. All of these are taxes on jobs and opportunity, and destroy and undermine an industry. I note that the Leader of the Opposition has come in, and I put to him the question: are you prepared to do the heavy lifting, or are you just after another headline?

Mr Shorten: Mr Deputy Speaker, on a point of order: if the member is asking a question, I am happy to answer it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Mitchell): Are you asking him a question?

Mr BALDWIN: Yes. Are you prepared to do the heavy lifting?

Mr Shorten: I am prepared to do the heavy lifting you won't do.

Mr BALDWIN: No, you are not prepared to do the heavy lifting; you are all about a headline. If you are prepared to do the heavy lifting, you will actually vote to support getting rid of the carbon tax. If you were prepared to do the heavy lifting, you would vote in support to get rid of this. No, you are a rank opportunist, Leader of the Opposition.

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (11:10): The opposition do not support the exporting of thousands of Australian jobs—never have, never will. Labor members of parliament were elected to this parliament to stand up for Australian jobs, not to stamp their passports and wave them overseas. This debate about the Qantas Sale Act has been a most dishonest, rankly opportunist debate by the government. They have no ideas about the future of Australian aviation. They have no ideas about Australian jobs. They have no view about the future of this great country. They would use words dripping from their mouths: they 'support freedom for Qantas'. It is the freedom for Qantas to transfer jobs overseas. It is the freedom for Qantas to offshore its maintenance work overseas. No wonder
the member for Paterson scurries away from the table; he doesn't like the sound of truth! It is freedom for foreign governments to buy our airline.

Mr Baldwin: Mr Deputy Speaker, on a point of order: the Leader of the Opposition has just misled the House. I am not scurrying away anywhere; I am just moving away from the table.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Mitchell): There is no point of order.

Mr SHORTEN: Another valuable contribution from the member for Paterson! When they talk about freedom in this House, it is not freedom for thousands of people to work at Qantas; it is the freedom of the unemployment queue, which is the only freedom that these people opposite have been inflicting on Australian jobs. It is a dishonest debate by the government to say that this is freedom for Qantas. It is the freedom for foreign governments to buy Australia's national carrier.

We hear this nonsense about a level playing field. What a load of rubbish. A level playing field for Qantas? It is a level playing field for Australia's national carrier to be purchased by either the government in China or governments in the Middle East. There is no level playing field in global aviation. And, if the members opposite knew anything about aviation in the world, they would understand that eight of the top 10 airlines in the world have foreign government shares in their businesses. The only plan that those opposite have for aviation is to sell it overseas, to get rid of the jobs and to shrug their shoulders and say: 'Running a government's too hard. Standing up for Australian governments is too hard.'

This has been a very poorly conceived debate by those in government. It is a poorly conceived debate because it fails the test of standing up for Australian jobs. It is a poorly conceived debate because the government's process to arrive at this rushed piece of legislation has been nothing short of shambolic and chaotic. Furthermore, it is a poorly conceived debate because the solution they are offering of changing the Qantas Sale Act is in fact no answer at all to the challenges that Qantas face in the next two years.

When I say it is a poorly conceived debate about jobs, my explanation is this. There are thousands of jobs at Qantas which, if the business is sold offshore, will be done offshore. Unlike those opposite, who did nothing when Ansett collapsed, I was there and I saw what happened. I can assure you that the idea that you break up a company into an international and a domestic arm will lead to a net reduction in jobs. We have got that sort of 'wombolic' Deputy Prime Minister stuttering around on the doors saying: 'There'll be no reduction. There'll be no reduction in terms of jobs in Australia.' What planet does that chap live on? It is not planet Earth and it is not the real world, where people are going to lose their jobs.

We see them talk about jobs and say: 'We need to set the place free. We need to set Qantas free.' Everyone knows, any observer of aviation knows, what will happen once you split Qantas into an international arm and a domestic arm. These very clever, card sharp personalities opposite say: 'Well, we'll just let foreign governments buy the domestic business because that's where the money is. And, of course, why wouldn't you let income be transferred overseas? Why didn't we think of that?' But then what they say is: 'The international arm? Oh, that will still be Australian.' Everyone knows except those opposite. I suspect they know but do not have the moral courage to say what they know. They know that if the international arm is on its own without the domestic arm it will struggle. We will be
back here debating the demise of the international arm of Qantas if we let these circus acrobats opposite with their backflips and changes and churns on aviation policy have their way.

When we look at jobs, they have never fought for an Aussie job ever since they got into government. People in my electorate, airplane people, people who work at the airport, people who work at Qantas, good people, taxpayers, people who pay the school fees for their kids, people who have worked hard as professionals their whole lives cannot believe the betrayal of those people opposite. They say they just do not get it. But I say to these Qantas staff, of course, why would they get it? I said because they had no fight on Holden, they had no fight on Toyota and they have had no fight for the car components industry. We have not seen them near Alcoa and Point Henry. We have not seen them at Yennora rolling mill. We have not seen them that at Gove, with Rio Tinto and the decimation of that community. We did not see them contact anyone who worked at Forge. These people opposite are the cheese-eating, surrender monkeys of Australian jobs, to borrow from an American politician. Their only manufacturing policy is to buy a white flag made in another country and run it up the mast. Now they are committing acts of vandalism on Qantas.

They are not fit to be the government when you look at what they have done. But have a look at the process they have gone through. We have had smoke signals. Not smokin' Joe Hockey; we've had smoke signal Joe Hockey and the smoke signals contradict each other. Last November, last December, we got the Hockey waltz—maybe we will, like the old square dance where we put our foot in the middle and maybe we take the foot out. We may give them a debt guarantee; we may not—poor old Treasurer Hockey, rolled by his Prime Minister. You can just see Joe Hockey as a sort of latter-day B-grade Shakespearean character, 'Will I guarantee or won't I guarantee, what should I do?' In fact, what they have done is lead Qantas up the garden path, lead the Qantas workforce up the garden path. They had lead Australia up the garden path for three months. Now what they do is they say: 'Oh no, we won't do anything. We'll just invent this spurious nonsense that somehow shipping jobs overseas is going to save jobs in Australia.' If we want to talk about mixed signals, at least Joe Hockey was just confused. Then of course you have got the chief womble of the National Party, Warren Truss, and what he said—

  Government members interjecting—

  **Mr SHORTEN:** Wombles are nice.

  **Mr Keenan interjecting—**

  **The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Point of order. There is no point of order, the Leader of the Opposition will continue.

  **Mr SHORTEN:** I withdraw that. Thanks, Michael, good point. What I was trying to say and what I should have said, with no disrespect intended to Warren Truss or wombles, is that he said that it would not lead to a reduction in jobs. The truth of this matter is it will. They know it; we know it. The good news is Australians have worked it out. The Prime Minister told us—he expressed his usual crocodile tears of regret. The Prime Minister said, 'I regret that jobs have gone.' Really? If you really regret it, what are you going to do about it? Absolutely nothing, the big zero, the big nothing.
But let us have a look at the process that they have gone through. We have had the mixed signals. We have had the dithering of the National Party where in 2009 Warren Truss, says, 'We wouldn't want to have majority ownership.' Then of course, they do their backflip when they get into power. It is one thing before they get elected and another altogether different beast when they get into government. Then you have had the coercion squad from the coalition come out on Monday night after Qantas said that carbon was not a major issue. It defies belief that somehow Qantas's junior employee just said something.

What people really believe, and take note of it members of the government, is that Qantas dared to step off the script of this bullying government and they said carbon was not the major issue. Then of course they put the pressure back on. I am sure there was no pressure! If you believe that, there is a big bridge at the mouth of the Yarra that I would like to sell you. Even a crocodile would not swallow some of the stuff we heard yesterday in question time about lack of pressure on Qantas to backflip and change. Now they have got Qantas to say they do not want a debt guarantee. These people are engaged in more pressure than I think we have seen in a long time from either side of politics when they form a government. Of course, not only has the process been absolutely appalling, not only is there no test of what is good for Australian jobs from that mob opposite; but then they come up with the Qantas Sale Act. Ladies and gentlemen, people listening to this debate not here in the parliament, the coalition's basic case is 'Let's sell the business overseas—

Mr Nikolic interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Mitchell): The member for Bass will be silent.

Mr SHORTEN: Let us have a look at how this brain snap will work that the government has come up with. First of all, the new business will need an air-operating certificate. How long will that take? It will take about a year. The two businesses, the new international and new domestic businesses, will need to divide up. They will need to work out who owns what planes—not an impossible question to work out but not without a lot of legal and contractual work. They will need to work out how they demerge the two businesses. Whilst I acknowledge that some of the cost centres in Qantas could be clearly demarcated to go international business and some of the cost centres can be clearly demarcated to go into the domestic business, I believe that upwards of 80 per cent of the cost structure of Qantas is shared. What Qantas does not understand is how on earth is the government, simply through a legislative instrument, going to deal with the business case of demerging the two airlines? Qantas does not have two years of the government's time to try to work out its future. It does not have hundreds of millions of dollars to implement the latest brain fade from the Abbott government, as it cannot fight for Australian jobs.

Then you have got to look at the buyers. Who is actually going to buy this airline? The cashed-up buyers in global aviation are China South—

Mr Nikolic: What about to get out and look at—

Mr SHORTEN: Why do you not listen, Member, and you might learn something—China Southern Airlines and China Eastern Airlines. I am going through details that member did not hear in his party room because I know his ministers have not even thought about this stuff. You have China Southern or China Eastern, or you have Qatar or one of the Middle Eastern
airways. We have seen how strong and courageous this government is when you get a foreign buyer!

If they can't trust Uncle Sam to buy GrainCorp, what are they going to do with the Chinese government buying Qantas? I know that they will lead us up the garden path for two years. More jobs will go and there will be more brand damage to Qantas. I know secretly, in the light of the practical difficulties of this demerger, those people want us to vote against the Qantas Sale Act because they know they have no plan. They know that this is in the too-hard basket. They know that the aviation carrier of Australia is too difficult. What a cynical bunch they are opposite. What a bunch of cynics because they know—they have actually said it. Indeed, the Deputy Prime Minister—in fact, I do regret my earlier remarks, because he is right on this one—said it's not going to pass.

Mr Albanese: 'A waste of energy.'

Mr SHORTEN: He called it 'a waste of energy', as the member Grayndler reminds me. It is 'a waste of energy'. How on earth are we doing this issue? They know that it is going to take Qantas two years, if the sale act got through, to be able to get foreign capital. They know. These people are the great chokers of foreign investment. They will choke in fear. If they couldn't do GrainCorp, they are not going to do 'GrainCorp on steroids', Qantas. We know it and you know it. We know that the Nats will panic, we know Palmer will panic the Nats, we know the Nats will panic Tony and we know that Tony will roll Joe—in fact, we do know that Tony can roll Joe, because we have seen it this week. We know that nothing will happen. What a magnificent waste of time this government is. What a terrible waste of time you people are. You are going to kill Australian jobs. You don't know the people who work in heavy maintenance. We know them. I know what happens when you offshore those jobs—they never come back. I know the families of Ansett, the pilots who had to move their families elsewhere in the world.

You talk a lot about loving this country. You are very quick to talk about patriotism, but when it comes to a tough issue, a subtle issue, an issue which involves steering through and which does not involve you standing in a parade and taking a salute—and that is important—but when it comes to the tough issues of jobs, you go missing. Not only do they have no case on jobs and they have never tried to defend it on jobs, not only do we all know this process has been an ugly messy process of which the government can take no pride, not only do we know that the Qantas Sale Act is a mirage because of the time it will take—Qantas has looked at the sale act—

Mr Nikolic interjecting—

Mr SHORTEN: Listen, why don't you listen and learn something other than the coercion you are getting? What they know is they looked at this option—

Mr Nikolic interjecting—

Mr SHORTEN: Please, members of parliament, this is a very important point: Qantas looked at the demerger option and they decided that was not the option which they wanted to go with nor could go with in the time they needed to make the changes. But, of course, just because the Liberal Party say they know business gives them the arrogance to pretend they know more about breaking up a company and selling it. We would not be so arrogant. The
other thing that concerns me about this, which we have heard nothing about from the patriots opposite, is that I remember that Qantas was the only civilian airline who would fly in to Somalia. I know that when it came to Bali and when it came to Beirut, Qantas is the organisation who helps in our times of national emergency.

Mr Nikolic interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Mitchell): The member for Bass will be silent! End of story!

Mr SHORTEN: The Defence Act section 67 makes it terribly clear—that because Qantas is our national carrier, the government of Australia can stand up for our national interest. This is not good enough and we will not stand by and see you trash an Australian icon—not on our watch.

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Education) (11:25): I am pleased to speak briefly on this Qantas Sale Amendment Bill 2014, which before the House. I am delighted that the Labor Party facilitated this debate by moving a suspension of standing orders to bring it on. The government was very pleased to support it. It was an unusual move, that is certain, but it does mean that the government can pass this bill today. The pressure will then be on the opposition to determine their position in the Senate—and the rest of the Senate, of course, the Greens and the crossbenchers. The pressure will be on Labor to decide whether they want to put Qantas on the same playing field as Virgin or whether they want to continue to allow Virgin to have an advantage over Qantas. I hope that they will come to a sensible position and I intend to give them the opportunity to consider that over the next week's break from the parliament.

I have listened to the Leader of the Opposition's speech, which was obviously designed to hang on to his leadership—it was directed to the people behind him rather than to the people outside this building. As I have said many times, Labor should stop standing up for the unions and start standing up for the workers. Start standing up for the workers. Unfortunately, while Labor allows itself to be shackled to the union movement, it is a very heavy anvil that they are dragging around. It means that they are making all their decisions based on the factionalism of the Labor Party, what the unions tells them—in this case, Tony Sheldon and the Qantas unions. Unfortunately, it is very bad for the workers but is actually particularly bad for the Labor Party. It is bad for the Labor Party to allow itself to simply be the union party. It is bad for the Leader of the Opposition to allow himself to be a wholly-owned subsidiary of the union movement.

I know that Mr Albanese, the member for Grayndler, achieved over 18,000 votes from the Labor members and the caucus. The Leader of the Opposition, the member for Maribyrnong, achieved over 12,000 votes. That was 18,000 to 12,000. Somehow the member for Grayndler was defeated. He was the people's choice.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Leader of the House will resume his seat. The Manager of Opposition Business.

Mr Burke: Mr Deputy Speaker, my point of order is on the standing orders requiring people to be relevant to the debate. It has become clear that the government is not willing to defend its position. I would not be surprised if they even try to shut down this debate, because
they are not willing to defend their position. They are embarrassed about the position they have taken. He should be brought back to the bill.

Mr PYNE: I am explaining it. Do I have the call?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: You have it. The Leader of the House.

Mr PYNE: I know I did not have the call because the microphones were not on. Perhaps the Manager of Opposition Business might pick up on that—when the microphones are on you have got the call—rather than taking those ludicrous points of order, as he did yesterday against Madam Speaker.

The point is I am explaining why the Leader of the Opposition has adopted this ludicrous position on the Qantas Sale Act. He has adopted it because he is the factions' choice and not the people's choice. That is why he has adopted it and that is why it is relevant to the debate. He got 12,200 votes; the member for Grayndler got 18,200 votes.

An opposition member interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I will ask the Leader of the House to resume on the bill, please.

Mr PYNE: The member for Port Adelaide knows it. That is why he is leaving in embarrassment, because he was the member for Grayndler's campaign manager.

With those few words, I move:

That the question be now put.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Broadbent): The question is that the question be now put.

The House divided. [11:33]

(The Deputy Speaker—Mr Broadbent)

AYES

Abbott, AJ
Andrews, KJ
Billson, BF
Briggs, JE
Brough, MT
Chester, D
Ciobo, SM
Coleman, DB
Dutton, PC
Fletcher, PW
Gambharo, T
Goodenough, IR
Hartseyker, L
Hendy, PW
Hogan, KJ
Hunt, GA
Irons, SJ
Jones, ET

Alexander, JG
Baldwin, RC
Bishop, JI
Broad, AJ
Buchholz, S (teller)
Christensen, GR
Cobb, JK
Coulton, M (teller)
Entsch, WG
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Griggs, NL
Hawke, AG
Hockey, JB
Howarth, LR
Hutchinson, ER
Jensen, DG
Joyce, BT

CHAMBER
AYES

Keenan, M
Laming, A
Ley, SP
Marino, NB
Matheson, RG
McNamara, KJ
Nikolic, AA
Pasin, A
Porter, CC
Pyne, CM
Robb, AJ
Roy, WB
Scott, BC
Simpkins, LXL
Southcott, AJ
Sudmalis, AE
Taylor, AJ
Truss, WE
Van Manen, AJ
Vasta, RX
Wicks, LE
Wilson, RJ
Wyatt, KG

NOES

Albanese, AN
Bowen, CE
Burke, AE
Butler, MC
Byrne, AM
Champion, ND
Clare, JD
Collins, JM
Danby, M
Elliot, MJ
Feeney, D
Fitzgibbon, JA
Gray, G
Hall, JG (teller)
Husic, EN
Macklin, JL
McGowan, C
Neumann, SK
O'Neil, CE
Perrett, GD
Ripoll, BF
Rowland, MA
Shorten, WR
Thistlethwaite, MJ
Vannvakinou, M
Wilkie, AD

Kelly, C
Laundy, C
Macfarlane, IE
Markus, LE
McCormack, MF
Morrison, SJ
O'Dowd, KD
Pitt, KJ
Prentice, J
Randall, DJ
Robert, SR
Raddock, PM
Scott, FM
Smith, ADH
Stone, SN
Sukkar, MS
Tehan, DT
Turnbull, MB
Varvaris, N
Whiteley, BD
Williams, MP
Wood, JP

Bird, SL
Brodtmann, G
Burke, AS
Butler, TM
Chalmers, JE
Chesters, LM
Claydon, SC
Conroy, PM
Dreyfus, MA
Ellis, KM
Ferguson, LDT
Giles, AJ
Griffin, AP
Hayes, CP
Jones, SP
MacTiernan, AJGC
Mitchell, RG
O'Connor, BPJ
Owens, J
Plibersek, TJ
Rishworth, AL
Ryan, JC (teller)
Snowdon, WE
Thomson, KJ
Watts, TG
Zappia, A
Question agreed to.

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

The House divided. [11:41]

(The Deputy Speaker—Mr Broadbent)

Ayes .................... 82
Noes ...................... 51
Majority ............... 31

AYES

Abbott, AJ
Andrews, KJ
Billson, BF
Briggs, JE
Brough, MT
Chester, D
Ciobo, SM
Coleman, DB
Dutton, PC
Fletcher, PW
Gambaro, T
Goodenough, IR
Hartsuyker, L
Hendy, PW
Hogan, KJ
Hunt, GA
Irons, SJ
Jones, ET
Keenan, M
Laming, A
Ley, SP
Marino, NB
Matheson, RG
McGowan, C
Morrison, SJ
O'Dowd, KD
Pitt, KJ
Prentice, J
Randall, DJ
Robert, SR
Ruddock, PM
Scott, FM
Smith, ADH
Stone, SN
Sukkar, MS
Tehan, DT
Turnbull, MB
Varvaris, N
Whiteley, BD
Williams, MP
Wood, JP

Alexander, JG
Baldwin, RC
Bishop, JI
Broad, AJ
Buchholz, S (teller)
Christensen, GR
Cobb, JK
Coulton, M (teller)
Entsch, WG
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Griggs, NL
Hawke, AG
Hockey, JB
Howarth, LR
Hutchinson, ER
Jensen, DG
Joyce, BT
Kelly, C
Laundy, C
Macfarlane, IE
Markus, LE
Mc Cormack, MF
McNamara, KJ
Nikolic, AA
Pasin, A
Porter, CC
Pyne, CM
Robb, AJ
Roy, WB
Scott, BC
Simpkins, LXL
Southcott, AJ
Sudmalis, AE
Taylor, AJ
Truss, WE
Van Manen, AJ
Vasta, RX
Wicks, LE
Wilson, RJ
Wyatt, KG
Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Broadbent): Is leave granted for the third reading to be moved immediately?

Leave not granted.

Consideration in Detail

Bill, by leave, taken as a whole.

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler) (11:44): If the minister could respond, the challenge if this bill is passed will be what occurs in terms of the breakup of Qantas. There is a very real distinction between the corporate structure of Qantas and the corporate structure of Virgin. Virgin's international arm is a new arm. Qantas has—

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Education) (11:45): I move:

That the question be now put.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Broadbent): The motion is that the question be put. I put the question. Those in favour? Those to the left?

An honourable member: Can you state the question?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the motion be put.

Mr Albanese: Which question?
The DEPUTY SPEAKER: That the bill be read a third time.

Mr Albanese: No. With respect, Mr Deputy Speaker, procedurally, you cannot move that something be put that hasn't even been moved.

Government members interjecting—

Mr Albanese: You are a hopeless Leader of House and you still don't know what—

A government member: You haven't got the call!

Mr Albanese: There is no motion for the third reading before the House. Leave was sought. It was not given because I thought it was appropriate to have a consideration in detail stage so the minister can respond—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question before the chair is that the bill be agreed to, and the motion is that the bill be agreed to. I put the motion.

Mr Albanese: No-one has yet moved the third reading. I was speaking in the consideration in detail stage—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Grayndler will take his seat.

Mr Pyne: Mr Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The question was put to the House: was leave granted for the third reading to be moved forthwith? Leave was not granted for it to be moved forthwith, but we are now into the third reading of the bill—or the consideration in detail, because leave was not granted for the third reading to be moved forthwith. But the question before the House is that the bill be agreed to, as you have stated. I have moved that that question be put.

Mr Burke: Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker: it is impossible for the House to deal with the question 'That the question be put' when there is no question before the House. It would be like if one of us jumped up during question time and moved that the question be put when there is no question before the House. They asked for leave to move directly to the third reading. Leave was not granted. We moved to consideration in detail. Had leave been granted, they would have moved straightaway that the bill be read a third time. That did not happen. Therefore, there is no question before the House and it is impossible to move that the question be put when there is no question before the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Broadbent): The question is that the question be now put.

The House divided. [11:52]

(The Speaker—Hon. Bronwyn Bishop)

Ayes ......................82
Noes ......................52
Majority .................30

AYES

Abbott, AJ
Andrews, KJ
Billson, BF
Briggs, JE
Broadbent, RE
Buchholz, S (teller)
Christensen, GR

Alexander, JG
Baldwin, RC
Bishop, JI
Broad, AJ
Brough, MT
Chester, D
Ciobo, SM
**AYES**

Cobb, JK  
Coulton, M (teller)  
Entsch, WG  
Frydenberg, JA  
Gillespie, DA  
Griggs, NL  
Hawke, AG  
Hockey, JB  
Howarth, LR  
Hutchinson, ER  
Jensen, DG  
Joyce, BT  
Kelly, C  
Laundy, C  
Macfarlane, IE  
Markus, LE  
McCormack, MF  
Morrison, SJ  
O'Dowd, KD  
Pitt, KJ  
Prentice, J  
Randall, DJ  
Robert, SR  
Ruddock, PM  
Scott, FM  
Smith, ADH  
Stone, SN  
Sukkar, MS  
Tehan, DT  
Turnbull, MB  
Varvaris, N  
Whiteley, BD  
Williams, MP  
Wood, JP

**NOES**

Albanese, AN  
Bowen, CE  
Burke, AE  
Butler, MC  
Byrne, AM  
Champion, ND  
Clare, JD  
Collins, JM  
Danby, M  
Elliot, MJ  
Feeney, D  
Fitzgibbon, JA  
Gray, G  
Hall, JG (teller)  
Husic, EN  
Macklin, JL  
Bird, SL  
Brodmann, G  
Burke, AS  
Butler, TM  
Chalmers, JE  
Chesters, LM  
Claydon, SC  
Conroy, PM  
Dreyfus, MA  
Ellis, KM  
Ferguson, LDT  
Giles, AJ  
Griffin, AP  
Hayes, CP  
Jones, SP  
MacTiernan, AJGC
Question agreed to.

The SPEAKER (12:00): The question now is that the bill be agreed to.

The House divided. [12:01]

(The Speaker—Hon. Bronwyn Bishop)

Ayes .....................83
Noes .....................51
Majority..................32

AYES

Abbott, AJ
Andrews, KJ
Billson, BF
Briggs, JE
Broadbent, RE
Buchholz, S (teller)
Christensen, GR
Cobb, JK
Coulton, M (teller)
Entsch, WG
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Griggs, NL
Hawke, AG
Hockey, JB
Howarth, LR
Hutchinson, ER
Jensen, DG
Joyce, BT
Kelly, C
Laundy, C
Macfarlane, IE
Markus, LE
McCormack, MF
McNamara, KJ
Nikolic, AA
Pasin, A
Porter, CC
Pyne, CM
Robb, AJ
Roy, WB

Alexander, JG
Baldwin, RC
Bishop, JI
Broad, AJ
Brough, MT
Chester, D
Colombo, DB
Dutton, PC
Fletcher, PW
Gambaro, T
Goodenough, IR
Hartsuyker, L
Hendy, PW
Hogan, KJ
Hunt, GA
Irons, SJ
Jones, ET
Keenan, M
Laming, A
Ley, SP
Marino, NB
Matheson, RG
McGowan, C
Morrison, SJ
O'Dowd, KD
Pitt, KJ
Prentice, J
Randall, DJ
Robert, SR
Ruddock, PM
Question agreed to.
Bill agreed to.

**Third Reading**

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Education) (12:03): I ask leave of the House to move the third reading immediately.

Leave not granted.
BUSINESS
Consideration of Legislation

Mr PYNE: I move:
That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the motion for the third reading being moved without delay.

The SPEAKER: I will put the motion. All those in favour?
Government members: Aye!

Mr Shorten: I was seeking the call, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER: We are in a difficult position. The motion has been called and a vote has been taken, so we will have to complete the motion. You may then seek a recommittal.

Mr Shorten interjecting—

The SPEAKER: We are in the process of taking the vote. The ayes have already voted.

Mr Shorten: We seek a recount.

The SPEAKER: It is too early to do that. We must complete it first. All those against say no.

Opposition members: No!

The SPEAKER: I think the ayes have it.

Mr Burke: The noes have it.

The SPEAKER: Do you seek a recommittal?

Mr Burke: We do seek a recommittal, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER: I will give the call to the Leader of the Opposition, because debate can ensue from the original motion.

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (12:05): It has taken 94 years to build Qantas. It has taken the Abbott government 94 minutes to try and tear Qantas down. Shame!

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Education) (12:05): I move:
That the member be no longer heard.

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

The House divided. [12:09]
(The Speaker—Hon. Bronwyn Bishop)

Ayes ....................81
Noes .................52
Majority ...............29

AYES
Abbott, AJ
Andrews, KJ
Billson, BF
Briggs, JE
Broadbent, RE
Buchholz, S (teller)

Aye Alexander, JC
Baldwin, RC
Bishop, JI
Broad, AJ
Brough, MT
Chester, D

CHAMBER
AYES

Christensen, GR
Cobb, JK
Coulton, M (teller)
Entsch, WG
Frydenberg, IA
Gillespie, DA
Griggs, NL
Hawke, AG
Hockey, JB
Hunt, GA
Irons, SJ
Jones, ET
Keenan, M
Laming, A
Ley, SP
Marino, NB
Matheson, RG
McNamara, KJ
Nikolic, AA
Pasin, A
Porter, CC
Pyne, CM
Robb, AJ
Roy, WB
Scott, BC
Simpkins, LXL
Southcott, AJ
Sudmalis, AE
Taylor, AJ
Truss, WE
Van Manen, AJ
Vasta, RX
Wicks, LE
Wilson, RJ
Wyatt, KG

Ciobo, SM
Coleman, DB
Dutton, PC
Fletcher, PW
Gambaro, T
Goodenough, IR
Hartsuyker, L
Hendy, PW
Howarth, LR
Hutchinson, ER
Jensen, DG
Joyce, BT
Kelly, C
Laundy, C
Macfarlane, IE
Markus, LE
McCormack, MF
Morrison, SJ
O'Dowd, KD
Pitt, KJ
Prentice, J
Randall, DJ
Robert, SR
Ruddock, PM
Scott, FM
Smith, ADH
Stone, SN
Sukkar, MS
Tehan, DT
Turnbull, MB
Varvaris, N
Whiteley, BD
Williams, MP
Wood, JP

NOES

Albanese, AN
Bowen, CE
Burke, AE
Butler, MC
Byrne, AM
Champion, ND
Clare, JD
Collins, JM
Danby, M
Elliot, MJ
Feeney, D
Fitzgibbon, JA
Gray, G
Hall, JG (teller)
Husic, EN

Bird, SL
Brodtmann, G
Burke, AS
Butler, TM
Chalmers, JE
Chesters, LM
Claydon, SC
Conroy, PM
Dreyfus, MA
Ellis, KM
Ferguson, LDT
Giles, AJ
Griffin, AP
Hayes, CP
Jones, SP
Question agreed to.

The SPEAKER (12:16): The question now is that the motion to suspend standing orders, as moved by the Leader of the House, be agreed to.

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler) (12:16): If they were confident of their position and their arguments they would not be gagging this debate.

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Education) (12:16): I move:

That the question be put.

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

The House divided. [12:20]

(The Speaker—Hon. Bronwyn Bishop)

Ayes .....................83
Noes .....................51
Majority ..................32

AYES

Abbott, AJ .......................... Alexander, JG
Andrews, KJ ........................ Baldwin, RC
Billson, BF ........................ Bishop, JI
Briggs, JE ........................ Broad, AJ
Broadbent, RE ........................ Brough, MT
Buchholz, S (teller) ..................... Chester, D
Christensen, GR ........................ Ciobo, SM
Cobb, JK ........................ Coleman, DB
Coulton, M (teller) ..................... Dutton, PC
Entsch, WG ........................ Fletcher, PW
Frydenberg, JA ..................... Gambarelli, T
Gillespie, DA ........................ Goodenough, IR
Griggs, NL ........................ Hartsuyker, L
Hawke, AG ........................ Hendy, PW
Hockey, JB ........................ Hogan, KJ
Howarth, LR ........................ Hunt, GA
Hutchinson, ER ........................ Irons, SJ
Jensen, DG ........................ Jones, ET
Joyce, BT ........................ Keenan, M
Kelly, C ........................ Laming, A
Laundy, C ........................ Ley, SP
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AYES

Macfarlane, IE
Markus, LE
McCormack, MF
McNamara, KJ
Nikolic, AA
Pasin, A
Porter, CC
Pyne, CM
Robb, AJ
Roy, WB
Scott, BC
Simpkins, LXL
Southcott, AJ
Sudmalis, AE
Taylor, AJ
Truss, WE
Van Manen, AJ
Vasta, RX
Wicks, LE
Wilson, RJ
Wyatt, KG

Marino, NB
Matheson, RG
McGowan, C
Morrison, SJ
O'Dowd, KD
Pitt, KJ
Prentice, J
Randall, DJ
Robert, SR
Ruddock, PM
Scott, FM
Smith, ADH
Stone, SN
Sukkar, MS
Tehan, DT
Turnbull, MB
Varvaris, N
Williams, MP
Wood, JP

NOES

Albanese, AN
Bowen, CE
Burke, AE
Butler, MC
Byrne, AM
Champion, ND
Clare, JD
Collins, JM
Danby, M
Elliot, MJ
Feehery, D
Fitzgibbon, JA
Gray, G
Hall, JG (teller)
Husic, EN
Macklin, JL
Mitchell, RG
O'Connor, BPJ
Owens, J
Pilcher, TJ
Rishworth, AL
Ryan, JC
Snowdon, WE
Thomson, KJ
Watts, TG
Zappia, A

Bird, SL
Brodtmann, G
Burke, AS
Butler, TM
Chalmers, JE
Chesters, LM
Claydon, SC
Conroy, PM
Dreyfus, MA
Ellis, KM
Ferguson, LDT
Giles, AJ
Griffin, AP
Hayes, CP
Jones, SP
MacTiernan, AJGC
Neumann, SK
O'Neil, CE
Perrett, GD
Ripoll, BF
Rowland, MA
Shorten, WR
Thistlethwaite, MJ
Vamvakroun, M
Wilkie, AD

Question agreed to.
The Speaker (12:12): The question now is that the motion to suspend standing orders, as moved by the Leader of the House, be agreed to.

The House divided. [12:27]

(The Speaker—Hon. Bronwyn Bishop)

Ayes ....................83
Noes ....................51
Majority...............32

AYES

Abbott, AJ
Andrews, KJ
Billson, BF
Briggs, JE
Broadbent, RE
Buchholz, S (teller)
Christensen, GR
Cobb, JK
Coulton, M (teller)
Entsch, WG
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Griggs, NL
Hawke, AG
Hockey, JB
Howarth, LR
Hutchinson, ER
Jensen, DG
Joyce, BT
Kelly, C
Laundy, C
Macfarlane, IE
Markus, LE
McCormack, MF
McNamara, KJ
Nikolic, AA
Pasin, A
Porter, CC
Pyne, CM
Robb, AJ
Roy, WB
Scott, BC
Simpkins, LXL
Southcott, AJ
Sudmalis, AE
Taylor, AJ
Truss, WE
Van Manen, AJ
Vasta, RX
Wicks, LE
Wilson, RJ
Wyatt, KG

Alexander, JG
Baldwin, RC
Bishop, Ji
Broad, AJ
Brough, MT
Chester, D
Cobo, SM
Coleman, DB
Dutton, PC
Fletcher, PW
Gambaro, T
Goodenough, IR
Hartley, L
Hendy, PW
Hogan, KJ
Hunt, GA
Irons, SJ
Jones, ET
Keenan, M
Laming, A
Ley, SP
Marino, NB
Matheson, RG
McGowan, C
Morrison, SJ
O'Dowd, KD
Pitt, KJ
Prentice, J
Randall, DJ
Robert, SR
Ruddock, PM
Scott, FM
Smith, ADH
Stone, SN
Sukka, MS
Tehan, DT
Turnbull, MB
Varvaris, N
Whiteley, BD
Williams, MP
Wood, JP
Question agreed to.

**BILLS**

**Qantas Sale Amendment Bill 2014**

**Third Reading**

Mr TRUSS (Wide Bay—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development) (12:29): I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler) (12:29): It is extraordinary that those opposite are not prepared to defend their position. We are talking about an iconic Australian company that has represented our nation around the world for 94 years.

Mr Pyne: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The last half an hour was spent suspending standing orders so that that motion could be moved immediately as a procedural motion. It does not have to be debated; it has to be voted on. That is why we moved the motion that standing orders be suspended.

The SPEAKER: Both members will resume their seats. The position is this: we have just carried the motion that standing orders be suspended as would prevent the motion that the third reading be moved without delay. We have carried that motion. The Deputy Prime Minister has now moved the third reading, and the member for Grayndler wishes to debate that motion. There are other forms which may be used then. I call the member for Grayndler.
Mr ALBANESE: They are not prepared—

The SPEAKER: The member for Grayndler will resume his seat.

Mr ALBANESE: They are unprepared on policy—

The SPEAKER: I have asked you to resume your seat. I would say to the member for Grayndler that on a number of occasions I have asked you to resume your seat and you have failed to do so. One more time and you will leave the chamber. I call the Leader of the House.

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Education) (12:30): I move:

That the question be now put.

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

The House divided. [12:31]

(The Speaker—Hon. Bronwyn Bishop)

Ayes .................83
Noes .................51
Majority.............32

AYES

Abbott, AJ
Andrews, KL
Billson, BF
Briggs, JE
Broadbent, RE
Buchholz, S (teller)
Christensen, GR
Cobb, JK
Coulton, M (teller)
Entsch, WG
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Griggs, NL
Hawke, AG
Hockey, JB
Howarth, LR
Hutchinson, ER
Jensen, DG
Joyce, BT
Kelly, C
Laundy, C
Macfarlane, IE
Markus, LE
McCormack, MF
McNamara, KJ
Nikolic, AA
Pasin, A
Porter, CC
Pyne, CM
Robb, AJ
Roy, WB
Scott, BC
Simpkins, LXL
Southcott, AJ

Alexander, JG
Baldwin, RC
Bishop, JI
Broad, AJ
Brough, MT
Chester, D
Ciobo, SM
Coleman, DB
Dutton, PC
Fletcher, PW
Gambaro, T
Goodenough, IR
Hartsuyker, L
Hendy, PW
Hogan, KJ
Hunt, GA
Irons, SJ
Jones, ET
Keenan, M
Laming, A
Ley, SP
Marino, NB
Matheson, RG
McGowan, C
Morrison, SJ
O’Dowd, KD
Pitt, KJ
Prentice, J
Randall, DJ
Robert, SR
Ruddock, PM
Scott, FM
Smith, ADH
Stone, SN
Question agreed to.

The SPEAKER: The question now is that the bill be read a third time.

The House divided. [12:37]

(The Speaker—Hon. Bronwyn Bishop)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ayes</th>
<th>Noes</th>
<th>Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>30</td>
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</tbody>
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AYES

- Abbott, AJ
- Andrews, KJ
- Billson, BF
- Alexander, JG
- Baldwin, RC
- Bishop, JI
- Bird, SL
- Brodtmann, G
- Burke, AE
- Burke, AS
- Butler, MC
- Butler, TM
- Chalmers, JE
- Chetters, LM
- Claydon, SC
- Conroy, PM
- Dreyfus, MA
- Ellis, KM
- Ferguson, LDT
- Giles, AJ
- Griffin, AP
- Hayes, CP
- Jones, SP
- Macklin, AJGC
- Neumann, SK
- O'Neil, CE
- Perrett, GD
- Ripoll, BF
- Rowland, MA
- Shorten, WR
- Thistlethwaite, MJ
- Vamvakinou, M
- Wilkie, AD
- Wood, JP

CHAMBER
## AYES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AYES</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Briggs, JE</td>
<td>Broad, AJ</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broadbent, RE</td>
<td>Brough, MT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buchholz, S (teller)</td>
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<td>Christensen, GR</td>
<td>Ciobo, SM</td>
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<td>Cobb, JK</td>
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## NOES

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## CHAMBER
Thursday, 6 March 2014  HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  1873

NOES
Fitzgibbon, JA
Gray, G
Hall, JG (teller)
Husic, EN
Katter, RC
MacTiernan, AJGC
Neumann, SK
O'Neil, CE
Parke, M
Plibersek, TJ
Rishworth, AL
Ryan, JC (teller)
Snowdon, WE
Thomson, KJ
Watts, TG
Zappia, A

Giles, AJ
Griffin, AP
Hayes, CP
Jones, SP
Macklin, JL
Mitchell, RG
O'Connor, BPJ
Owens, J
Perrett, GD
Ripoll, BF
Rowland, MA
Shorten, WR
Thistlethwaite, MJ
Vamvakinou, M
Wilkie, AD

Question agreed to.
Bill read a third time.

Civil Aviation Amendment (CASA Board) Bill 2014

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Truss.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr TRUSS (Wide Bay—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development) (12:40): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Australian aviation is an essential part of our economy—it links our regions to our cities—and our cities to the world.

The increased diversity of the Australian aviation industry requires continuous improvement in the aviation safety regulatory system. While Australia has an enviable record in aviation safety, built on a strong regulatory system—any regulator must keep pace with the industry it regulates.

Australia's aviation safety governance structures and processes have continued to evolve since the initial establishment of the Civil Aviation Act 1988 covering the operations of the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA)—Australia's aviation safety regulator.

CASA was established in July 1995, under an updated Civil Aviation Act 1988, as the independent aviation safety regulator—a Commonwealth statutory authority with responsibility for the safety regulation of civil air operations in Australia and Australian aircraft operating outside Australian territory.

The CASA board, in its current form, was established in July 2009 to decide the objectives, strategies and policies to be adopted by CASA. The board is also responsible for ensuring that
CASA performs its functions in a proper, efficient and effective manner, complying with directions given by the minister.

The CASA board currently consists of the Director of Aviation Safety (who is also the Chief Executive Officer of CASA), as an ex-officio member, and up to four board members (including the chair and deputy chair).

The Coalition's Policy for Aviation, released in August 2013, outlined a number of commitments to enhance and strengthen aviation.

The government has since established an external aviation safety regulation review, which is being undertaken by a panel of leading aviation experts.

The review is well underway, with the review panel examining the suitability of Australia's aviation safety related regulations and the outcomes and direction of CASA's regulatory reform process.

The panel is also examining the structures, effectiveness and processes of CASA with a view to ensuring that best practice in aviation safety is maintained. The panel has received around 250 submissions from interested parties across the aviation industry. The review panel is expected to report to the government by the end of May 2014.

The Coalition's Policy for Aviation also outlined our commitment to improve CASA's structure and governance arrangements to enhance the organisation's abilities to function as Australia's aviation safety regulator.

To deliver on this commitment the government intends to appoint two additional members to the CASA board.

At least two of the board members will be required to have technical and/or operational aviation experience to strengthen the board's aviation knowledge, skills and practical experience. The expanded board will be well-placed to oversee CASA's new strategic direction—which the government will issue, as allowed for under Section 12A of the Civil Aviation Act, after the government has considered the review panel's final report.

Establishing a firm strategic direction for the organisation will enhance CASA's capability to respond as Australia's aviation safety regulator. Through the introduction of a new strategic direction, the government plans to reinforce safety as CASA's primary responsibility, but will also set out the leadership role of the board in implementing the strategic direction of CASA.

Today I introduce into the parliament a bill that implements this commitment to take decisive action to strengthen the nation's aviation safety agency and their oversight of the aviation industry. The Civil Aviation Amendment (CASA Board) Bill will allow the government to fulfil undertakings, made in the coalition's policy for aviation, to have important enhancements to safety governance in place from 1 July 2014.

The bill will maintain the CASA board structure, but will expand the size of the board by two members. The appointment of two additional members will increase the breadth of aviation knowledge and experience on the CASA board, which will better equip it to set and implement the strategic direction of the organisation.

The bill improves the capacity and effectiveness of CASA to meet the challenges of an increasingly complex and diverse aviation industry. CASA must have the right structure,
resources and legal framework to regulate the civil aviation industry to enhance the safety of
the travelling public, industry participants and the wider community.

The provisions of the bill will provide for the CASA board to be comprised of six members
appointed by the minister, plus the Director of Aviation Safety as an ex-officio member, that
is, seven members in total.

The board will play an important role monitoring CASA's effectiveness and accountability
across the authority's range of functions and will facilitate stronger links between CASA and
other government agencies, allowing for meaningful and constructive input from industry and
other relevant stakeholders.

Importantly, the enhanced board will be in place to implement CASA's new strategic
direction.

Enhancing the CASA board is one important step in ensuring we continue to foster an
aviation industry that is dynamic and sustainable, with a regulatory system that is
proportionate to risks and delivers the highest level of safety—a level of regulation that does
not unreasonably restrict innovation and growth in the industry.

It is vital that government and industry share the responsibility for addressing these
challenges.

The Civil Aviation Amendment (CASA Board) Bill demonstrates this government's
ongoing commitment to aviation safety—we are taking decisive action now to strengthen the
nation's safety regulator and its oversight of the aviation industry.

Debate adjourned.

Farm Household Support Bill 2014
First Reading
Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Joyce.
Bill read a first time.

Second Reading
Mr JOYCE (New England—Minister for Agriculture and Deputy Leader of The
Nationals) (12:48):
I move:
That this bill be now read a second time.

The Farm Household Support Bill 2014 is a bill to replace the Farm Household Support Act

It confirms this government's commitment to introduce a new farm household support
payment, to help those in financial need regardless of the cause.

For more than two decades, the Farm Household Support Act has enabled the government
to provide farm families with crucial financial assistance during times of severe hardship.

It was a lifeline for many farm families during the disastrous millennium drought of 1995
to 2009.

Australia is a dry continent with a highly variable climate, and drought is an obvious
challenge our farmers face—but it is not the only one.
They must also adapt to changes in commodity prices, the fluctuating Australian dollar, competition from foreign producers both on and offshore—who can be heavily subsidised—biosecurity threats and the vagaries of the weather.

Farmers also do not have the good fortune of coming home to a pay cheque each week. They live and work with uncertainty—sometimes they get paid, sometimes they do not. And the amount they get paid can vary considerably.

In spite of this, or maybe because of it, we are world leaders in agriculture.

Last year, the Australian agriculture sector generated $47.3 billion in gross value of production, making it one of the five pillars of the nation's economy alongside manufacturing, services, education and research and mining.

Our farmers exported $38 billion in produce to our trading partners last year—income that is vital to the nation’s economy.

Australia is well placed to benefit from the growing global demand for quality food and fibre, especially from Asia.

But our farmers need the support of the Australian government to reach their full potential, during both the good and the bad times.

The government will do everything it can to encourage and assist farmers to adopt smart risk management strategies so that they can grow and adapt in the face of climatic and economic challenges.

It is vital that we strike a balance between supporting farm families during hard times, and promoting the growth of a productive, competitive and profitable sector.

This government has a history of introducing measures to support farm families through hard times.

In 1999 we introduced the Exceptional Circumstances Relief Payment, known as ECRP, as part of the Farm Household Support Act to help farm families put food on the table during severe and unexpected adverse events such as drought.

At the height of the last drought, during the 2008-09 financial year, over 30,000 farm families relied on ECRP to meet basic household expenses.

The government will honour its commitment to support farm families through difficult times and invest in the growth of a profitable and globally competitive agriculture sector.

That is why the government is proud to introduce the Farm Household Support Bill 2014 to the Australian parliament.

The bill delivers once-in-a-generation reform of government support for farm families by introducing the farm household allowance.

The allowance will replace exceptional circumstances support and the existing transitional farm family payment.

This approach—to replace exceptional circumstances income support with a generally available income support payment—was confirmed in May 2013 by the Australian government and all states and territories via the Intergovernmental Agreement on National Drought Program Reform.
This legislation will make the farm household allowance a permanent feature of the agricultural policy landscape from 1 July 2014.

The allowance will provide farmers and their partners in hardship, up to three years of household income support paid at the same rate as Newstart allowance or youth allowance for those under 22 years old.

But we know that some farmers, particularly those affected right now by severe drought, simply cannot wait until the commencement of the legislated allowance on 1 July to receive support.

That is why the government will bring forward the main eligibility requirements of the allowance and apply them to the existing income support scheme, the transitional farm family payment, or TFFP, from 1 March 2014.

To reflect these interim arrangements and new criteria, TFFP will become known as the interim farm household allowance from this time. Those who have received their maximum 12-month entitlement to TFFP will be able receive an extended period of support.

The changes will ensure that eligibility requirements for the interim payment are aligned to the extent possible with the future legislated criteria for the farm household allowance. This will also make it easier for farmers receiving support to transfer onto the legislated farm household allowance when it is available.

While getting financial support on the ground to those who need it is clearly the priority, the legislated farm household allowance brings with it a range of additional support.

The allowance will deliver case management support for the farm families receiving it, as well as financial assistance to obtain advice or training to improve their situation.

They will also have access to the range of other benefits available to other Australians receiving social security payments, such as an automatic entitlement to a healthcare card.

It will also support farm families to educate their children. Parents receiving the allowance automatically meet the income test provisions in respect of their child’s youth allowance or the additional boarding allowance under the Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme.

In some circumstances, recipients will also receive the pharmaceutical allowance, telephone allowance, remote area allowance and rent assistance.

The three years of income support provided by the allowance will give farm families time to plan for their future and take action to achieve greater financial security and self-reliance.

For some, the allowance will be the lifeline that allows them to consider their future with dignity.

Whatever choice farm families make, the government is committed to making long-term, positive differences in the lives of farm families receiving the payment.

That is why everyone who receives the farm household allowance will enter into a financial improvement agreement.

The agreement will set out a plan of action for recipients that outlines their short- and long-term goals and the activities that will help them achieve those goals.

These activities could include professional, financial or farm advice; education and training; or re-employment services, depending on individual needs and goals.
To ensure our farmers can do what they do best, the workload in running a farm will be taken into account when deciding suitable activities and timelines.

Personal factors that may be affecting a farmer and their partner’s ability to work towards improving their situation will also be taken into account in the development of an action plan.

Action plans are a proven, effective method of helping farm families plan for, and move towards, a financially secure future.

But allowance recipients will not be alone.

Each farm family will receive support from a case manager who will help them develop an action plan that meets their individual needs.

Case managers will monitor progress against action plans, and put farmers and their partners in touch with relevant programs or services in their area, making it easier for them to access social support, financial counselling or employment services.

Case managers will provide farm families with a source of encouragement, support and structure to make decisions about their farm business and personal situation—decisions that may be difficult, but necessary nonetheless.

The farm household allowance also delivers on the government’s objective of making the agriculture sector more productive and globally competitive.

Farmers and their partners receiving the allowance will each have access to a $3,000 advice and training grant to help them obtain the skills and qualifications they need to achieve their goals.

Research shows that farmers who engage in training and education run more profitable, adaptive and drought-prepared farm businesses.

Training improves confidence and willingness to adopt innovative technologies and best-practice risk management strategies.

Unfortunately, the cost of training and education can be prohibitive to those who would most benefit from it—especially when you consider the expenses incurred in travelling to larger towns and cities where training is often held.

Financial assistance for training and education is an investment in the future of our farmers.

Since the early nineties, successive governments have delivered advice and training grants to farmers facing hard times to help them improve their profitability and natural resource management or to transition into a new life outside of farming.

Feedback from peak farm bodies and program review panels indicates time and time again that financial assistance for training and education helps farmers help themselves.

This bill marks an exciting and important development in Australia’s response to farm families living in an increasingly challenging environment.

The farm household allowance is an ongoing demand-driven and uncapped program, so no family in need will go without.

It will provide much-needed certainty about the level of household income support available to the farming community into the future.

The allowance brings farm families into the fold of personalised case management that is so effective in building confidence and skills in decision making and achieving goals.
It delivers on the government's commitment to invest in a more competitive and resilient agriculture sector by investing in relevant training and education.

The bill is accompanied by a second bill, the Farm Household Support (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2014.

This bill will repeal the Farm Household Support Act 1992 from 30 June 2014, and amend legislation required for the operation of the farm household allowance.

Industry members will welcome farm household income support that is available to families when they need it, without the need for an exceptional circumstances declaration.

We are grateful for their ability to point out the strengths of previous programs and tell us what needs further work.

And we will continue to listen to them.

When the Australian Bureau of Statistics states that farming has helped shape our nation and will sustain our population and those of our trading partners in the years ahead, you know it is the truth.

Both sides of politics believe in rural communities and the benefits they bring to the Australian economy and way of life.

The evolution of national drought policy has attracted bipartisan support.

And we must continue to see a genuine approach by both sides to navigate the difficult policy issues that affect the lives of thousands of Australians living in rural and regional communities.

The bill will ensure that farm families in hardship have the same access to income relief as other Australians, regardless of the cause of their hardship.

The farm household allowance will improve outcomes for farm families through personalised case management and financial assistance to up-skill or retrain.

It will strengthen the government's support for farmers, and through them, rural and regional communities across Australia.

Mr FITZGIBBON (Hunter) (12:59): The opposition welcomes the bill and looks forward to scrutinising and debating the bill and facilitating it through the parliament as quickly as possible.

Debate adjourned.

Farm Household Support (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2014

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Joyce.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr JOYCE (New England—Minister for Agriculture and Deputy Leader of The Nationals) (13:01): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Farm Household Support (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2014 is a companion bill to the Farm Household Support Bill 2014.
Together, these bills deliver a new legislative scheme to deliver income support to farmers and their partners who are experiencing financial hardship.

This bill repeals the Farm Household Support Act 1992 and amends other acts.

Repealing the Farm Household Support Act 1992 is appropriate as all of the programs and payments under the act are redundant. It also makes consequential amendments of a minor nature to other acts to support the full and effective implementation of the farm household allowance.

This bill also includes transitional provisions to ensure recipients of non-legislated income support payments, including the new interim farm household allowance, can transition to the legislated farm household allowance as smoothly as possible.

This bill draws a line under past approaches to drought support, enables the farm household allowance to assist our farmers and their families, and ensures relevant transitional arrangements are there to support those in need.

Debate adjourned.

**Quarantine Charges (Imposition—General) Bill 2014**

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Joyce.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr JOYCE (New England—Minister for Agriculture and Deputy Leader of The Nationals) (13:02): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This government is working to boost the competitiveness and productivity of the Australian agriculture sector. A strong biosecurity system is critical to that goal. Australia’s enviable pest and disease status gives our producers a unique advantage other markets struggle to provide. Australia’s strong biosecurity system works to protect human, plant and animal health from the impact of exotic pests and diseases.

The Department of Agriculture is responsible for safeguarding Australia from unwanted pests and diseases. As well as playing an obvious role protecting Australia's environment; safeguarding Australia from unwanted pests and diseases also protects Australia’s economy.

For example, a recent review commissioned by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences looked at the economic impact of hypothetical foot and mouth disease outbreaks in Australia. In the event of a large multi-state foot and mouth disease outbreak, the ABARES estimates revenue losses could be more than $50 billion over 10 years. Reflecting international experience, the economic impact of trade restrictions, including the closure of export markets, would be far greater than the cost of controlling the disease.

Historically, the Department of Agriculture's approach to biosecurity has been shaped by mandatory border intervention targets for specific goods at the border. However, this approach did not take into account the varying levels of risk posed by different goods or whether intervention would be most effective overseas, at our border or on-shore.
In recent years, the department's approach has evolved to one based on risk, which helps officers target higher risk goods, passengers and mail. This has helped the department to more effectively manage the biosecurity risks associated with ever increasing volumes of trade and passengers moving across our border.

Risk based interventions reduce the burden on compliant businesses, enabling faster clearance at the border through better targeting and focus on higher risk goods. The risk based business model allows the free movement of goods where risk is low and cuts costs for clients who actively and conscientiously take account of biosecurity risks. It reduces the cost of delivering frontline services and saves time and money for importing businesses with flow-on benefits to the broader economy.

The government's policy is that agencies should set charges to recover the costs of products or services that they provide. Any charges should reflect the costs of providing the service and should generally be imposed on a fee-for-service basis or, where efficient, as a levy. In line with this policy, the department recovers the costs of providing services to importers under the Quarantine Act 1908 directly and indirectly. This includes indirect services such as intelligence gathering and surveillance that enable targeting of high risk goods for intervention.

This legislation package brings into line an appropriate legislative structure for the recovery of costs associated with indirect biosecurity services undertaken by the department for the benefit of importers. The legislation will sit alongside the existing fee-for-service cost recovery mechanism. Having the appropriate cost recovery mechanisms in place will support Australia's capacity to manage biosecurity risks into the future.

This legislation is designed purely as a cost recovery mechanism. The legislation ensures that the Minister for Agriculture must be satisfied that the amount charged will not be more than the likely costs of delivering the activity.

The legislation has been drafted to be consistent with Australia's international trade obligations. This will also be the case in drafting any delegated legislation.

The Quarantine Charges (Imposition—General) Bill 2014 is the first of four bills that provide the appropriate cost recovery mechanism for the risk-based approach.

Specifically the bill will enable cost recovery of activities that provide general benefits to importers—particularly the recovery of costs for surveillance, compliance, risk analysis and intelligence capabilities, which are key features of the risk-based approach.

The amount of the cost recovery charges and who is liable to pay them will be set in regulation under the bill. As mentioned, the bill also includes a safeguard regarding the amount of the charge. This will provide clients with confidence that the government will not over recover the costs of its biosecurity services.

Setting the charges through delegated legislation will allow the Minister for Agriculture to make appropriate and timely adjustments to the charges avoiding future over or under recoveries.

The bill also validates the fees currently in the Quarantine Service Fees Determination 2005.
Three companion bills are being introduced alongside this bill, the Quarantine Charges (Imposition—Customs) Bill 2014, the Quarantine Charges (Imposition—Excise) Bill 2014, and the Quarantine Charges (Collection) Bill 2014.

This package of bills will ensure that appropriate cost recovery mechanisms are in place. Funding the biosecurity system is critical for protecting Australia's unique animal and plant health status. It is also essential for maintaining farmers' access to overseas markets and strengthening our position as a net exporter of the highest quality agricultural goods—a position forecast to be worth $38.0 billion to the Australian economy in the current financial year.

Debate adjourned.

**Quarantine Charges (Imposition—Customs) Bill 2014**

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Joyce.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr JOYCE (New England—Minister for Agriculture and Deputy Leader of The Nationals) (13:09): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Quarantine Charges (Imposition—Customs) Bill 2014 is the second of four bills being introduced to form this legislative package.

The Quarantine Charges (Imposition—Customs) Bill 2014 will impose charges only when they are considered a duty of customs. The key provisions of the bill mirror those in the Quarantine Charges (Imposition—General) Bill 2014 and have the same operative function and effect.

The bill does not itself set the amount of the charges and will not impose any financial impacts on businesses. The charges and who is liable and exempt from paying the charges will be set in delegated legislation.

Debate adjourned.

**Quarantine Charges (Imposition—Excise) Bill 2014**

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Joyce.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr JOYCE (New England—Minister for Agriculture and Deputy Leader of The Nationals) (13:10): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Quarantine Charges (Imposition—Excise) Bill 2014 is the third of four bills being introduced to form this legislative package.

The Quarantine Charges (Imposition—Excise) Bill 2014 will impose charges only when they are considered a duty of excise. The key provisions of the bill mirror those in the
Quarantine Charges (Imposition—General) Bill 2014 and have the same operative function and effect.

The bill does not itself set the amount of the charges and will not impose any financial impacts on businesses. The charges and who is liable and exempt from paying the charges will be set in delegated legislation. At this point in time there are no proposals to introduce any duties of excise in the delegated legislation.

Debate adjourned.

**Quarantine Charges (Collection) Bill 2014**

**First Reading**

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Joyce.

Bill read a first time.

**Second Reading**

Mr JOYCE (New England—Minister for Agriculture and Deputy Leader of The Nationals) (13:12): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Quarantine Charges (Collection) Bill 2014 is the final bill being introduced as part of the package to provide appropriate cost recovery arrangements for import services. These arrangements are consistent with the Australian Government Cost Recovery Guidelines.

The Quarantine Charges (Collection) Bill 2014 will provide authority to collect charges imposed under the Quarantine Charges (Imposition—General) Bill 2014, the Quarantine Charges (Imposition—Customs) Bill 2014 and the Quarantine Charges (Imposition—Excise) Bill 2014.

The bill provides that the regulations will determine the time the charge is due and payable.

The regulations under this bill will also outline the liability of a person's agent to pay charges on that person's behalf and establish appropriate late payment fees where charges are not paid in the time allowed.

Specifying such matters in regulations, as opposed to the act itself, provides the department with sufficient flexibility to ensure that these matters are appropriate in all circumstances.

The bill also provides the Commonwealth with mechanisms to appropriately deal with nonpayment. This includes powers to refuse service in relation to a person who is liable to pay a charge or late payment fee; to suspend and revoke import permits; to deal with goods and vessels to recover unpaid charges and late payment fees (including power to create a statutory charge on a good or vessel and withholding goods that are subject to a charge); to, in exceptional circumstances, sell goods and vessels that are subject to a charge or late payment fee to recover outstanding debts owed to the Commonwealth; to deal with goods or vessels that are abandoned or forfeited, including the ability to take possession, cause goods or vessels to be sold, destroyed or otherwise disposed of, and; for quarantine officers to issue directions in relation to goods and vessels that are subject to a charge. Penalties, including fines, imprisonment or both, apply to a person who engages in conduct that contravenes a direction.
Unpaid charges and late payment fees will be considered as debts to the Commonwealth and may be recovered by action in a relevant court.

The bill sets out provisions for the remitting or refunding of charges or late payment fees if there are exceptional circumstances.

The bill includes a link to provisions of the Quarantine Act 1908 where it is appropriate for consistency of operation between this bill and the Quarantine Act. It is not appropriate for different provisions and powers to apply between this bill and the Quarantine Act.

The bill sets out provisions for the remitting or refunding of charges or late payment fees if there are exceptional circumstances.

Together these four bills will ensure biosecurity import services are appropriately and validly supported. As mentioned earlier, funding the biosecurity system is critical for protecting Australia’s unique animal and plant health status. It is also essential for maintaining farmers’ access to overseas markets and strengthening our position as a net exporter of the highest quality agricultural goods.

Debate adjourned.

Export Market Development Grants Amendment Bill 2014

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Robb.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr ROBB (Goldstein—Minister for Trade and Investment) (13:16): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The changes proposed in this bill, the Export Market Development Grants Amendment Bill 2014, deliver on the coalition’s pre-election commitment to progressively restore funding to export market development grants starting with an initial $50 million boost.

The export market development grants program provides funding for the partial reimbursement of eligible export marketing expenditure for small and medium enterprise exporters. These grants assist small and medium sized enterprises to enter new export markets and become self-sustaining exporters.

The 2013 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook allocated an additional $50 million over four years. The associated policy changes required to give effect to this provision, as well as some additional administrative enhancements to the scheme, are contained in this bill.

This increased funding of the Export Market Development Grants Scheme is designed to progressively restore the funding to the scheme, which had been cut by $25 million per year by the previous government, and thereby, seek to boost Australia’s manufacturing and services export base.

This cut that was witnessed under the previous administration says much about Labor’s lack of feel for small business and medium business. It shows that they were more interested in meeting a political objective than in supporting the engine of growth that small and medium business is in this country.
To achieve this objective that we have set, to increase manufacturing and services' export base, the bill increases the maximum number of grants per applicant from seven to eight, and reduces the required expenditure threshold to qualify for a grant from $20,000 to $15,000. Based on the profile of last year's applicants, this will enable hundreds of extra small businesses to benefit from the scheme. Currently the export market development grant does not reimburse the first $5,000 of an eligible claim; this will drop to $2,500—around 85 per cent of export market development grant recipients will receive an extra $2,500 per grant as a result.

To illustrate what this means:

- A new business with a unique product that has only had a market overseas and is looking for their first sale and is spending just $15,000 on export promotion will now get a $5,000 grant. Previously they would have received nothing;
- An experienced exporter who has received the maximum seven grants in the past, but whose export business had dried up due to the high exchange rate, for example, will now be eligible to apply for an eighth grant to help try and recover those markets now that, say, the exchange rate is improving, of up to $150,000. Previously they would have received nothing.

The improvements the coalition is making will benefit many small business exporters in rural and regional areas. Businesses like:

- Wrightcom Australia, exporting agricultural equipment from near Echuca;
- Carbon Revolution from Waurn Ponds, exporting premium-priced carbon fibre wheel rims;
- Ramler International from Cheltenham, providing seating products to a global customer base that's included the London Olympic Village, US airports and hotels; and
- The Angus Society of Australia, promoting beef exports from Armidale in New England and hundreds more are now eligible for higher grants and more grants than have been provided previously.

It is in line with the coalition's overarching economic objective to remove from centrestage unsustainable government spending, endless and economically damaging rule changes and new taxes, and replace that with robust growth of the private sector, to back our strengths in doing that. Small and medium enterprises are the engine room of the private sector. They are historically the greatest source of innovation in our community. They need to be unshackled from the endless rule changes, the high taxes such as the carbon tax, and they need us, where we can, to give them the assistance to break into new markets. They have not got the infrastructure, they have not got the experience, they have not got the opportunity, they have not got the resources, to go to some of these foreign markets. And to achieve success, to penetrate these markets in an informed way, providing some small measure of assistance has proven enormously successful. I would say to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, this is probably the most successful small business program that we have witnessed over the last 10 or 20 years. This Export Market Development Grants Scheme has been demonstrably successful. It has delivered a massive dividend to the Australian taxpayer. This measure of support gives not only some support. It gives hope. It gives a sense of partnership, in that these people are taking a risk, going out there and risking a lot of their own funds, and they are getting some
measure of support from the community. These are elements that are very important if we want to ensure an export-led growth by small businesses, if we want to get trade and investment as a leading edge of sustainable economic growth and sustainable jobs.

The government is seeking to introduce this bill now to address urgently the need to boost Australia's manufacturing and services export base as rapidly as possible and to provide certainty for small businesses as they consider their export marketing plans into the future.

I commend this bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013

Consideration of Senate Message

Bill returned from the Senate with amendments.

Ordered that the amendments be considered at the next sitting.

Fair Work Amendment Bill 2014

Second Reading

Debate resumed on the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR (Gorton) (13:24): I rise to oppose the Fair Work Amendment Bill 2014. Labor opposes this proposed legislation because it is a continuation of this government's crusade against the employment conditions of workers across Australia. It is a continuation of this government's race to the bottom on labour standards.

Before the election, and indeed again when introducing this bill, this government promised that, when proposing amendments, those amendments would not go any further than its pre-election promises and that it would implement specific recommendations directly from the 2012 Fair Work Act Review. I rise today to say that it would appear that the government has broken its promise on both counts. This is bitterly disappointing from the view of the opposition and, undoubtedly, the Australian public.

The government is going further than its pre-election promises. One of the reasons that Labor opposes the Fair Work Amendment Bill 2014 is that in a number of places, including in provisions dealing with individual flexibility arrangements, greenfield agreements and right of entry, the government has clearly overstepped its election mandate to the disadvantage of employees. It is now clear that the government could not be trusted to honour its most basic promise—namely, to implement recommendations from the 2012 Fair Work review without change. Instead, the government is putting down its own spin on Fair Work recommendations while trying to pass them off as a carbon copy of what the expert panel proposed.

I must advise the House that, if the bill is enacted, workers will suffer as a result of the proposals in this bill. The government proposed a return to the sensible centre on workplace relations, and this bill does not deliver on that promise. Take for example the government's proposed amendments to the individual flexibility arrangements, IFAs, which Labor first introduced in 2009. These arrangements, or IFAs, vary terms of modern awards or enterprise agreements in order to meet the genuine needs of employers and individual employees while
ensuring that the arrangements do not exclude National Employment Standards and that the employee is 'better off overall' than they would have been if no IFA had been entered into.

Labor introduced IFAs because we agree that flexible work practices can deliver benefits to both employees and employers if applied appropriately. At the same time, we protected the vulnerability of workers, particularly low-paid workers and families who can least afford cuts to the bottom line of their budget, by ensuring that sufficient safeguards were in the legislation. The use of IFAs as a means of improving job satisfaction and paving a way for employees to successfully manage unique out-of-work responsibilities is possible if handled with care. But they must not—I repeat: must not—be imposed on unsuspecting employees as a means of ripping away conditions such as penalty rates.

Take the example of a retail worker who wants to forgo an early morning penalty rate so that they can start early and finish early one day a week so they can get away in the afternoon to coach a junior football side. IFAs provide the ability to vary the terms of the applicable enterprise agreement to make this possible. The employee swaps what would be a relatively insignificant monetary benefit for a non-financial benefit. For the employee, their arrangement may maintain appropriate remuneration for work undertaken while allowing for some mutually agreeable changes to work patterns. For the employer, this arrangement may help attract and retain staff. It would be a win-win.

The Labor Fair Work system was fair and equitable for all parties, and it was already in place across the majority of enterprise agreements in this country. In fact, the Fair Work review expert panel commissioned by the previous government cited data that demonstrates that the majority of enterprise agreements already provide as much flexibility, if not more, as is provided by the model flexibility term, a term that the government is seeking now to legislate to insert into all enterprise agreements.

So it is a shame. The amendments proposed by this government in relation to IFAs reinforce the maxim that, when it comes to the Liberal Party and workplace relations, the devil is always in the detail. Under the guise of implementing a recommendation of the Fair Work expert panel, the government is unreasonably proposing that a key safeguard be abandoned when it comes to what can be traded away through an IFA. The relevant expert panel recommendation states that, if a non-monetary benefit is being traded for a monetary benefit, the value of the monetary benefit forgone must be 'relatively insignificant, and the value of the non-monetary benefit is proportionate'.

Despite the expert panel's clear prescription of this recommendation, it is missing from the government's amended bill. 'Relatively insignificant' and 'proportion' are two safeguards that scream employee protection. They are gone without trace.

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

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Scullin Electorate: Shire of Nillumbik

Mr GILES (Scullin) (13:30): I rise in support of the proposal by Nillumbik Shire Council to extend the Diamond Creek regional trail. The existing trail is 12 kilometres long and links Diamond Creek with the main Yarra trail. It starts at Nillumbik Park and joins the main Yarra
trail in Candlebark Park. The Nillumbik Trails Strategy, which was adopted by council in 2011, recommended the development of four regional trails traversing the shire. As one of these proposals, the extension of the trail will connect to the townships of Wattle Glen and Hurstbridge. This section would be an estimated eight kilometres in length. When compared to state and national averages, Nillumbik residents have high recreational participation rates with a trend toward unstructured activities such as walking, running and cycling. This is something that should be encouraged. The extension of the Diamond Creek trail is a high priority for the Nillumbik community.

I note the work of community activists such as the Friends of Nillumbik, the Creek Trail Blazers, and the Wattle Glen Residents Association; including Bill Lord, Stephanie Germancheva, Helen Legg and Bill Taylor who have done much to bring this matter to the public’s attention. They have attracted much support, including from Cadel Evans.

During the election, I spent a lot of time speaking with people from Wattle Glen and Hurstbridge. I was struck by the beauty of the area and it seemed a shame to have to drive between these communities. These sentiments were echoed in the conversations I had with people, many of whom wanted to enjoy the bucolic surrounds of the area more fully. There is a range of social, health, environment, economic, tourism and transport benefits that would flow from this extension. I urge the state and federal governments to support this worthwhile initiative.

**Dobell Electorate: Kulnura**

**Mrs McNAMARA** (Dobell) (13:31): Last Saturday, I joined with the residents of Kulnura to celebrate the township's 100th birthday. The name Kulnura is of Aboriginal origin and it means 'in sight of the sea'. Situated in the mountains of the beautiful Wyong valleys, Kulnura offers some fantastic viewing areas of the sea and the coastline of Dobell. Home to just over 500 people, the Kulnura community represents everything great about this wonderful nation of ours. Kulnura illustrates the diverseness of Dobell, from our tourist destinations on the coast to Wyong valleys and to towns such as Kulnura that support small fruit and poultry industries. In celebrating Kulnura’s 100th birthday, local residents both past and present spent Saturday catching up and reflecting upon the rich history and the town’s uniqueness.

Fortunately, we have insight into Kulnura’s early days through the family history of Mr George T Hunt, an early settler on the mountain. Mr Hunt's family recalls that at the time of settlement, there was a strong support to call the town Passiflora, but Kulnura was eventually agreed upon. I am advised that to this day, Kulnura is the only place in the world named Kulnura, something the local residents are fiercely proud of.

On Saturday, I was honoured to attend the celebrations and to learn of the town's history and of residents past and present. I was fortunate enough to meet Mr Gibson, a long-term resident aged 93, who spoke of his primary school years at Kulnura. It was also my honour to present the community with an Australian flag. With over 200 people attending the celebrations, it is a testament to the richness of this small community for keeping their heritage alive. I conclude by thanking all those involved in organising this historic day with a special mention to the Kulnura Public School Choir for their outstanding singing and rendition of *Advance Australia Fair*.  

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International Women's Day

Mr NEUMANN (Blair) (13:33): The issue of women's equality has made positive gains, however we live in a world that is still far from equal. This coming Saturday is International Women's Day and tomorrow morning I will once again attend the annual Zonta International Women's Day breakfast at the MiHi Tavern in Brassall in my electorate of Blair. Each year, the Ipswich arm of Zonta International holds the breakfast, at which an inspiring woman is guest speaker, to celebrate International Women's Day. The speakers address a room of about 150 people, including groups of young women from local high schools. This year's International Women's Day theme is 'inspiring change'.

We know statistics and research on equality that shows that despite numerous campaigns and corporate initiatives run across the world, gender equality remains a live issue. To use academia for example, we know that in Australia in 2013, women account for only 28 per cent of academic appointments above lecturer level. In the natural and physical sciences, the statistics are far worse, only 17 per cent. We know that women today earn only 83.50c for every dollar a man earns. Nine and a half years ago, it hit 85c, but it has gone backwards since. We know that one woman in this country dies each week as a result of domestic violence and we know that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are many times more likely to be hospitalised. I congratulate the Ipswich club of Zonta International for the work they do year in and year out to improve the lives of women.

Tasmanian Election

Mr NIKOLIC (Bass) (13:34): The election in Tasmania on 15 March revolves around some big issues, the most important of which is who has the best long-term plan for Tasmania. Given the depth of our economic and social malaise after 16 years of Labor and Labor Greens government, Tasmania's recovery will take time and there are no silver bullets. But the Liberal team has a credible plan to change Tasmania for the better. That requires strong, stable majority government to implement a plan that tackles the jobs crisis by backing our competitive strengths in agriculture, aquaculture, forestry, mining and tourism; that helps business by cutting red and green tape; that delivers a single, state-wide planning scheme and restores an international shipping service; that rebuilds front-line services and extends high school to year 12; and perhaps most importantly, that fixes the budget mess, cuts waste and makes the public service more efficient.

Will Hodgman and his team have already announced 130 detailed, fully costed and fully funded policies. When the Labor Premier divorced the Greens a few weeks ago, her campaign was all about asking Tasmanians to 'forget about the last four years'. Well, Tasmanians will not forget and realise that we simply cannot afford another Labor Greens government where the minority calls the shots. My message to the people of Bass is that the Liberals are the only party Tasmanians can trust not to do a deal with the Greens. Will Hodgman was the only leader to keep his word on this issue and his vision for Tasmania is the best plan for a brighter future.

Taxation

Mr HUSIC (Chifley) (13:36): I draw to the House's attention today's Financial Review and an exceptionally insightful piece by Neil Chenoweth talking about the amount of money that Apple has paid in tax in this country. Between 2002 and 2013, Australians spent $26.7
billion on Apple products. According to this report, the income shifted to Ireland by Apple Sales International totalled nearly $9 billion, and the tax paid to the ATO of that $26.7 billion of sales was $193 million. You have to ask, 'Why do they get away with this?' We have a tax regime that is built out of plasticine and a lot of these firms squeeze the most they can out of the tax rules—a transfer-pricing regime that is lagging behind the times, taxation arrangements that need to be hauled into the modern era, and we are being kept in the dark about the tax that is actually being paid. These multinationals are not paying their fair share and Australian firms that are doing the right thing are bearing the load.

The coalition has done two things that have not helped in this case. In December, Assistant Treasurer Arthur Sinodinos announced they had abandoned a measure to prevent firms reducing their bills and on 4 January Arthur Sinodinos also indicated he was considering abandoning measures requiring firms to disclose total income. We deserve better. We need to work as one to fix this tax regime up. I urge the government to do it.

Flynn Electorate: Proston Show

Mr O’DOWD (Flynn) (13:38): This Saturday, 8 March, the Proston Royal Show Society hold their show. As you know, Deputy Speaker Scott, this borders on your territory. I will be attending this on Saturday and it will be a long drive from Bundaberg. However, it is well worth the day. The show society is led by Valma Voigt, the president, the vice-president, Leslie Blanch, and the secretary is his wife, Dell Blanch.

The show is one of 129 rural shows held in Queensland on an annual basis. It is a great show. It has horse events for all ages, a large stud cattle program, a poultry pavilion, a championship dog show, and a woodchop and post-splitting. In the pavilion there is cooking, horticulture, sewing, photography displays, fine arts, handicrafts and farm produce. There will be sideshow rides and clown shows for the children, fireworks and, of course, a barbecue with plenty of food and drinks available. A good day will be ensured for all.

Newcastle Electorate: Schools

Ms CLAYDON (Newcastle) (13:39): I rise to acknowledge and celebrate all schools in my electorate which are currently inducting their school leaders for 2014. To be elected as school captain, vice-captain or prefect is a tremendous honour and I congratulate those students who have been elected to such important leadership roles.

I recently had the opportunity to attend Lambton High School's investiture of prefects on Tuesday, 18 February. This event was especially significant for me—I was returning to Lambton High School, the very place that I was elected school captain, albeit many years ago now. I would like to thank the principal, Martin Rosser, for the invitation to attend and I want to put on record my congratulations to the following student leaders: captains, Stephanie Hough and Develka Gunasekera; vice-captains, Isabel Williams and Michael Garrett; senior prefects, Sophie Parente and James Wood; and prefects, Marlee Byrnes, Jonathan Catt, Madeline Cordingley, Kyle Farquharson, Sarah Jeffrey, Jonathan Gardiner, Mikenzie McManus, Elijah Fraser, Nathasha Robards and Joseph Popov.

I first had the pleasure of meeting Joseph at the launch of the National Disability Insurance Scheme in Newcastle last year. Joseph is a wheelchair user and, not being one to shy away from sharing his opinion, enjoyed the opportunity of meeting the former Prime Minister to talk about his hopes for the NDIS. I have no doubt that Joseph and all the school leaders...
inducted for 2014 will be strong advocates for their school communities. I look forward to working together with them both now and in the future.

**Deakin Electorate: Clean Up Australia Day**

Deakin Electorate: Heatherdale Creek Rejuvenation Project

**Mr SUKKAR** (Deakin) (13:40): I rise today to thank and recognise the many people in my electorate of Deakin who contributed to the Clean Up Australia Day efforts on Sunday. In particular I would like to thank, on behalf of both myself and the Simpson Park/Somers Trail Advisory Committee, the approximately 40 volunteers who joined in the clean-up at the Heatherdale Creek Parklands. It was a great team effort. Gary Cooper, Val Turnbull and all of the advisory committee deserve acknowledgement for their dedication and hard work in assisting with preparations for the day. I would also like to recognise Doug Terrill from the Heatherdale Tennis Club for his hospitality in hosting morning tea, along with all of the local small businesses that generously donated prizes.

The event was also a good way to prepare the Heatherdale Creek Parklands for the federal coalition government's upcoming Heatherdale Creek Rejuvenation Project. This Green Army project will remove noxious weeds and replant native vegetation on Heatherdale Creek in order to prevent the spread of weed infestation, enhance water quality and improve the habitat for wildlife. We are very fortunate to have a strong community in Mitcham, and I see the ongoing management and care of the Heatherdale Creek Parklands as an important way for all of us to continue fostering that important community spirit.

**Rare Diseases**

**Ms PARKE** (Fremantle) (13:42): Today, along with many parliamentary colleagues, I attended the Rare Voices Australia barbecue and, notwithstanding the promises earlier this week by the member for Swan regarding plentiful steaks, hot meat pies and Italian sausages, I am grateful to the organisers for the mini veggie burgers. I am also grateful for this opportunity to briefly discuss a health issue that affects a considerable part of the Australian population but remains relatively unknown.

An estimated 1.2 million Australians are affected by a rare disease, including 400,000 children. Though each condition is rare in itself, the experience of living with such rare afflictions is not uncommon, and indeed something like one in 12 people live with a rare disease, both in Australia and globally.

Rare diseases are any disorders or conditions that are life threatening and/or chronically debilitating while at the same time statistically rare, meaning the condition has an estimated prevalence of five in 10,000. There are between 5,000 to 7,000 known rare diseases, and the severity of these conditions, coupled with the lack of information and the large number of people affected collectively, makes them a distinctive health priority requiring a nationally coordinated plan, something that the UK has introduced, as we heard at the barbecue here today, but which is lacking here in Australia. Building and improving access and the sharing of resources will encourage the development of policies, service planning, clinical guidelines and research, which will in turn improve diagnosis, appropriate care and treatment.

Last Friday, 28 February was international Rare Diseases Day. The theme and focus for 2014 is 'Care', emphasising the significance of medical, social and emotional support for
people living with a rare disease. I urge all members to show their support for people impacted by rare diseases.

**Western Sydney**

**Mr CRAIG KELLY** (Hughes) (13:43): On Monday evening I was privileged to attend the first meeting of the Prime Minister's committee for Western Sydney. I would like to take this opportunity to commend our Prime Minister for his focus and vision in supporting the future of our region.

What I took out of the discussion was that there was a consensus that we need to look at infrastructure planning from a whole-of-Western Sydney perspective. The real issue we face in Western Sydney is that we simply do not have enough jobs in the area. Too many local residents are forced to commute long distances into the Sydney CBD and back again in the evening. Time spent commuting is neither productive nor healthy, and it takes time away from being spent with families.

An airport in Western Sydney can be the catalyst to get the infrastructure and development we need to kick-start our region, but it must be supported with the right enabling infrastructure first. Western Sydney is the growth engine of New South Wales—it is booming. But to optimise the growth potential we need investment and we need attention. Along with the necessary rail and road infrastructure, we need to get many government departments, both federal and state, relocated to support our major growth centres in Liverpool, Campbelltown and Penrith. This will also benefit the taxpayer as it will lower the cost of the leases that are currently in place. In my mind, the process is about putting together a jigsaw for Western Sydney for the decades to come.

**Qantas**

**Mr THISTLETHWAITE** (Kingsford Smith) (13:45): The Abbott government is a disgrace. One of the nation's biggest reforms in Qantas's 93-year history, and what do they do? They gag debate, they refuse consideration of the bill in detail, and they ram through the House of Representatives a reform that is likely to result in the break-up of our nation's carrier. I represent 2½ thousand loyal, hard-working Qantas employees in the electorate of Kingsford Smith. They have been denied the right for their representative in this parliament to put their point of view on a reform that affects theirs and their families' livelihoods.

The facts around Qantas are these: Qantas's domestic arm made $59 million profit this year; Qantas domestic, if it is broken up, is likely to be sold off to foreign interests. So those opposite are going to allow the sell-off of the profitable arm of Qantas, but the unprofitable arm, the international division, which made a $262 million loss this year, is likely to remain in Australian hands. Jobs are likely to go overseas. Today I have been rung by Qantas employees who have already been informed that they are losing their jobs. People in highly skilled occupations who did their apprenticeships here in Australia, their jobs are going to go overseas. Qantas contributes $1.4 billion in direct and indirect taxes to our nation, and employs 30,000 employees. They deserve better.

**Nuffield Australia Farming Scholars**

**Mr BROAD** (Mallee) (13:46): Today I rise to draw to the Australian parliament's attention the Nuffield Australia Farming Scholars program. This evening, in the dining room, the Australian parliament will host 62 scholars from around the world. Mr Deputy Speaker
Scott, I think you can appreciate the importance of this program, having been a Nuffield scholar yourself. I am also one of them in this chamber. The program is all about creating innovative leaders. We believe that agriculture is essential to the Australian economy; we believe that if we invest in people then we will grow productivity.

The scholarship was set up after the Second World War because global food security was in question, and we believed that exchanging information would lessen that. I will just read the mission statement of the Nuffield Australia Farming Scholars program:

The Nuffield Australia Farming Scholars’ mission is to develop potential and promote excellence in all aspects of Australian agricultural production, distribution and management through the adoption of local and international best practice, and continuous development of a unique network of industry leaders and innovators.

I am very proud to say that two scholars have come out of my electorate, Tania Chapman and Sarah Sammon, and they are going to do amazing things. One is involved in the citrus industry and the other is involved in flowers—not just flowers, but the petal industry. Something you can use to decorate your house. Nuffield scholars provide the food on your table and the romance in your life, and it is a good thing they are here in the Australian parliament today.

Environment

Mr ZAPPIA (Makin) (13:48): Last Friday I attended the official opening by the South Australian state minister for the environment, the Hon. Ian Hunter, of the newly constructed bicycle and trail bike paths at the Cobbler Creek Recreation Park in the Makin electorate. Cobbler Creek Recreation Park is a large, natural environmental asset in the midst of suburbia, and exists because the local community fought hard and successfully resisted attempts to have the land sold off for housing. Until the addition of the new tracks, the park had walking trails through it, but no BMX or trail bike paths. BMX and trail bike riders nevertheless used the park for recreational purposes in an unsafe way, causing environmental damage to the park.

Agreement was reached between the SA state government, users of the park and the Friends of Cobbler Creek, a local environmental group who have effectively become voluntary caretakers of the park, on the construction of the cycle and motorcycle tracks. The new tracks have enabled the park to be opened up to users in a safe, responsible manner that should not cause environmental damage to the park. I congratulate all involved in the project, and thank the South Australian state government for funding the new tracks. I especially thank the Friends of Cobbler Creek for their years of voluntary work in caring, maintaining and generally taking responsibility for the Cobbler Creek Recreation Park.

Reid Electorate

Mr LAUNDY (Reid) (13:49): I rise today to pay tribute to members of the Chinese and Korean communities within my electorate. Members of these communities have, over many years, made a magnificent contribution to our local area and during the last two years I have had the opportunity to become friends with many of them. They, like so many migrants to our country, have worked incredibly hard to provide the best possible opportunities for their families to prosper. Moreover, the rich cultural history that Chinese and Korean members of our community provide to my electorate is celebrated by all.
Sadly, I do need to note that members of my Chinese and Korean communities have expressed to me that great hurt has been caused to them by the visit last December to the Yasukuni Shrine by Japan's Prime Minister Abe. I join with members of my community in expressing the view that this visit should not have occurred. I warmly welcome the upcoming visit to China and Korea by Prime Minister Abbott, which will further strengthen ties between our countries, and I encourage local businesses to join the trade minister in China as part of this important delegation. Again, I thank the Korean and Chinese communities of my area for their ongoing wonderful contribution to our local area and I commit to providing a strong voice for them in this place.

**Mallee Emu-Wren**

**Mr KELVIN THOMSON** (Wills) (13:50): The Mallee emu-wren is a tiny and delicate bird; it would easily fit into the palm of my hand. It has a feathery tail and is a thing of beauty. I was therefore very distressed to hear that the South Australian bushfires that accompanied the week-long heatwave in that part of the world had destroyed all of the remaining wild population of the Mallee emu-wren in South Australia, leaving only one place in the world where the bird survives—that is, Victoria's Murray-Sunset National Park. This makes the bird extremely vulnerable; a single fire could render it extinct. So when I heard the Prime Minister saying that perhaps we had too much national park, I was absolutely astonished. I do not have religious convictions myself, but for someone who claims to have the **m** to say that we can have species which are part of God's creation become extinct on our watch is, I think, deeply unsatisfactory. Australia has lost 27 bird species since European settlement, and at least another 20 are considered at imminent risk of extinction. I hope that this government and others that have land management responsibilities will make sure that we have wildlife habitat corridors so that a species like the Mallee emu-wren is not lost to us forever.

**Asia Pacific: Harmony**

**Mr COLEMAN** (Banks) (13:52): I am rising to speak on a matter of significant importance in my electorate. The people of Banks seek harmony both within our local community and more broadly. Harmony within the Asia-Pacific region is of course particularly important to Australia. In this context, it is my view that the visit of Japanese Prime Minister Abe to the Yasukuni Shrine in December 2013 was highly regrettable. It is in the interests of all nations within the Asia-Pacific region not to do anything which risks inflaming tension. As Foreign Minister Julie Bishop, noted in her speech to the Alliance 21 conference, 'Visits such as this can escalate the already tense regional environment.' We all know that for Australia, Japan and other nations in our region, the way forward is one of friendship. The visit to the Yasukuni Shrine works against that spirit of friendship, which we should all seek to encourage. In my view, the Japanese government should desist from any further visits to the Yasukuni Shrine.

**Neighbourhood Watch**

**Ms HALL** (Shortland—Opposition Whip) (13:53): I would like to pay credit to the wonderful, dedicated group of people in Belmont Neighbourhood Watch who are led by Deadre Ham, OAM, a dedicated person, who has served her community for many years, just as Belmont Neighbourhood Watch serves our community. They deliver the Neighbourhood
Watch newspaper come rain, hail or shine. They also provide all the residents of the Belmont area with information on safety and keep them up-to-date on crime statistics. There are many good contact numbers available in that wonderful Neighbourhood Watch newspaper. Deadre and her dedicated volunteers have been delivering the newsletter for well in excess of 20 years. A number of members of that group have been awarded Shortland awards in recognition of the fine service they have given to our community.

As well as that, many of those reliable, tireless members of Neighbourhood Watch have also received recognition—under the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program and other volunteer programs. I would like to say thank you very much to Deadre Ham and her group of tireless workers as they continue to distribute Neighbourhood Watch newsletters throughout the Belmont area.

**Australian Defence Force**

*Mrs GRIGGS* (Solomon) (13:55): I rise today to thank the Prime Minister for visiting my electorate of Solomon last weekend and for attending the welcome home parade for more than 250 Darwin based soldiers marking the end of their deployment to Afghanistan. Thousands of Territorians attended the Darwin parade wearing yellow shirts and waving flags to show their support for our returned soldiers. The enormous sacrifice of Australia's decade-long mission in Afghanistan was acknowledged by the Prime Minister and others.

This operation has been the nation's longest military operation during which 40 soldiers sadly lost their lives and more than 260 personnel have been injured. I would like to place on record my personal thanks to all those involved in this operation and to confirm my wholehearted support for the Prime Minister's announcement of the national day of commemoration to be held on 21 March 2015, a day to recognise the contribution and sacrifice of Australian troops who served in Afghanistan and in the Middle East.

**General Practice**

*Mr FITZGIBBON* (Hunter) (13:56): There can be no more important a responsibility for government than the provision of quality, affordable health care for its community. Over the course of the Howard years, the GP situation in some parts of my electorate was reaching crisis point. You could not get your name on the books of the local GP and bulk-billing services were very elusive.

Over the last six years, we have turned that situation around substantially and resident-to-GP ratios have improved markedly. As a result, people are getting far greater access to bulk-billing services. This I fear, though, is about to unravel, given what we hear coming from the other side of the chamber. As the Prime Minister walks into the chamber, being a former health minister I note he will be very keen to hear my thoughts on this. The Prime Minister visited my electorate when he was health minister and I appreciated that very much. The Prime Minister would understand the situation in parts of my electorate. We must allow people to have ready access to affordable health care. There is no more important a role for the government and I call upon the Prime Minister to consider the needs of my constituents, as he goes into the budget, in what I understand could be detrimental changes to the Medicare system as we know it.
South Australian Election

Mr WILLIAMS (Hindmarsh) (13:58): I am concerned for the future job opportunities of my children Sasha and Joshua in South Australia as a result of the last 12 years of a Labor government. So are state Liberal leader Steven Marshall and another fine candidate Cory Windward in Mitchell who have both spoken passionately about future job opportunities for their children. We all know the South Australian economy is struggling. Deloittes in the December 2013 economic forecast found South Australia's potential economic growth to be the worst of all states in 2014. Only seven per cent of South Australian small businesses are supportive of state Labor government policies. The South Australian Centre for Economic Studies says that the outlook is highly uncertain.

Steven Marshall has a business background, he has a background in the not-for-profit sector and he has a background in the environment, as do the state candidates in my area of Hindmarsh. Joe Barry is a fine businessman with an education background, who made a great announcement about Henley Square recently. Terina Monteagle has been greatly supportive of local sports clubs. David Speirs and Carolyn Habib are local councillors who have led the charge in their area. We have Liz Davies, Serge Ambrose and Glenda Noble and we make special mention of a seat close to my electorate and Scott Roberts in Enfield. I congratulate all these fine candidates for putting themselves forward and looking to change the state Labor government, making South Australia a better place.

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

Debate interrupted.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Qantas

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (13:59): My question is to the Prime Minister. Does the Prime Minister acknowledge that the future of Qantas is a matter of national importance and, if so, why did the Prime Minister refuse to speak in the national parliamentary debate on the Qantas Sale Act before the government shut it down?

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Prime Minister) (14:00): Of course the future of Qantas is absolutely vital, and that is why it is important that the parliament consider and deal with the bill that the government put before the parliament today to liberate Qantas from the shackles that it currently operates under. I say to members opposite: Labor was good enough to free Qantas from government ownership; now it has got to be good enough to liberate it from the restrictions under which it operates. Labor was good enough all those years ago to sell Qantas; now it has to be good enough to liberate Qantas. All the government is asking for is for Qantas to get the same deal that Virgin gets. That is all we are asking. That is all we want. If it is good enough for Virgin, why isn't it good enough for Qantas too?

Let me remind the Leader of the Opposition that Virgin employs almost 10,000 Australians. It flies almost 20 million Australians every year. It operates some 140 planes here in Australia. It services planes in Australia. And you know, Madam Speaker, Virgin is growing. Why doesn't the Leader of the Opposition want to give the same deal to Qantas that he is prepared to accept for Virgin?
Mr Burke: Speaker, a point of order under standing order 104. It was about the Prime Minister's refusal to participate in the debate.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr ABBOTT: I am here participating in a debate over Qantas. I have done little else in question time over the last five days. I say to the opposition: it is one thing to participate in a debate. What about participating in a rescue? That is what I ask. What about participating in a rescue by giving Qantas the same fair deal that Virgin enjoys?

Economy

Mr GOODENOUGH (Moore) (14:02): My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister update the House on progress in delivering the government's plan for a stronger and more prosperous economy?

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Prime Minister) (14:02): I thank the member for Moore for his question. While obviously there is a long way to go, there are significant positive signs. Yesterday the statistician showed that growth was slightly above market expectations. Confidence is up, export volumes are up strongly and housing starts are up strongly. The news today is that retail sales were up 1.2 per cent in January. That is a very strong result that gives us the strongest year-to-year retail figures in almost five years.

But there is so much more to do and it is the task of government to get the fundamentals right. That means getting taxes down, getting red tape down, getting productivity up and building the infrastructure that our businesses need, because if we can do all that there will be more jobs and more prosperity for all Australians, including the people of Moore. It all starts with repealing the carbon tax, and it is worth reminding the House of what the leaders of the four biggest business groups in Australia said yesterday: Australia’s carbon tax is one of the highest in the world.

This is the important statement:

It is making our key industries less competitive every day it stays in place.

Every day it stays in place, it is making our key industries less competitive. They go on:

For small business especially, this has been a major burden that has reduced profitability, suppressed employment and added to already difficult conditions.

But it is not just about the carbon tax. It is also about trade. Our plan is about free trade, because trade means jobs and free trade means more jobs. I congratulate the Minister for Trade and Investment on successfully concluding negotiations for a free trade agreement with Korea. I welcome the statement yesterday from China's Premier Li that negotiations for a China-Australia free trade agreement will be accelerated—more good news on the trade front.

But today the House of Representatives has taken a big step towards liberating Qantas from the shackles under which it operates, towards establishing a genuinely level playing field for Qantas, towards enabling Qantas to compete with its rivals on a fair basis. All this demonstrates that this is a government which is serious about supporting businesses and the workers of our country.

Qantas

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:05): My question is to the Prime Minister of Australia, who I am sure is proud of the enviable safety record of Qantas,
the world's safest airline. Does the Prime Minister accept that the enviable safety record of Qantas is in no small part due to the professionalism, the hard work, the commitment and the expertise of its Australian based maintenance crews?

Mr Abbott (Warringah—Prime Minister) (14:06): I absolutely accept that Qantas has a fine safety record, perhaps the best safety record in the world. Obviously I am very grateful to the workers who are responsible for that. I am proud of them, as I am proud of Qantas. But Virgin is a safe airline as well. Is the Leader of the Opposition suggesting to this House that Qantas is safe and other airlines are not? What is the Leader of the Opposition suggesting here? Is he suggesting that the Qantas Sale Act is somehow responsible for Qantas's safety? Is that what the Leader of the Opposition is suggesting?

Honourable members interjecting—

The Speaker: There will be silence while we hear the Prime Minister's answer. The question has been asked. The answer is being given.

Mr Shorten: Madam Speaker, I seek your guidance: on a number of occasions, the Prime Minister keeps asking questions and I am happy to answer them.

The Speaker: There is no point of order. The member will resume his seat. There is only one relevance allowed on each question.

Mr Abbott: The Leader of the Opposition is trying to suggest that it is the Qantas Sale Act that is responsible for the Qantas safety record. The Leader of the Opposition is trying to suggest that without the restrictions that exist under the Qantas Sale Act an airline cannot be safe. This is a most reckless and irresponsible suggestion from the Leader of the Opposition. Qantas is safe. I am proud of Qantas. I am proud of the workers. Virgin is safe. I am equally—

Mr Danby: What about China Southern?

The Speaker: The member for Melbourne Ports will withdraw.

Mr Danby: Madam Speaker, my comments were about the safety record of China Southern compared to Qantas. I see no need to withdraw.

The Speaker: In that case, he can remove himself under 94(a).

The member for Melbourne Ports then left the chamber.

Mr Albanese: Madam Speaker, on relevance: the question went to whether Qantas's safety record was related to its workforce—

The Speaker: The member will resume his seat. Has the Prime Minister finished his answer? We had the Leader of the Opposition attempting a point of relevance. We can only have a question.

Mr Shorten interjecting—

The Speaker: We do not have guidance under standing orders. It was a good intervention. It was a good try. The Prime Minister has indicated he wishes to continue his answer. He will direct his remarks to the question.

Mr Abbott: In this country we are blessed with two outstanding airlines: Qantas and Virgin. They both have outstanding safety records—and Rex, also a great airline with a great
safety record. The point I wish to make is that Qantas's safety record does not depend upon
the Qantas Sale Act, and it is reckless of the Leader of the Opposition to suggest that it does.

**Qantas**

Mr HOGAN (Page) (14:10): My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister and the
Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development: will the minister outline to the House
what impact the passage of the Qantas Sale Amendment Bill will have on regional areas?

Mr TRUSS (Wide Bay—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and
Regional Development) (14:10): I thank the honourable member for his question. The reality
is that the future of aviation in Australia is strong. This is a country that is well suited to
aviation. It is a large country with our population concentrated in large urban areas. We have
comparatively safe flying conditions and, obviously, as a nation an excellent safety record in
aviation.

Sydney-Melbourne, Sydney-Brisbane and Brisbane-Melbourne are all in the top 20 busiest
routes in the world, so there is enormous potential for aviation to prosper in this country. But
it does need to work in an environment which is supportive, which encourages investment and
which gives the airlines the opportunity to provide the best possible services in the most
economical way.

Costs are high in Australia, and some of those costs are unavoidable but others are not. We
do not need to have a carbon tax added to the cost of everything that we do. We do not need
to have a mining tax, which in fact discourages mining investment and therefore limits the
capacity of one of the biggest growth areas, particularly regional aviation fly in, fly out
services. But we do have excellent regional air services, and most of those air services are
carried out by companies which have a level of foreign ownership.

Skywest was foreign owned by Singaporeans for a considerable period of time until it was
taken over by Virgin. Virgin itself has a level of foreign ownership. Rex has a strong level of
foreign ownership, and for that matter there is a 40 per cent ownership of Qantas. All of those
airlines are operating with an excellent safety record and providing excellent services to
Australians. They all employ thousands of Australians. They do not send their aircraft
overseas for day-to-day servicing. They do not in fact bring people in from other parts of the
world to operate these services.

The reality is these airlines exist because they are providing services to regional Australia
and our capital cities. They are Australian in the way in which they deliver services to the best
possible standards. Many of them are globally award-winning airlines and they do it by being
Australian and serving our country.

What we must do now as a parliament is to give them the best possible opportunity to trade
profitably in the future and the support to repeal part 3 of the Qantas Sale Act will be a
substantial step in that direction.

**DISTINGUISHED VISITORS**

The SPEAKER (14:14): Before I call the honourable member for Grayndler, I would like
to advise the House that we have in the gallery today Mr John Anderson, the former Deputy
Prime Minister and member for Gwydir. We make him most welcome.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Qantas

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler) (14:14): My question is also addressed to the Deputy Prime Minister. I refer to his comments in 2009, when he was opposing the white paper proposals to relax some foreign equity restrictions while keeping Qantas Australian owned. He said:
Loss of effective Australian control could leave Australia without an airline primarily committed to our interests.
What safeguards will be put in place for the Australian flying public, particularly those in regional areas? What has changed? What safeguards has he put in place for these proposals that he puts forward?

Mr TRUSS (Wide Bay—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development) (14:14): This question was asked yesterday and was answered very well, I thought, by the Treasurer. It was also asked the previous day, when I also provided an answer that I think was very pertinent to the issues that were raised. I would suggest that the best thing for the honourable member to do would be to read yesterday’s Hansard and the Hansard from the day before—because the answers have not changed since then.

Mr Albanese: Madam Speaker, on a point of order going to relevance: He was asked what safeguards have been put in place—

The SPEAKER: The member will resume his seat. It was a very wide-ranging question. The Deputy Prime Minister has the call.

Mr TRUSS: As I thought the Treasurer said very well yesterday, circumstances have changed substantially over the last few years. We now have very strong regional airlines that have demonstrated that even with high levels of foreign ownership—in some instances 100 per cent foreign ownership—they are able to be competitive in this country and to provide safe and reliable services. Those services have continued through good times and bad. They have been able to respond to downturns in the economy and strong periods in a way that demonstrates the sort of flexibility that a company committed to Australia will inevitably display. There is actually only one airline that is operating in Australia with one hand tied behind its back. There is only one regional airline that has one hand tied behind its back, and that is QantasLink.

We are offering the parliament the opportunity now to enable QantasLink to compete fairly and squarely with the other regional air carriers—just as we are inviting the parliament to enable Qantas to compete with Virgin and other carriers that operate in Australia. This is an opportunity to move forward and I think it is time that the Labor Party—following the decisive vote in the House of Representatives today—moved across to the Senate and allowed this legislation to pass the parliament so that Qantas can get on with building a strong future for itself.

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler) (14:17): I seek leave to table a media release from the Deputy Prime Minister—

Mr Pyne: Leave is not granted.

Qantas

Mr KATTER (Kennedy) (14:17): Madam Speaker, could I have—

CHAMBER
The SPEAKER: I would warn the honourable member for Kennedy not to use props. I have made it quite clear that I have always preferred the ruling of Mr Jenkins Senior to that of Mr Jenkins Junior. So we will have no props.

Mr KATTER: Madam Speaker, I fully accept your ruling but I would just like to table this document.

The SPEAKER: Ask your question first and then see.

Honourable members interjecting—

Mr KATTER: I cannot hear with the interjections, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kennedy has got a limited time in which to ask his question. He had better get on with it.

Mr KATTER: My question is to the Minister for Industry. Half of all airline fatalities come from maintenance and inspection failures. The only airline without a fatality is Qantas. The 5,000 Qantas engineering workers who created this safety are now to be sacked, their jobs and $1 billion a year going overseas. Overseas access by treaty is confined to an Australian airline. Surely, Minister, this must be one whose maintenance is based in Australia—not one whose market advantage comes from a cut-rate, cheapjack overseas based workforce.

Mr IAN MACFARLANE (Groom—Minister for Industry) (14:19): I thank the member for Kennedy for his question, which is fairly wide ranging. Can I just make it clear that there are a number of airlines operating in Australia and another of the airlines has access to international routes, and it is also an Australian airline.

Mr KATTER: And its maintenance is based overseas.

The SPEAKER: The member has asked his question. He will not further interject. The minister has the call.

Mr IAN MACFARLANE: I hope that, by that interjection, the member for Kennedy is not intimating that Qantas is the only airline in Australia that is safe to fly, because that is simply not true. The reality is that what this debate about is ensuring the longevity of Qantas. We on this side are about keeping Qantas well into the future. We on this side want to make sure that Qantas is able to keep flying. We want to put Qantas on a level playing field with other Australian airlines—other Australian based airlines. Those on that side—

Mr Perrett interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Moreton is warned!

Mr KATTER: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The question I am asking is that the maintenance is based overseas—

The SPEAKER: Just state the point of order. If the member is raising a point of order on relevance—are you?

Mr KATTER: Yes, absolutely, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Then it is a wide-ranging question and the minister is in order.

Mr IAN MACFARLANE: Madam Speaker, what we need in this debate is for those who sit on that side—those in the Labor Party in the chamber opposite—to actually give Qantas a
chance. Give the workers of Qantas a chance. Give them a future and get out of the way and let the Qantas Act be repealed.

**Qantas**

**Mr ALBANESE** (Grayndler) (14:21): My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister. Given that the government's proposed changes to the Qantas Sale Act will allow Qantas to move maintenance workers and engineers overseas, has the government conducted a risk analysis on the consequences of transferring Qantas maintenance overseas?

**Mr TRUSS** (Wide Bay—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development) (14:21): The member speaks as though Qantas do not have service undertaken overseas now. He would know as a former transport minister that a lot of their service activities occur overseas. As I said at this despatch box a couple of days ago, their new A380 fleet—

*Ms Owens interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Parramatta will desist or leave the chamber—one or the other.

**Mr TRUSS:** You cannot reasonably expect an airline to set up a huge service facility to do major service on an A380 when you have only got 12 in your fleet and the first one, as I understand it, will require a major service for the first time in about 2020. The 747s are being phased out. You cannot keep a service facility in this country to service aircraft like that. So, in reality, Qantas are already having quite a bit of their service done overseas, including in Christchurch in New Zealand and at other places.

*Ms Owens interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Parramatta will leave the chamber under 94(a).

**The member for Parramatta then left the chamber—**

**Mr TRUSS:** Perhaps a more serious part of the honourable member's question, however, is the issue of safety and the assurance that safety standards will be maintained at Qantas, especially during this transition period when a number of staff are going to leave Qantas's employ. I can inform the House that CASA, the Civil Aviation Safety Authority, has been in discussions with Qantas to talk about managing these kinds of issues and to put in place appropriate plans to guarantee that, even during this period of transition, Qantas will maintain its enviable reputation as a safe conveyor of passengers from point to point with its wonderful safety record. Both Qantas and the Civil Aviation Safety Authority are conscious of the need to address these issues, and I am sure that that is a clear and very important part of their plans into the future.

**Qantas**

**Ms GAMBARO** (Brisbane) (14:23): My question is to the Treasurer. How will passing the Qantas Sale Amendment Bill help Qantas compete on a level playing field?

**Mr HOCKEY** (North Sydney—The Treasurer) (14:24): I thank the member for Brisbane for her question. I note that the best thing we can do to give Qantas a leg up and to level the playing field for aviation in Australia is to remove part 3 of the Qantas Sale Act and ensure that Qantas can compete on a level playing field with international and other domestic airlines. This is hugely important. That is the starting point: a level playing field in legislation.
As the Prime Minister said a little bit earlier, what else can we do? We can help to grow the economy—to lift the tide so that all boats will rise and all will benefit. The retail trade figures that came out today were three times better than what the market expected—three times better than what the market consensus was for January. The international trade figures that came out today were also significantly better than market expectations.

I have noticed during the course of this question time that the Labor Party would never want to let the facts get in the way of an accusation. The claims by the Leader of the Opposition here about the safety record of Qantas are outrageous. It is outrageous behaviour for someone who aspires to lead the nation. To simply sit here and claim inaccurately that the only way a plane is safe in Australia is to have it serviced in Australia not only totally ignores the fact that Qantas already gets planes serviced overseas but also ignores the fact that airlines flying to Australia do not have their servicing done in Australia and other airlines in Australia, such as Virgin, do not necessarily have their maintenance done in Australia.

Of course the hypocrisy of Labor knows no bounds. Here they are beating their chests about Qantas and yet on 31 May the tourism minister of South Australia said: 'The best way to get to Asia from Adelaide is with Cathay Pacific, Singapore Airlines or Malaysia Airlines. Support the airlines that are loyal to Adelaide.' There was no talk about Qantas. What about Qantas—the beating heart of the Labor Party? They shed tears every day for the Qantas workers and yet their Labor tourism minister in South Australia is saying: 'Don't fly Qantas; go Cathay, go Singapore, go Malaysia—do not fly Qantas.'

The hypocrisy of the Labor Party is rich. They are interventionists. They are protectionists. They want to go back to 1990. They do not understand the implications of their words.

Qantas

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:27): My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer to the government's proposal to allow foreign ownership of Qantas. How long will the consequent demerger, the thousands of staff transfers, the foreign investment review process and the obtaining of a new air operating certificate take? How many years and how many hundreds of millions of dollars will it cost Qantas and their shareholders?

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Prime Minister) (14:27): The fundamental truth is that we want to liberate Qantas from the shackles on its operation. We want to ensure that Qantas and Virgin are both competing on the same level playing field. We have had a lot of questions on all sorts of points from members opposite.

Mr Burke: Madam Speaker, I raise a point of order under standing order 104. We have had lots of questions on lots of issues, as the Prime Minister says. We have one right now on how long this will take.

The SPEAKER: We do not need the commentary; state the point of order.

Mr Burke: That is what it is about.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I call the Prime Minister.

Mr ABBOTT: The fundamental point is this: we want to give Qantas a fair go and members opposite do not. That is all we want. We want to give Qantas the same fair go that other airlines have. The former minister for transport stood up and asked earlier today what
has changed between now and 2009, when Labor wanted to remove the 25 per cent and 35 per cent rules. I will answer honestly.

Mr Burke: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Utilising the Mackellar precedent, if the Prime Minister does not know the answer, he should be sat down.

The SPEAKER: I will repeat what I have said before: I clearly did it better than you do. I call the Prime Minister.

Mr ABBOTT: He has asked what has changed since 2009.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: There is too much noise on my left. We are hearing the answer.

An opposition member: No, we are not.

The SPEAKER: If there is no silence someone will remove themselves.

Mr ABBOTT: Let me answer with complete candour. Members opposite have got worse, and members on this side have got better. That is the truth. We have improved our understanding. We have gone forward; they have gone backwards.

Mr Albanese interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Grayndler will remove himself under 94(a).

The member for Grayndler then left the chamber.

Mr ABBOTT: The once great Labor Party, which had the strength, the courage and the insight to sell Qantas back in the early 1990s, has gone backwards. That is the truth. This is a worse Labor Party. This is a Labor Party which has—

Mr Conroy interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Charlton will join the member for Grayndler under 94(a).

The member for Charlton then left the chamber.

Mr ABBOTT: turned its back on reform and turned its back on leadership. What we are seeing today is a Labor Party which has turned its back on Qantas, and we will never do that. That is why we support this act.

Mr Pyne: I simply make the point that it is quite impossible to hear the Prime Minister's answer because of the extraordinarily bad behaviour coming from the opposition benches.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: I must say I am having trouble hearing the Leader of the House make his point of order. I will say, as I said yesterday, there is a wall of noise—I do not know whether it is a tactic or whether it is spontaneous—which will not be tolerated. Should it continue, more people will join those who have already left.

Mr Perrett interjecting—

Mr Pyne: By way of illustration, the member for Moreton was shouting out while you were telling that side of the House not to shout.

Opposition members: Dobber!

The SPEAKER: I thank the Leader of the House.
Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: There will be silence. Sometimes, I think the member for Moreton thinks he is writing a book verbally. I give the call to the honourable member for Macquarie, and there will be silence on my left.

Carbon Pricing

Mrs MARKUS (Macquarie) (14:31): Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister for Industry. I refer the minister to AGL’s submission to the New South Wales Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal that shows that gas prices will be $76 lower next year without a carbon tax. How will repealing the carbon tax ease the cost of living pressures placed on Australian households?

Mr IAN MACFARLANE (Groom—Minister for Industry) (14:32): I thank the member for Macquarie for her question and I know that she is constantly in touch with the 10,000 small businesses that operate in her electorate and acutely aware that they are facing increased energy bills because of the carbon tax. At a time when being competitive and efficient is so important for small business, they do not need this carbon tax to continue a day longer than today.

It is not just the small businesses in the member for Macquarie's electorate. There are of course small businesses all over New South Wales and all over Australia who are paying higher electricity and gas bills because those who sit opposite us are being obstructionist in the removal of a carbon tax, which Australia has already voted on at the last election in support of the position that those on this side of the table took—that is, to remove the carbon tax.

Along with small business, 1.2 million households in New South Wales are getting hit with this carbon tax every time they turn on their lights, every time they turn on their gas cookers and every time they heat hot water, yet those who sit opposite are quite happy, as the member for Macquarie has said, to allow the increase in electricity and gas bills not only in New South Wales but also right around Australia. They are quite happy to see the carbon tax continue and every Australian business get hit in the hip pocket because of the carbon tax and the higher electricity bills that go with it.

This point was highlighted by AGL, who supply electricity to residents in Sydney, Wollongong and Newcastle, in their submission to the New South Wales Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal. AGL noted that gas prices will be 5.6 per cent higher with a carbon tax than they otherwise would have been and that households would save money as a result of its removal. Those are AGL’s words. What we want the Labor Party to do is realise that they are hurting big business, small business and households by this belligerent behaviour of opposing the removal of the carbon tax.

We have already seen the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry say:

Acting now to repeal the carbon tax would boost business confidence and should be part of a broader national push to reduce high energy costs.

Those who sit opposite are in favour of higher energy costs for small business and higher energy costs for households, and they should stop and think of others.
Qantas

Mr THISTLETHWAITE (Kingsford Smith) (14:35): My question is to the Prime Minister. Prime Minister, a large number of Qantas workers in my electorate are now losing their jobs. Many of them have contacted me over the past couple of days in a distressed state. What plans does your government have to support these workers and their families?

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Prime Minister) (14:35): It is a good question and it is tragic. It is absolutely tragic for any worker to get the news that his or her job is redundant. There is no doubt about that. It is absolutely tragic. There are two things that governments can do for workers in a situation like that. First of all, we can ensure that there are strong and effective employment services that can help people in those very difficult circumstances, and I am confident that we do have strong and effective employment services to help. The second thing we can do is try to ensure that the economy is strong so that if one job stops another job can start, and that is what we are determined to do by cutting taxes, reducing red tape, boosting productivity and improving our infrastructure. That is the best thing that we can do.

The other thing that we should try to do is ensure that—

Ms Hall interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Shortland will desist.

Mr ABBOTT: The business that is shedding staff is able to restructure so that it can become competitive and once more have a strong future, and, in Qantas's case, continue to be one of the world's great airlines. That is what we are determined to do—to ensure that Qantas will remain one of the world's great airlines. The Leader of the Opposition constantly bickers across the table. He is bickering across the table now: 'Qantas won't be Australian.' Is the Leader of the Opposition seriously suggesting that a company like Virgin is somehow un-Australian? Is that what he is really saying—that Virgin is somehow un-Australian, even though it employs almost 10,000 Australians, flies more than 20 million Australians around the country every year—

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: There will be silence on my left.

Mr ABBOTT: and services some 140 planes, nearly all in this country? I want Qantas to have a strong future. That is why I am prepared to establish a level playing field for Qantas. The Labor Party, back in 2009, wanted to create a level playing field for Qantas but lost its nerve.

Ms Macklin interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Jagajaga will desist or leave—one or the other.

Mr ABBOTT: This government will not lose its nerve on this subject. We will ensure not just that Qantas is sold but that Qantas is finally free. That is what we want.

Carbon Pricing

Mr CHRISTENSEN (Dawson—The Nationals Deputy Whip) (14:38): My question is to the most productive Minister for the Environment that we have had for a while. I refer the minister to the list of entities liable for the carbon tax, published by the Clean Energy Regulator on 14 February, that shows that Mackay Sugar and Wilmar sugar refining paid a
carbon tax bill of $1.9 million each in 2012-13. What impact has the carbon tax had on manufacturing in Australia and why should the tax be repealed immediately?

Mr HUNT (Flinders—Minister for the Environment) (14:39): Thank you very much to the most productive member for Dawson in many years. And he is not just that.

*Opposition members interjecting—*

The SPEAKER: There will be silence on my left, and that includes the member for Chifley.

Mr HUNT: He represents the sugar capital of Australia and he is a great supporter of the sugar industry himself. But I have bad news for the member for Dawson. We heard during the election campaign, from none other than the former Prime Minister Mr Rudd, that the carbon tax had been terminated. It has not. Only today, we have more news from the Senate. The Senate continues the strike from Labor senators. Three months and four days since the carbon tax bills were introduced in the Senate—no decision, no outcome. It is work to rule. The Leader of the Opposition has brought his union tradition into this House and into the Senate and he has his boys and girls on strike in the Senate. We would say to the Leader of the Opposition: if you are serious about being productive, if you are serious about cost of living and if you are serious about the impact on manufacturing and other Australian firms, bring your senators back to work and get them to vote on repealing the carbon tax.

What it means for Mackay Sugar and Wilmar Sugar is a $1.9 million hit on their businesses, their workers and their consumers each year, whether that is at the Mackay plant or the Yarraville plant. But it is part of a broader problem, a bigger problem, of a $1.1 billion hit on Australian manufacturing. That is on chemicals, that is on cement, that is on food and that is on glass—all of these great Australian firms. That is why, when you look at the roll call of Australian industry, they are saying it is time for the Senate to vote. We heard from the Australian Industry Group in the last week:

*Australia’s carbon tax is one of the highest in the world. It is making our key industries less competitive every day …*

We have heard from the Australian Forest Products Association:

*We ask that the Senate promptly passes the Bills to remove the carbon tax, as it is in our national interest …*

The Australian Aluminium Council said:

*It is clearly the Government’s intention—and a position that the Australian Aluminium Council (AAC) supports—that this legislation be passed …*

The cement industry supports the carbon tax repeal legislation. The Minerals Council says it is necessary because it is a 'poorly designed response' to climate change. The Food and Grocery Council urges the Senate to:

*… pass the carbon tax repeal bill without delay.*

*Opposition members interjecting—*

The SPEAKER: Silence on my left!

Mr HUNT: There is a reason that all of these firms and all of these industries want the Senate to vote on the carbon tax repeal, and that is that it is affecting jobs, it is affecting costs and it is affecting competitiveness. It is within the gift of the Leader of the Opposition to
bring his senators back to work. I say to the Leader of the Opposition: get out of the way and repeal the carbon tax.

**Qantas**

Ms PLIBERSEK (Sydney—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:42): My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister. Can the minister outline which current provisions of part 3 of the Qantas Sale Act he proposes to retain in the Air Navigation Act?

Mr TRUSS (Wide Bay—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development) (14:42): I am not quite sure what the deputy leader is actually talking about. We are repealing the whole of part 3 of the Qantas Sale Act. The Air Navigation Act is a separate act of parliament. There are some minor modifications to be made to that because currently it excludes Qantas in certain areas, and those modifications will occur. However, the criteria for designating a national carrier are determined by the government. There are a series of issues. They require two-thirds of the board of directors to be Australian, the chairman to be Australian and the head office to be in Australia, and require majority Australian ownership. Those criteria will remain in place. I made it clear in my second reading speech that we have no plans to change the designation rules for Australian airlines.

**Workplace Relations**

Mrs McNAMARA (Dobell) (14:43): My question is to the Minister for Education, representing the Minister for Employment. I remind the minister that the government has proposed a registered organisations commission to provide oversight over registered organisations such as the Health Services Union. What other measures has the government implemented to ensure workers are protected, and what hurdles exist to their implementation?

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Education) (14:44): Madam Speaker, I can assure you I will not be using any props, but I will be tabling a document from The Daily Telegraph: 'From HSU to prison stew'—

Mr Shorten interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will desist.

Mr PYNE: at the end of my answer. I thank the Leader of the Opposition for pointing it out to the House.

This week we were starkly reminded of why we need a registered organisations commission. The Daily Telegraph's front page story of Tuesday, 'From HSU to prison stew', about the former federal president of the Labor Party Michael Williamson's spectacular fall from grace reminded us all of why we needed a registered organisations commission. The government's response to the horrific stories out of the HSU, to the ripping off of workers by dodgy union officials, was to bring forward a registered organisations commission, amongst other things like a royal commission and the Australian Building and Construction Commission.

The Leader of the Opposition's response has been to reject that. His response was to reach inside his pocket for his trusty union membership card that he apparently brings into the parliament every day and, like a lucky rabbit's foot, a little talisman, to give it a rub and to realise that his job was to jump to the tune of the union leadership. And that is what he did. On this occasion, the Geppetto to the Leader of the Opposition's Pinocchio is Tony Sheldon.
from the Transport Workers Union on Qantas—the little puppet, the Leader of the Opposition, was doing the bidding of, this time, Tony Sheldon from the TWU.

But I have found some more examples of links between the Labor leadership and the union movement. They are not hard to find. Imagine my surprise, when I was searching the Leader of the Opposition's website, billshorten.com.au, to discover that the registrant of the website is the Australian Workers Union! So the Australian Workers Union does not even allow poor Pinocchio to have his own website. Geppetto makes sure that they keep a close watch on the Leader of the Opposition by being the registrant of his website, billshorten.com.au. If it is wrong you can correct the record, but it says 'the Australian Workers Union'. They do not even let him run his own website.

What we would like to see the Leader of the Opposition do is to reverse his position—to put the worker first, not the union leader first. He can do it on Qantas. He can do it on the Registered Organisations Commission. He can do it on the Australian Building and Construction Commission. He can do it on the royal commission. He can pay back the $267,000 of HSU members' money that the former member for Dobell used to get elected in 2007. I table the front page of The Daily Telegraph, 'HSU to prison stew'. I am tabling that, but I do not think that I will table the registrant because he can get that himself.

Qantas

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:47): My question is to the Prime Minister. Last night, the Treasurer said, in relation to the government's policy on Qantas:… our Plan B is our Plan A …

Why is the government's only plan for Qantas an idea that the Deputy Prime Minister has described as a waste of time and a waste of political energy?

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Prime Minister) (14:48): We have got plenty of debating points from the Leader of the Opposition, but what the people of Australia want and what the workers of Qantas want is a real plan to give their airline a strong future, to ensure that Qantas remains one of the world's great airlines. There are two elements to our plan. The first is to repeal part 3 of the Qantas Sale Act, which will give Qantas exactly the same conditions that their principal rival, Virgin, faces. The other element of our plan—plan B, if you like—is to repeal the carbon tax. That is our plan B. Plan A is to repeal part 3 of the Qantas Sale Act; plan B is to repeal the carbon tax, because the carbon tax has been a $106 million hit on jobs at Qantas in the last financial year and it has been a $58 million hit on jobs at Qantas in the current half year. That is the truth.

So members opposite—and I accept that they want, in their own way, to help the workers of Qantas—want to help the workers of Qantas, but they oppose the means of helping them. They will the end, but they do not permit the means. That is the problem, because the only way to help Qantas right now is to get rid of the shackles that are holding it back, and that means repealing the sale act and repealing the carbon tax. That is the very best thing that the Leader of the Opposition could do for the workers of Qantas right now. I say: let us help Qantas. And I say to the Leader of the Opposition: just have the position today that you wanted to have in 2009 when you wanted to remove the 25 per cent and 35 per cent restrictions on Qantas but lost your nerve. Well, this government will not lose its nerve, and
this government will never, never turn its back on Qantas. We will do what is necessary to ensure that Qantas continues to be one of the world's great airlines.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER (14:50): Before I call the honourable member for O'Connor, I would like to advise the House that we have with us in the gallery the Hon. Abraham Sumanthiran MP, a member of the Sri Lankan parliament. We make you most welcome.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Health

Mr WILSON (O'Connor) (14:50): My question is to the Minister for Health. I refer the minister to the Karratha GP superclinic in Western Australia that was promised more than three years ago, is still not open, and is yet to see a single patient. How have the delays to this clinic affected the delivery of health services in Karratha?

Mr DUTTON (Dickson—Minister for Health and Minister for Sport) (14:51): I thank the member for his question. He is a great champion of rural health services. And it is great to see John Anderson up in the gallery today; he did a lot for rural health services around the country. This government is intent on making sure that we can get money back to front-line services. Labor left an incredible mess for us—accumulated deficits of $123 billion; $667 billion of debt—and they spent money like it was going out of fashion in the health portfolio on all sorts of crazy schemes and new bureaucracies. There were lots of funds spent that just did not go to front-line services.

When you scratch below the surface of the GP superclinics scheme—because on the surface I think it looks okay; it has a good title; it looks okay—you do not have to scratch too much before you see that it is a nasty program. The GP Super Clinics Program has a nasty undertone. You do not have to poke too much into the GP Super Clinics Program to see a really nasty undertone to it.

Who could have presided over that program? You have guessed it. It is our friend who is quickly engaging in conversation with the member for GroceryWatch and Fuelwatch. They obviously collaborated well before, as well, when they were in government, to come up with equally disastrous programs. But what we know about the GP Super Clinics Program is that the program was $650 million of borrowed money—wasted money.

If you have a look at Western Australia, my good friend points out one example, but I asked my office to go and have a look at what the situation is with the GP superclinics promised by Labor in Western Australia, bearing in mind that this was taxpayers’ money borrowed to go out and set up clinics in competition with existing doctors’ clinics. Lo and behold, where they have been set up, the doctors have been poached from the existing clinics to go and work in the superclinics, to no better health outcomes.

But, if you look at Western Australia in detail, Labor promised six GP superclinics. Some they promised twice. I will go through them. In 2007, they promised Wanneroo. In 2010, they promised Wanneroo. It is still not built. In 2010, they promised Rockingham. It is still not built, here in 2014. Northam was promised in 2010—not built. Midland was promised in 2007 and again promised in 2010. It is open. Well done: one out of six. That is great. Not a bad
achievement for the Labor Party. Let us go to Karratha. In 2010 it was promised. It is not open. And it is the same in Cockburn: promised in 2007, promised in 2010 and not delivered.

We will clean up the mess that Labor left behind in health. We will get more money back to front-line services. We will rebuild general practice, not attack the doctors like Labor did. We will rebuild the health system for the 21st century.

**Rail Infrastructure**

**Ms MacTIERNAN** (Perth) (14:54): My question is to the Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development. What discussions has the minister had with the Western Australian government about federal funding for passenger rail projects in Perth? And how does the minister explain to Western Australians stripping $500 million out of Perth's urban rail funding, adding to the congestion crisis in Perth?

**Mr TRUSS** (Wide Bay—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development) (14:54): I have had a number of discussions with Western Australian ministers about the infrastructure program in Western Australia over the last few months. It will be a very exciting program. It will offer substantial additional road and rail investment in the state of Western Australia. We believe that it is important to have a strong and effective program that will actually deliver the kind of infrastructure that supports the enormous potential development in that state.

We have indicated quite clearly that our priorities are to ensure that the freight systems of our nation are working well and that our particular responsibility as the federal government is to look after the interstate road and rail networks. We will be investing $35.5 billion in the next program in that network. That is the biggest program in our nation's history.

The fact that we are intending to commit such funds to the road and freight rail network means that the states will have more access to funds to take care of their responsibilities, which are especially related to passenger rail services. The people of Perth can expect their state government to be able to invest more on passenger rail because we will be carrying the heavy load in relation to building the road and freight network that Western Australians need.

What we have is a commitment to infrastructure across Australia. The infrastructure Prime Minister intends to deliver the biggest infrastructure program in our nation's history, and I am looking forward to the privilege of working with him to make sure it all happens.

**Telecommunications**

**Mr BROADBENT** (McMillan) (14:56): My question is to the Minister for Communications. Will the minister tell the House what the government is doing to consult with business in the communications sector and lower the burden by deregulation? And what changes has he made to the arrangements for his dialogue with business representatives tomorrow?

**Mr TURNBULL** (Wentworth—Minister for Communications) (14:57): I thank the honourable member for his question and acknowledge his lifelong interest in deregulation and experience in small business—indeed, as Pakenham's leading draper. He is very committed to small business.

There is a big difference between our approach to regulation and the Labor government's approach. Labor believes in its heart that government's job is to tell the people what was best.
It believes government knows best. We believe that our role in government is to enable citizens and businesses to do their best, and that is why we are committed to removing $1 billion a year off the cost of regulation and red tape, and the first instalment will be presented in this House later this month.

In my portfolio, media and telecommunications are heavily regulated, and we are already busy consulting with the industry. We have been doing that from the outset of the government, and tomorrow there will be a ministerial advisory council meeting with CEOs from the telecommunications sector and indeed from the media sector, the broadcasting sector, as well.

But there are some very big differences. The first thing is that we are calling them together to seek their views, to get their input, to ask them. We are not calling them together the way the previous minister did, in a classic example of Conrovianism, bringing them together to tell them what he was going to do. A year ago, the representatives of the media sector came to this House—

Mr Dreyfus: Madam Speaker, on a point of order: the standing orders do require that the minister be directly relevant to the question, and he has strayed very, very far from the question.

The SPEAKER: It is a very wide-ranging question. The minister has the call.

Mr Turnbull: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is good always to know that the member for Isaacs, again and again, reminds us that anyone can go to jail if they get the right lawyer. I had always assumed that the member for Isaacs was one of the neo-Conrovians. Neo-Conrovianism is a growing tendency in the Labor Party, trying to bring Conrovianism into the 21st century. But I can see now that he is an unreconstructed Conrovian at his heart.

The second difference about the meeting tomorrow is this: the previous minister had said in New York in 2012 that he was so powerful that if he told telco executives they had to wear red underpants on their head before they saw him, they would have to do so. He said, ‘I have unfettered power’—his words. There are timid souls, neo-Conrovians among them, who would say that we should just have a half measure: simply stop stipulating the colour of the underpants! We are prepared to stand up to vested interests in the undergarment industry.

Mr Burke: Madam Speaker, both to raise a point of order and to preserve the dignity of the House—

The SPEAKER: What is the point of order, Manager of Opposition Business? We have already had one on relevance. You cannot have two.

Mr Burke: So you will not let me do 104 again? How about 91c?

The SPEAKER: I think that he is a killjoy!

Mr Turnbull: We are prepared to stand up to those who are interested in undergarments, who are professionally or, indeed, interested in any other sense. We will go full measure. We are absolutely determined to extirpate Conrovianism in all of its forms and there will be no shirking.

Commission of Audit Report

Mr Bowen (McMahon) (15:01): My question is to the Treasurer. Given the Treasurer has had the Commission of Audit's interim report for weeks, when will the Treasurer release
the report to the public? Will the Treasurer release it before the Western Australian Senate election on 5 April?

Mr HOCKEY (North Sydney—The Treasurer) (15:01): Thank you very much. We have received the interim report. We have not received the final report.

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr HOCKEY: Oh, you have shot me in the heart! What a harrowing hit from Labor.

The SPEAKER: I think we will have a little decorum returned.

Mr HOCKEY: We have had it now for about three weeks—that is about right. The Labor Party when they were in government held Gonski for 60 days—most of it against his will—and they held the Henry report for 130 days and then did not even implement it, apart from the mining tax. So I would say, please, we go through these things in a careful, methodical manner. We consider these things very carefully and, quite frankly, if the Labor Party paid the same attention to detail that we did, perhaps they would still be in government.

Immigration Programs

Mr VARVARIS (Barton) (15:02): My question is to the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection. What action is the government taking to ensure that those waiting offshore to apply legitimately for a place in our refugee and humanitarian program receive an opportunity for resettlement in Australia?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) (15:03): I thank the member for Barton for his question, because I know that like me and members on this side of the House—and I hope those on the other side of the House—we have a very keen interest in ensuring that there is fair access to our refugee and Special Humanitarian Program. I know there are many people in Barton who feel the same, because he has brought these matters to my attention, and I know that he is pleased with the progress we are making with the Special Humanitarian Program, which I am keen to update the House upon.

Our border protection policies deliver many things. The first of those of course is that they are saving lives at sea. I am pleased once again to update the House that it is 77 days today—11 weeks—since there has been a successful people-smuggling venture to this country, and that is principally because of the front-line maritime operations being performed by our Navy and our Customs and Border Protection Service. Last Friday, the Prime Minister and I along with member for Solomon had the opportunity to thank those directly involved in those exercises. I know that those up in NORCOM now and those at Larrakeyah and other places who often through NORCOM will be seeing today's proceedings. They know that members of this House are deeply appreciative of the work that they are doing.

The other thing this is achieving is ending the injustice where more than 15,000 people under the previous government's policies were denied places in our refugee and Special Humanitarian Program because the places under that program were given to those who had come on boats. Specifically within the Special Humanitarian Program, when we lost office in 2007-08 as a coalition, there were 4,706 places in that program. In their last year in office those who now sit opposite had 503 places. This year that program will once again have an additional 4,000 places in the Special Humanitarian Program.
As part of our program, I have announced today that there will be a cap on the onshore applications at the current planning levels. This will enable us to meet the commitment of 11,000 places, a commitment that will go to people who have applied offshore. We have de-linked the program so that if you come by boat and you are sitting waiting here now, you will not get a permanent visa from this government. You will only get a temporary visa and those places that are preserved for offshore applicants will go to those applicants. There will be 11,000 including 1,000 for women at risk. That is what the dividend is of strong border protection. When you run your borders well and when you manage your borders well, then you can save lives at sea. You can ensure that our refugee and humanitarian program has integrity in that the places go to those who we decide will come here, not the people smugglers.

Vocational Education and Training

Ms PARKE (Fremantle) (15:06): My question is to the Prime Minister. The Assistant Minister for Education recently told ABC radio Perth that there is not enough Try-A-Trade for those kids in school. Why then is the Prime Minister cutting $1 billion from trade training centres in schools including around 30 new centres in Western Australia?

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Prime Minister) (15:06): Talking about trade training centres in schools, the former Labor government promised some 2,600 and it delivered less than 200. That is what happened. It made an enormous promise and it simply did not deliver them. I know that the former Labor government in the election campaign made a whole series of promises, including promises in this area. We made it very clear that we were not bound by them. It is as simple as that.

Trade: China

Mr ALEXANDER (Bennelong) (15:07): My question is to the Minister for Trade and Investment. Will the minister provide an update on the progress being made toward a free trade agreement with China, and what benefits would such an agreement bring to Australia?

Mr ROBB (Goldstein—Minister for Trade and Investment) (15:08): I do thank the member for Bennelong for his question. He is a great supporter of good policy in trade and investment. Trade and investment with China is hugely important to Australia, but it cannot be taken for granted. In combination with South Korea and Japan, China makes up 51 per cent of all of our exports. Not only is China our largest customer for resources but it is our largest market for agricultural products, it is our largest market for foreign students, it is our largest market for tourists, it is our largest market for services and we have got a growing and very important source of foreign investment from China.

But while China is our biggest two-way trading partner, that same thing can be said for 123 other countries. The competition is intense. The world is acutely aware of the opportunities presented by China. So we need to do all we can to lock in our trading assessment relationship if we are to protect and grow our access to China in the years and the decades ahead. That is why the comments yesterday by China’s Premier Li, advising that China would seek to accelerate negotiations with Australia on a free trade agreement are most encouraging and highly welcome.
Unfortunately, the eight-year negotiation stalled badly under the previous government—and I would suggest that the unwise comments from the member for Melbourne Ports give us a sense of why they failed. While Labor dithered, New Zealand got the jump on Australia and completed a free trade agreement four years ago. Since then New Zealand's sales of dairy products to China have increased by $2.2 billion. Over the same period, Australia's sales of dairy products to China have increased by less than $70 million. Clearly, New Zealand has comprehensively outgunned Australia. It shows that these agreements can make a huge difference.

Just last week our senior negotiators met again in Beijing to advance our negotiations, and after eight long years of negotiation there is every reason to believe that an agreement could be reached this year. It confirms yet again that the coalition government is in part driven by strong trade policy, not a strong trade union focus.

Mr Abbott: After 21 questions, I ask that further questions be placed on the Notice Paper.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (15:11): Madam Speaker, I wish to make a personal explanation on two matters.

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

Mr SHORTEN: It has been a busy day for the coalition fairytale tellers.

The SPEAKER: Are you saying yes?

Mr SHORTEN: Yes, I do, Madam Speaker—sorry, a little levity on Thursday. I apologise.

The SPEAKER: I think we have had a lot of levity today.

Mr SHORTEN: Let me rush to agreement with you, Madam Speaker. Today in question time the Prime Minister and the Treasurer alleged that I had made claims about the relative safety of Australian airlines maintained by Australia workforces. In fact, the Prime Minister refused to my answer my actual question—

The SPEAKER: No. The Leader of the Opposition merely has to say that this is where he was misrepresented, here is the statement as to why that was not true. It is not a question of arguing a case; it is just stating it as it is.

Mr SHORTEN: Thank you for your patience, Madam Speaker. I have been misrepresented by the Treasurer and the Prime Minister. They have said that I was disparaging of the relative safety of Australian airlines. In fact, I have the greatest confidence in Australian maintenance crews maintaining all our aeroplanes in all our air companies. The second misrepresentation—

The SPEAKER: Before I call you about the second misrepresentation, the first is not a proper use of the facility of the House. You have plenty of opportunity in debate to put those points of view but not at this point. So if the other one is a similar one I suggest you do not put it.

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (15:12): No, I am afraid that remarkable clairvoyance is not right on this second one. I seek to make a personal explanation.
The SPEAKER: Because you have been misrepresented?

Mr SHORTEN: Yes, the Leader of the House today suggested that someone else owns my website domain name. This is not true. The site is my name and owned by me. I seek to table the documents which show that the claim by the Leader of the House was wrong when he backgrounded the media and he is wrong again today.

Leave not granted.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE: ADDITIONAL ANSWERS

Workplace Relations

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Education) (15:13): I wish to add to an answer I gave in question time with respect to the Leader of the Opposition's website—billshorten.com.au. I table the certificate from the registry portal of Whois Lookup, printed on 3 March 2014 this week, which shows that the Australian Workers Union is the registrant of billshorten.com.au.

The SPEAKER: The Manager of Opposition Business on a point of order?

Mr Burke: Yes, Madam Speaker, there was a new standing order added at the beginning of the life of this parliament, which stated that once a personal explanation—

The SPEAKER: Which one is it?

Mr Burke: had been given, if something that was false was repeated in the parliament, then it was open to the Speaker to intervene. This has not simply been repeated; it has been repeated immediately after it was established that it was false.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

Ms PLIBERSEK (Sydney—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (15:14): Madam Speaker, I wish to make a personal explanation.

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

Ms PLIBERSEK: I do. It is difficult to confine myself to the three that I have got here, because the health minister continues to misrepresent so grievously. But I will confine myself to three.

The first is yesterday in question time, the Minister for Health said I took health services away from the Australian people during my time as health minister. In fact, I increased frontline services. The minister also said that over half the GP superclinics announced by the former government were never delivered. In fact, that is wrong; around 80 per cent of GP superclinics were fully operational, delivering early services or under construction and over three million services were delivered to patients

The minister yesterday referred to the Sorrell GP superclinic, saying that 'plans were bad for patients'. In fact, three GP and primary care services were upgraded or set up with that money, spreading the benefit of the $2 million invested. The minister today spoke about the Karratha GP superclinic. The Karratha GP superclinic has been offering early services since 2 May 2012. It says so on your website.

Honourable members interjecting—
The SPEAKER: There will be silence on both sides.

Ms PLIBERSEK: The minister also said the former government 'spent $1 billion on the failed eHealth program'. The money spent was nowhere near $1 billion, and 1.4 million Australians now have a personally controlled eHealth record.

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: There is too much noise in the House!

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) (15:15): I wish to make a personal explanation.

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

Mr MORRISON: Yes.

The SPEAKER: The minister has the call.

Mr MORRISON: Thank you. In the Courier Mail on 6 March, in an article by James McCulloch, it says, 'After the Manus Island riots, immigration minister, Scott Morrison, sent a RAAF VIP jet'—presumably a luxury 737—to collect Rimbink Pato, the foreign minister, from Port Moresby to meet with him and foreign minister, Julie Bishop'—presumably in Australia.

Madam Speaker, I can confirm that that is completely false. Last Saturday I flew, not on the BBJ but on the Challenger, from Darwin to Port Moresby to hold meetings with both the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration and the Attorney-General of Papua New Guinea. That meeting was held in Port Moresby, and I am grateful to the Foreign Affairs and Immigration Minister, Minister Pato, because he had adjusted his meeting schedule to enable me to do that.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: You have made your point.

Mr MORRISON: I am getting to the point, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Look, the member will resume his seat.

Honourable members interjecting—

Mr MORRISON: I don't know how this is terribly controversial.

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: There will be silence! The minister will resume his seat. I will say to both sides of parliament: this question of personal explanations is getting close to being misused. It is not an opportunity to debate the issue; it is to simply and succinctly state where you believe you were misrepresented, and to state clearly and succinctly why it is not so. The minister has the call and will move to conclude his statement.

Mr MORRISON: I will seek to do so, Madam Speaker. Mr Pato accompanied me back from Port Moresby to Sydney because he had adjusted his schedule to have the meetings with me in Port Moresby, and I was pleased to provide that support to Mr Pato because it enabled us to further discuss the matters we had discussed that morning.
Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Education) (15:17): 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 and the Hansard.

Access to Committee Documents

The SPEAKER (15:18): Pursuant to the resolution of the Senate of 6 September 1984 and the House of Representatives of 11 October 1984, I present reports on the access to committee documents.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS

Report No. 22 of 2013-14

The SPEAKER (15:18): I present the Auditor-General's Performance Audit No. 22 of 2013-14 entitled Air warfare destroyer program: Department of Defence; Defence Materiel Organisation.

Ordered that the report be made a parliamentary paper.

Mr Burke: Madam Speaker, I draw to your attention that it has become a very common practice when you are on your feet for members to be wandering around the chamber. It was happening just then with the minister for immigration, and I simply draw it to your attention.

The SPEAKER: I thank the Manager of Opposition Business, and take the opportunity to remind people to pay attention to when the chair is on her feet in order that we can comply with standing orders. I am about to stand again, so the minister for immigration might move quickly.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Western Australia: Infrastructure

The SPEAKER (15:19): I have received a letter from the honourable member for Perth proposing that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely:

The effect of the Government’s harsh budget cuts on infrastructure investment in Western Australia and on Western Australian families.

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 MacTIERNAN (Perth) (15:20): Thank you, Madam Speaker. This will be a debate about which party has delivered for Western Australia, and I will be focusing very much on the area of infrastructure. It was the federal Labor government that brought home the bacon after years of an eastern-state-centric Howard government. It was certainly the federal Labor government that got on board and supported the economic infrastructure that we needed in Western Australia. I would really like to set out some of these facts.

During its time in government, Labor more than doubled transport expenditure across Western Australia. If we take a look at our six budgets, we committed $4.2 billion worth of
expenditure over those six budgets, over those first six years. That is $700 million per annum on average. Now if we contrast that with what happened in the last six years of the Howard government—I am being generous; I am just looking at those last six years of the Howard government—their average annual expenditure was $318 million. So $1.9 billion over their last six budgets, compared to our $4.2 billion. It is absolutely clear who has in fact done the heavy lifting in the development of infrastructure.

I want to talk about the extreme disengagement that we found under the Howard government to the needs of the mining community in the Pilbara. We had two projects that desperately needed to be funded. One was the realignment of the Great Northern Highway through Port Hedland, a $250 million project. The second was the duplication of the Dampier Highway, a $123 million project in and around Karratha and Dampier. The Howard government just simply would not fund these projects. They said, 'These are not on our national transport plan.' We are talking about Port Hedland and Karratha. The national transport plan, which had been developed by the coalition government—which always gives the transport portfolio to the National Party—built 'roads of National Party importance', not roads of national importance—'RONIs' we used to call them.

I have said this before in the House but let me remind you: on that national transport network we had Tamworth, the country and western music capital, we had Mildura, the raisin capital, and we had Shepparton, despite the best endeavours of the Prime Minister, Mr Abbott, and company. But it did not include Port Hedland or the Burrup Peninsula. Indeed, at the ministerial council meeting, when I pointed this out to the coalition minister, he said, 'What's the Burrup?', not 'Where's the Burrup?' This showed how eastern-state-centric this government had indeed become. But Labor got it. In the lead-up to the 2007 election, the Labor team committed to and over the next four years subsequently went on to deliver those two absolutely key projects into the biggest mining areas in Western Australia. The level of federal assistance has been unprecedented across the state. It included important projects in Perth—road, rail, passenger and freight transport.

Mr Briggs interjecting—

Ms MacTIERNAN: I know you are the Shane Warne of the Liberal Party, but just hold off on the sledging—I only have 10 minutes. If I had 30 minutes, I would love to engage with you, Sweetheart, but I am not going to because I am going to focus on exposing you guys for the reality of your hypocrisy and your failure to invest in Western Australia. The trajectory of this failure to invest in Western Australia continues today. The Abbott government has made very clear that they are ripping $500 million of expenditure from WA—expenditure already in the budget which they are removing. They have said the reason is that they do not do urban rail, although, I did notice the Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development was 'wombling' around Perth City Link the other day, marvelling at the project, talking about this fabulous urban rail project, which was two-thirds funded by federal Labor. But now we are not going to do that. We are not going to invest in urban rail. This is a massive problem for Western Australia, a massive problem for Perth.

Perth, which accounts for around 76 per cent of Western Australia's population, is growing with around 1,000 people per week coming into our state and we desperately need to expand our transport network. Even the conservative Premier Colin Barnett recognises that there is an urgent need for expanding our road network. Indeed small business recognises it. Businesses
generally recognise it. In a recent RAC survey, they found that 83 per cent of businesses in Perth are reporting that traffic congestion is having a negative outcome on their operations. So we have this massive problem.

Premier Barnett went to the last election having cobbled together a couple of public transport projects, very critical projects, which would have helped. Of course, these were all predicated on receiving federal funding but the federal government has said no. Today we have heard another 'womble-ish' answer come forward saying, 'That's not a problem because we're investing more in roads and so we'll free up all of this money.' When we look at what you are going to do over the next five years, we see that there is not a single road project that was not already in the budget. There is not one single cent more in road projects that you have committed to that which was not already in the last Labor budget. We had those projects, plus we had the $500 million of rail expenditure. You are taking that rail expenditure out. So that is a net loss to Western Australia of $500 million. You cannot explain that away.

I know you are going to pop up and talk about the mining tax. You are using it as a magic pudding. You say on the one hand, 'We don't get any money from the mining tax'; on the other hand you say that it is destroying the Western Australia economy. I want to say to you that there are three companies in Western Australia that would be the most likely candidates for paying the mining tax. Rio Tinto's full-year profit for last year was $3.7 billion—a record profit. BHP Billiton's half-year profit was $7.8 billion. FMG's half-year profit was $1.7 billion. All of these were record profits. The reality is that you are reverting to the days of the Howard government where you are not giving Western Australia a fair share—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Craig Kelly): I remind the member for Perth that she should direct her comments through the chair.

Ms Mac Tiernan: Thank you.

Mr Briggs interjecting—

Ms Mac Tiernan: Mate, you should be in bloody local government, if that is the case. The facts are very clear: under federal Labor, $700 million per year delivered for transport infrastructure in Western Australia; during the Howard years, less than half that; and in this coming budget we are going to see not one cent extra for roads but we will see $500 million less, taken out of that budget, for our urban rail project. Let's get these facts right.

Mr Briggs interjecting—

Ms Mac Tiernan: Thank you, you're so helpful! Can you put our $500 million back? (Time expired)

Mr Briggs (Mayo—Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development) (15:30): Mr Deputy Speaker, to start with I must say: stranger in the House! That is not the person who was on the corflutes at the election campaign. Stranger in the House, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr Gray: Mr Deputy Speaker, on a point of order: can you draw his attention to the subject of the MPI.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Craig Kelly): He has only just commenced. The assistant minister has the call.
Mr BRIGGS: I will take the advice of the member for Brand because I have respect for the member for Brand. It is a big step up from state politics, and we have just seen an example of that, because the member for Perth, who has over the last—

Mr Laurie Ferguson interjecting—

Mr BRIGGS: As I said to you, Laurie, you're not my favourite Ferguson at the moment, so let's—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind the minister for infrastructure to use the member's parliamentary title.

Mr BRIGGS: He has changed seats so many times in the last few years. What we have seen this week with the first reshuffle of the Shorten shadow ministry is the introduction of a shadow parliamentary secretary for Western Australia, the new member for Perth. I congratulate her on her appointment after such a short period in the federal parliament. Congratulations on being elevated to the front bench. But it is ironic that they are trying to sell this as a symbol to WA that they somehow now care about Western Australia.

If the positions on the front bench show care for a state, let's step through the positions on the front bench of both sides, shall we, Mr Deputy Speaker? We have got on that side the member for Brand, who is the shadow minister for resources, a position he does know quite a bit about. Now we have the shadow parliamentary secretary for Western Australia. Joel, you're not from Western Australia, sit down!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I give the call to the member for Hunter.

Mr Fitzgibbon: Mr Deputy Speaker, on a point of order: the minister has just indicated that it is his intention to go through a description of every member of the opposition frontbench. If that is the case then, by his own admission, he could not possibly be relevant.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The minister has the call.

Mr BRIGGS: This is an MPI about Western Australia, Joel. The member for Perth has been appointed because the member for Fremantle has had to step down. The member for Fremantle was of course a shadow minister. The member for Perth is a parliamentary secretary. So we have got one shadow cabinet minister and one shadow parliamentary secretary, under the symbolism rule of the Labor Party, when it comes to Western Australia. There are five ministers on our side of parliament. We have got the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party as the foreign minister. We have got the defence minister. We have got the—

Mr Fitzgibbon: Mr Deputy Speaker, on indulgence: I appeal to the minister to withdraw the remark that the member for Fremantle had to step down, which implies some impropriety on her part. She stepped down for family health reasons. He should clarify that.

Mr BRIGGS: Member for Hunter, I did say that she stepped down—

Opposition members interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! If the minister would assist the House.

Mr BRIGGS: I did not say she had to step down. I said she did step down, Joel. I know exactly why she did. I did not make that reflection and it is wrong of you to say so.
The member for Perth is a parliamentary secretary. The point we are making is a comparison between the amount of Western Australians on the front bench from the Labor Party and the amount from our side, because that is clearly what this appointment is about—to call it a parliamentary secretary for Western Australia. So we were walking through this—

Opposition members interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I also remind members on my left that it is disorderly to be interjecting unless you are in your place.

Mr BRIGGS: That was poor, Joel—really poor!

Mr Fitzgibbon: Check your transcript.

Mr BRIGGS: I will, mate, and I'll send it to you. We have the foreign minister, the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party; we have the defence minister, Senator David Johnson; we have the member for Stirling, the Minister for Justice; we have the assistant minister for immigration; and we have my great mate, the Minister for Finance. And why having the Minister for Finance is important is because it shows how much we on our side care about Western Australia. When we were elected to government we found that the Labor Party had committed to two very important road projects in Western Australia—the upgrades on the Great Northern Highway and the North West Coastal road—and they were not funded.

Ms MacTiernan: They were funded.

Mr BRIGGS: They were funded out of a mining tax that the member for Perth has waxed and waned on over the years—

Ms MacTiernan: They were in the budget.

Mr BRIGGS: Where there was no revenue, so there was no money to pay for the upgrades, Member for Perth. So don't come in here and claim you had all this money from a tax that did not raise any money in the first place.

Ms MacTiernan interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Perth she has had her opportunity and the minister has the right to be heard in silence.

Mr BRIGGS: The Minister for Finance said to the Deputy Prime Minister and me: 'We must find a way to fund these roads because they are vital for Western Australia, they are important roads for Western Australia.' The Minister for Finance said, 'We have to find the money in the budget to fund these roads.' So what did we do? We funded them. In December last year, contrary to the scare campaign the member for Grayndler was running around with, we funded them out of the budget, out of real money—not out of a tax that did not raise any revenue in the first place, Member for Perth.

Just dealing with that tax, for a party that have now appointed, in an act of symbolism, a parliamentary secretary for Western Australia, if they really cared about the Western Australian economy, if they really cared about the Western Australian people, what they would do is get their senators in the Senate to vote down the carbon tax, to get rid of the carbon tax. Of the top 20 carbon tax bills, 16 have been sent to electricity companies. Electricity companies have been slugged a total carbon tax bill of $4.1 billion in Western Australia. If you really want to do something for consumers in Western Australia, for Western Australians, get rid of a carbon tax.
The second thing you can do if you want to do something other than symbolism for the people of Western Australia is get rid of the mining tax. The member for Perth, in a moment of clarity a couple of weeks ago in the caucus—sources have reported—got up and said to the Leader of the Opposition: 'Bill, get rid of the mining tax, it's killing us in WA.' But it must be said for the purposes of the record, to make sure that we are not misleading the parliament, that on 22 August 2010, shortly after her state political career had ended, the now member for Perth said in *The Australian*:

I think there were many aspects of our story, I think the fact that we vacated the field on the mining tax, you know I actually think the mining tax is a bloody good thing and we should have gone out and told people why it was good, why we needed to do it …

That is the problem with the Labor Party. They think taxing your most successful industry, taxing the thing that has made the great strength of that great state Western Australia, is so important. We should do more of it.

*Ms MacTiernan interjecting—*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Craig Kelly):** I would again warn the member for Perth. She has had ample opportunity to speak during this MPI. She should either desist or leave the chamber.

**Mr BRIGGS:** You cannot injure a business enough in WA and make it more successful. Of course you cannot, and the member for Brand knows that. The member for Brand of all people in this place knows very well that the mining tax is killing Western Australia.

We have done for Western Australia what Western Australians want us to do. We have announced plans to fund and deliver road upgrades, not deliver a record such as the member for Perth when she was a state minister: the Pilbara was exploding and she refused to release more land so more houses could be developed, so those towns could not develop and take the opportunity. Don't you worry about that, Mr Deputy Speaker Kelly, when I was in the Pilbara at the beginning of February that was exactly the message they had. Thank goodness for Colin Barnett. Thank goodness for a federal Liberal government that has come to the party and said: 'We will fund—we won't just announce out of a mining tax that does not raise any revenue—the upgrades which can allow WA to make the most of the opportunities, the enormous opportunities, that the state has.' We will work with Colin Barnett and Troy Buswell to deliver the upgrades to Western Australian infrastructure which will ensure we have the strongest economy we can possibly have.

We have funded projects which were left unfunded by the Labor Party. When you hear the member for Perth claim that we are cutting funding, it is a complete and utter fib. What the Labor Party did in their last years is put money outside the forward estimates. That is what they did, and in fact if you look at the difference between the total overall budget and the next four years, between what we have intended to spend on infrastructure and what those on the other side would have spent had they been re-elected—and thank goodness they weren't—we are spending $6.2 billion extra.

We have not even had our first budget. I say to the member for Perth: hold onto your hat, because on budget night on 13 May, I think you should sit there quietly—I know it is going to be difficult—and listen to the Treasurer deliver for Western Australia, because that is what we will do. And the people of Western Australia know that. Whether it is the five serious and senior ministers of the Abbott government, our plans to get rid of the carbon tax and the
mining tax or our plans to invest in the infrastructure of the 21st century, this is best government Western Australians could hope for. We will deliver for Western Australia. We will not go to war with the state government of Western Australia like Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard wanted to and always did. We will go and talk to Colin Barnett. We will work to implement an infrastructure program which will ensure that Western Australia can be as strong and as prosperous as it should be. That is why the Abbott government was chosen last September, and we will deliver.

Mr GRAY (Brand) (15:40): It gives me great pleasure to rise in this chamber in support of the motion moved by the member for Perth. It gives me also great sorrow to rise in this chamber on the need to speak in favour of Western Australia and the place that we must hold in the minds of the Australian Commonwealth government and of this parliament.

The reality of the financial situation of Western Australia over the course of the last decade is that, since the election of the Rudd-Gillard and then Rudd governments, Western Australia saw a massive turnaround in support funding through infrastructure from the Commonwealth. From an average of less than $100 per Western Australian to an average of almost $300 per Western Australian, infrastructure funding increased.

When ministers from the Commonwealth government, when any parliamentarian or any tourist, arrives in Western Australia, they arrive at the airport and they will travel out of that airport on the Gateway project. That Gateway project is funded by both the Commonwealth and the Western Australia government—a partnership to build Western Australia, a partnership not about politics but about building Western Australia.

I took great pride in being in the Kimberley in late 2008 with the Premier of Western Australia announcing a massive investment in social infrastructure in the East Kimberley: $200 million that was spent on schools, on hospitals, on social infrastructure in Wyndham, massively overdue—massively overdue because successive governments, Commonwealth and state, had underfunded social infrastructure in the East Kimberley. It was a matter of pride for both governments to come together to fix that wrong—to fix funding for hospitals, to fix funding for home construction, to fix funding in schools, and to fix funding in trades training in the Kimberley. It was the first time it had been done and it should not be the last time.

My great concern is that the Commission of Audit into the Australian government's finances, which the government have been sitting on and have held secret for the past three weeks, as we were told in question time today—and quite probably for the next two months, I fear—will have a massively damaging impact on infrastructure in Western Australia. Worse than that, it will have a massively damaging impact on education funding in Western Australia. It will, I fear, have a massively damaging impact on hospitals in Western Australia.

It is important in the four weeks left before the biggest ever by-election in Australia's Commonwealth history, the by-election for the Senate in Western Australia, that the Commonwealth come clean, not on budget day on the second Tuesday of May, but before 29 March, before 5 April. Give people at least a week to understand the nature of that document and its impact on Western Australia, because two million voters will cast their votes on their Senate to represent Western Australia. They should be as well informed as they possibly can be on the impact of that budget on education, on hospitals, and on infrastructure funding, both road and rail but also community infrastructure.
Community infrastructure in my communities of Rockingham, Kwinana and Mandurah is critically important. We know that there are demands before the Commonwealth, agreed to by the Liberal Party during the election campaign—for instance, for massive funding for a swimming pool in Mandurah, something which has not just bipartisan support but historic bipartisan support in the City of Mandurah. We know that there are demands before the government for surf lifesaving club funding—funding that is deeply bipartisan but which has been held up pending the secret audit report, which we were told today in question time the government has had for three weeks.

At some stage in the next four weeks there will be an election. That election will be on 5 April. All Western Australians deserve to understand what that report means for Western Australian infrastructure, for schools and for our hospitals. That is not simply a political statement; it is a statement of dignity, of honesty and of common sense. Western Australians should know what is before them when they cast that most important vote in the biggest-ever by-election in Australia's constitutional history. I take this opportunity before our parliament to ask for that. (Time expired)

Mr PORTER (Pearce) (15:45): I recall distinctly in 2007 being rapt, as a young 37-year-old, watching the television when the then opposition leader, Kevin Rudd, ran a prime time advertisement throughout Western Australia prior to the 2007 election. In that advertisement he promised a $100 million infrastructure fund for Western Australia—not $100 million in total but $100 million a year—that was to be paid for out of a share of the petroleum resource rent tax from Chevron's Gorgon project and Woodside's Pluto project. Of course, $100 million a year over potentially six years—$600 million—is a fairly significant promise. Sadly, as early as 1 September 2012, The Australian reported, 'Wayne Swan refused to say this week whether that promise would ever be honoured.'

Of that $100 million promise that was advertised on prime time television to all of the residents of Western Australia, how much did we see? Not a red cent. Not a cent. Indeed, that ad ended, as I recall, with a statement saying that John Howard had been 'ripping off WA' and that the good electors in 2007 should vote for Mr Kevin Rudd. It begs the question: if the Labor Party is the great friend of WA and is doing so much for infrastructure and putting so much money into WA, why is it that they hold three seats in WA and members on this side hold 12? Has the entire population of Western Australia been gripped by delusion? Do they not know the reality of the situation?

I know the member for Perth; I know her from a different context. Whilst I would sometimes disagree with her conclusions, I largely found her to be an organised and intelligent member of parliament. One thing I did not know was the extent of her political courage—courage so extreme that it borders on a cavalier disregard for one's own political safety and rationality. To get out here with a motion, with a straight face, and argue that the federal Labor Party is a friend of the Western Australian constituents and the Western Australian taxpayer shows a level of political courage bordering on the cavalier. I say to the member: no matter how short time appears, no matter how desperate things are, you do not always have to follow the orders of your leadership group. If you look at the Falklands, there was a great rumour of an SAS raid which was to be set down on Tierra del Fuego. However, even the SAS, known for their great courage, refused to take that order—so the story goes—because they thought it was too much of a suicide mission. When I look rationally at what the
member for Perth is trying to do, just before a full Senate election, she is trying to put a motion that makes this point. However absurd the point is, the point is that—contrary to all the best judgement exercised over successive elections by the Western Australian people, contrary to all the empirical data, contrary to the well-known recent history after six years of Labor—Labor is somehow the better friend to the Western Australian people than the coalition. I find that quite extraordinary. I have noted that 2007 promise of $100 million a year—of which not a cent eventuated. That was not exactly the best start to Labor's promises.

What did we have then? We had the $100 million fund—not a cent. Then we had the carbon tax. Then I recall, because I framed the budget in 2011, the Western Australian government had the temerity to modestly remove a previous discount on fines iron ore to raise a fair amount of revenue for the people of Western Australia. Do you recall what the response of the federal Labor government was? It was to threaten the Western Australian people with diminished infrastructure funding because we had had the temerity to raise a royalty rate. Do you remember that, Member for Perth? I am assured that you do. Mr Ferguson said, 'The federal government have promised to boost infrastructure spending by $200 million a year in WA over 10 years, using the proceeds of the mining tax, and this would now have to be reduced.' That is a direct and extraordinary threat—a hollow one, because the tax raised no money in any event. Member for Perth, you are like Reg in the darkened rooms of the Roman Empire. 'What has the coalition ever done for us?' Yes, they will remove the mining tax; of course there is that. Yes, they will get rid of the carbon tax; yes, there is that. Yes, there is the Gateway project at $686 million. Yes, there is the Swan Valley bypass at $615 million. There is the Great Northern Highway, $307 million; the North West Coastal Highway, $174 million; Leach Highway, $59 million; Tonkin Highway, $140 million; and the aqueducts. But aside from that, what has the coalition ever done for us? If you are serious, Member for Perth, and you are taking this back to our glorious home state, I hope you can do it with as straight a face as possible or as good a disguise as you can muster.

Ms PARKE (Fremantle) (15:50): The Prime Minister does not understand Western Australia, and this government takes WA for granted. The Prime Minister has said he intends to model his approach on the leadership of Premier Barnett, and that is precisely what worries people. Despite a rising year-on-year revenue stream, the Barnett government has failed to invest in essential community infrastructure and public services. Funding to schools is being cut, hospital service delivery is being delayed, promises about public transport are being broken, and environmental protection has been steamrolled. That is the model that the Prime Minister apparently admires so much.

The most pressing need in metropolitan WA is for better public transport and better transport planning. Yet Mr Abbott has made it clear that he has no interest in supporting public transport investment and infrastructure. In fact, during the campaign he said, 'We have no history of funding urban rail and I think it is important that we stick to our knitting.' WA's rising congestion needs the creation of an effective second-tier public transport network to link up an expanded hard-rail system. While the Prime Minister knits away at whatever he is knitting, WA's urgent infrastructure requirements grow with each passing week. That is precisely why the former Labor government invested more in public transport than all previous governments combined, including through critical contributions to transformative projects in WA like Perth-Link and the sinking of the Perth-Fremantle rail line. That is why
the former Labor government went to the last election committing an additional $500 million to agreed transport projects in WA, in recognition that a capital city in the hardest-working and fastest-growing state in Australia needs infrastructure to match that growth.

In my electorate of Fremantle, the contrast when it comes to transport infrastructure could not be stronger. The Perth-Mandurah hard rail line—a visionary project of the former WA Labor government, led by the now member for Perth and shadow parliamentary secretary for WA, has catalysed transit-oriented development in the south metropolitan region and now forms the spine of a flourishing community in the cities of Melville, Cockburn and Kwinana. But we also need to see the delivery of east-west links that should connect the Murdoch Specialised Activity Centre and Fiona Stanley Hospital to Fremantle and that in time should connect Cockburn Central back to the burgeoning development planned along the Cockburn Coast.

There is another enormous disconnect between this Prime Minister and the interests of people in Western Australia, and that is on the issues of natural resources and the environment. WA is a state with enormous resource wealth, and the greatest wealth in Western Australia is vested in those things we own and share together. That includes iron ore and LPG, which Western Australians expect will be developed in a manner that respects the environment, that creates local employment and training opportunities, that sustains a healthy WA manufacturing sector and that returns a fair dividend to all Western Australians through taxes and royalties.

We are proud of our resources industry and we are proud of the contribution it makes to the Australian economy as a whole. But we know that the mining boom must deliver lasting benefits for all Western Australians, and we know that corporate and community priorities are not always the same. In WA we do not forget that, in the early response to the GFC, resources companies cut 15 per cent of their workforce through the mechanism of individual contracts. We do not forget the arrangements put in place by the Barnett government that allow mining-related manufacturing work to go offshore. Those are not acceptable outcomes of what should always be a compact between the private sector and the community. A healthy and productive resources sector requires a fair and frank partnership between industry and government, not the kind of hands-off, anything goes, blank cheque approach of the coalition.

The greatest shared resource in Western Australia, the most important form of our common wealth, is the environment—our forests and oceans, our coasts and farmland, our places of great Indigenous and cultural heritage—and here is another fundamental disconnect between this government and the people of Western Australia. Only this week we heard a further instalment of the Prime Minister's attitude to the environment. He believes the protection of old-growth forests is the product of extreme ideology rather than being a mainstream value. There was another Liberal leader who held that view in Western Australia. His name was Richard Court and it took the hard lesson of the 2001 state election to remind him that Western Australians are passionate about the natural environment we all share.

And I can tell you that support for marine protection in Western Australia is just as strong. The careful design and adoption of a comprehensive network of marine protected areas in Commonwealth waters was one of the Labor government's greatest legacies—an achievement made possible by reaching an evidence-based consensus between the wider public, dive and marine tourism stakeholders and commercial and recreational fishers.
So let there be no doubt that, with his disregard for essential public transport infrastructure, his disregard for old-growth forests and marine conservation, and his endorsement of a Barnett government that has cut school funding, mismanaged our hospitals and lied about the delivery of transport projects, this Prime Minister has no idea about the things that matter to Western Australians and the things that are necessary to support a strong and sustainable WA in the future.

Mr WYATT (Hasluck) (15:55): It is tremendous having the member for Perth rising and talking about these key issues of funding to Western Australia, because she belonged to the Gallop and Carpenter governments, which at a time of high economic return within the Western Australian coffers did not realise some of that infrastructure that she talks about today. There was an opportunity for that government, within her portfolio, to develop more than the Perth to Mandurah line. Western Australia suffered at the hands of the previous Commonwealth government.

Ms MacTiernan interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Craig Kelly): Order! The member for Perth has had ample opportunity to speak in this debate. I will give you one more warning; otherwise you can have an early mark.

Mr WYATT: The last six years of the Labor government saw some interesting decisions made. The whole issue around native title and the commitment that had been struck saw the then Prime Minister withdraw that support and that commitment which meant that the Western Australian government paid their way. The $300 million commitment to Broome was met by the Western Australian government and not honoured by the Commonwealth government. The $1.2 billion that was taken out of education under the Gonski arrangements impacted, and therefore the state, without the Commonwealth resourcing, had to make some decisions.

Ms Kate Ellis interjecting—

Mr WYATT: Member for Adelaide, you may skulk, but you were part of this process. Western Australia has not had a friend in the Labor governments. Infrastructure that should have been built was not committed to or delivered on the ground to Western Australians.

It is interesting that you raise this issue at the time of the Senate election, as the member for Brand talked about. I had a discussion with the member for Brand about some of the infrastructure needs of Western Australia. We had a very frank discussion. He indicated that there would not be a commitment to some of the infrastructure required. The Leader of the Opposition at the time, Tony Abbott, committed to some of the major infrastructure that was needed in Western Australia and he has honoured that commitment. The minister for transport has been to the state and has outlined those commitments.

Our road infrastructure in Western Australia is important to the economic growth of our economy—not only at the state level but also at the national level. If we are serious about developing the resources, the previous six years of a Labor government should have meant greater commitment, because it certainly took its share of the taxes that the major companies paid. The imposition of the carbon tax saw companies like Woodside Energy paying $172 million as a carbon tax bill; BHP Worsley Alumina, $56 million; BHP Burrup, $55 million; and Yara Pilbara, $35 million. If we want to develop the economy, let the carbon tax repeal
bill through the Senate. Allow the change to occur so that you do not get in the way of the economic prosperity of both this nation and Western Australia.

There is much still to be done. The games that Labor have played over the last six years and, more recently, in this term of parliament are seeing a diminution of our capacity to grow our economy and for all families to share and prosper in that. There are small businesses that rely on the growth of the resources and mining sector. Their opportunity to be part of that is diminished when you get companies slowing. So I would say to Labor, and certainly to the member for Perth, that you had your opportunity. You could have made a difference but you did not. In fact, you were part of a government that hamstrung some of the initiatives. Light rail in Perth could have been done under the Gallop and Carpenter governments. There were sufficient resources that the state was drawing down from mining royalties. I certainly did not see the commitment from the Commonwealth government to come equally to the table, but the Labor government of that time was quite happy to put its hand out and rip resources out of the Western Australian economy.

Colin Barnett, to his credit, has held a strong economic approach to the development of infrastructure and the things required to provide government services to Western Australians. It is a pity that Labor lives in a dreamer's paradise of the things that they say they delivered because, as a Western Australian, I have not seen that translate into reality on the ground.

Ms KATE ELLIS (Adelaide) (16:00): At a time when this parliament turns its attention, through this matter of public importance, to the effect of this government's cuts and broken promises on the families of Western Australia, there are few areas which are more important to those families than education. In the area of education, Western Australian families were given some very clear promises from the Abbott government before the last election. They were told that the Abbott government would be on a unity ticket with a Labor when it came to education reform and funding. That has been shown to be nothing more than an utter farce. They were told, in the Prime Minister's own words:

We will make sure that no school is worse off.

Those were words that the Prime Minister was quite happy to say before the election but has rightly refused to repeat in this parliament after the election because he knows that they are utterly false.

The now education minister stated:

We have agreed to the government's school funding model.

He also said:

We are committed to the student resource standard, of course we are. We are committed to this new school funding model.

But it was utterly untrue, and they have already betrayed those Western Australian families who took them at their word when they made those very clear pre-election promises.

The truth of the matter is that, if they had agreed to the Labor government's school funding model, that model would include some very important provisions. It included the provision that for every $2 of additional Commonwealth funding the state governments would need to put in a dollar of state funding themselves in a co-contribution. But perhaps even more importantly in this example, it had very important clauses that, in order to get additional Commonwealth funds, state governments had to guarantee that they would stop cutting state
education budgets. But, of course, this government have said, 'Hands off—do what you like; we'll send you a blank cheque and you can go back to cutting your budgets by even more than we invest in them.' That is exactly what Western Australian families have already seen.

In Western Australia they have already seen $158 million cut from their state education budgets. Western Australian families are dealing with savage cuts to schools right across the state. The effect of those cuts has been dramatic and devastating. We have seen Western Australian schools losing 350 education assistants. We have seen them losing 150 education positions in central and regional offices. We have seen 105 Aboriginal and Islander educational officers lost and 600 teaching positions lost. And, at a time when more than 11,000 new students head to school this year in WA, the government plans to cut another $25 million from education. Why? Because the Abbott government broke their very clear word to Western Australian families.

And why else? Because the Western Australian members opposite in this House have refused to stand up and fight for those Western Australian families. To them I say that the Labor Party will make sure that we keep fighting for the school reforms which you were promised at the last election. We will hold this government to account so that when they said that no school would be worse off they are forced to deliver upon that, which means that it is crunch time. In about 10 weeks time when we see the federal budget, we will see in black and white whether or not there was any honesty whatsoever in the comments from those opposite, because if there is we will be expecting to see included in the budget papers the $7 billion in Commonwealth funding which is meant to be delivered in years 5 and 6 of the Gonski reforms. We will not hold our breath because we know that those opposite are too weak to stand up against the Prime Minister's education cuts and, importantly, Colin Barnett's education cuts.

Just today in question time the Prime Minister admitted that 32 trades training centres in WA would be cut by his government under his watch. The Prime Minister's words in question time today were:

I know that the former Labor government in the election campaign made a whole series of promises, including promises in this area. We made it very clear that we were not bound by them. It is as simple as that.

Unfortunately, it is not as simple as that. They were not election promises; they were in the budget papers as a funded program. Thirty-two trades training centres for Western Australia have been cut under your watch—

*Mr Wyatt interjecting—*

**Ms KATE ELLIS:** and you, Member for Hasluck, do nothing to stand up against it. But of course we know that in Western Australia—where there are skill shortages in some areas and high youth unemployment in other areas—they are the very communities that need representatives to stand up and fight for their funding, fight for their trades training centres and fight to end the Western Australian government's cut to school education budgets. Those members are only found on this side of the House. *(Time expired)*

**Mr IRONS (Swan) (16:05):** It is always a pleasure to follow a Western Australian member—sorry, a South Australian member talking about Western Australia. When was the last time that the member for Adelaide was there? I would like to note, for people in Western Australia who are listening to this motion about Western Australia, that I cannot see one
Western Australian member on the opposition benches in the House at the moment during this important discussion about Western Australia. On the government side, there are currently five Western Australian members sitting here and listening to this debate which is so important to the member for Perth.

It is amazing that just before the member for Perth moved this motion she had a nice little photo opportunity with the member for Brand, the member for Fremantle and the Leader of the Opposition. On 7 September when she was elected, she declared all her love for Anthony Albanese as the new leader of the federal Labor Party. No wonder the Leader of the Opposition did not hang around to support her during her motion.

The member for Brand let the cat out of the bag when he started pleading with the Western Australian people for their vote in the upcoming Senate election in WA. So this is the whole purpose of this farcical and ineffectual matter of public importance brought to the House by the member for Perth.

I remember a story that was told to me by the member for Curtin with regard to facts. She related a story to me about a time she and the former member for Swan, who was then the Deputy Prime Minister of Australia, were delivering speeches in Adelaide. After the speeches were done, the member for Curtin approached the member for Swan and said, 'Some of the facts you gave during your speech weren't correct.' His response was, 'Julie, you have your version, and we have our version.' That is what we have heard from the opposition today—their version, which is so littered with nontruths that it would be amazing if the people of Western Australia swallowed the story that was put forward.

As the member for Swan I was also most surprised by the matter brought to the House by the member for Perth. I know that other members have also been very surprised by this matter from the member for Perth, because the coalition government, under the leadership of the infrastructure Prime Minister Tony Abbott, is delivering the $1 billion Gateway WA infrastructure project in my electorate of Swan. In 2010, during the election campaign, there was a commitment to this project by both parties. One party said that it would finance it through the mining tax. We, the coalition, said that we would fund the project without the mining tax. This is a $1 billion infrastructure project that could never have happened under the Labor government because, as I just said, Labor linked the project to the mining tax. As we have heard from the members from WA, that tax has raised nothing.

It is even more surprising that the member for Perth should raise this MPI when she herself, only yesterday, stated her support for the mining tax, saying the idea was 'sound'. As all Western Australians know, it was an anti-Western Australia tax. Eighty per cent of the revenue that was to be raised from the mining tax was to come from Western Australia. This is not a great position for the member for Perth to be taking to the Western Australian people before the Senate election. I note that the WA Senate team said yesterday:

Anyone who was expecting Alannah MacTiernan to stand up for WA's interests will now be sorely disappointed with the confirmation she will simply toe the line for the Labor party and its anti-WA policy agenda.

There is further trouble with the member for Perth's position on the mining tax. The mining tax is resented in WA because it is an anti-WA tax. Labor's mining tax has killed off investments and jobs in WA, and it hurts WA more than it hurts any other state. Surely the member for Perth understands that. We both represent central Perth seats, so I am not sure
what she is hearing from her constituents. My constituents are telling me that the mining tax is an anti-WA tax that threatens jobs and job security in Western Australia, and should be repealed. That is probably why there are 12 sitting federal members from the coalition in Western Australia and only three from the Labor Party. Labor and the member for Perth need to stand up for WA. They need to get out of way and repeal this mining tax, along with the carbon tax.

Thanks to the coalition's plan to provide certainty and deliver Gateway WA, the people of Swan can look forward to upgrades at key intersections in my electorate of Swan. In closing, I advise the people of Western Australia: stay on board with the coalition. The Senate election is important to Western Australia in getting rid of the mining tax and the carbon tax.

Mr ZAPPIA (Makin) (16:10): I welcome the opportunity to support my colleagues from Western Australia and support the people of Western Australia by speaking on, and supporting, the matter of public importance that is before the House. Under Labor we saw the country get the largest ever investment in infrastructure in the history of this country. Of that infrastructure investment, as the member for Perth quite rightly pointed out and I will repeat, Western Australia got its fair share. Western Australia got $4.2 billion during the six years of Labor, compared with the $1.9 billion it got during the previous six years of the Howard government. The facts speak for themselves. It is not a matter of debate. Either the money was spent or it was not, and it certainly was under Labor.

We invested in infrastructure because under the previous government, the coalition government, we had seen a government that had the opportunity and had the money to do so but did not invest sufficiently in infrastructure across the country. We were left with a massive infrastructure deficit throughout Australia. When in government, the Australian Labor Party saw the need to spend money on infrastructure, and it spent the money to try and pick up and fill up that shortfall. It is important to spend money on infrastructure because it has a direct effect on the nation's productivity. Better roads, better railways, better shipping ports, better airports and better telecommunications services, like the NBN, make a difference to the national productivity and efficiency of this country. If our productivity and efficiency are improved, that means we are more competitive, and being more competitive has a direct effect on jobs.

We understood the importance of investing in infrastructure throughout this country. For Western Australia, it is even more important. We understand Western Australia is a large state, we understand Western Australia has a lot of remote communities and we understand that Western Australia is heavily reliant on the mining sector—a sector that needs infrastructure to operate. We also understand that, if you are reliant on a mining sector in which the predictions say there will be a drastic reduction in employment numbers, the one thing you should not do is withdraw infrastructure. That is exactly what the Abbott government are doing. They say they are going to withdraw $500 million worth of rail projects for Perth—not just a few dollars, but $500 million, worth of rail projects for Perth are likely to be withdrawn. It goes further than that. They are going to withdraw $150 million from the Regional Australia Development Fund. Who do members opposite think are the beneficiaries of those kinds of funds? It is remote communities. So, when they withdraw those funds, they directly affect the very communities that need the most help.
Of course, they do those things because they do not care about jobs in this country. They do not understand that withdrawing investment in infrastructure directly affects jobs. They have a fine track record when it comes to turning their backs on jobs in this country. We saw it with Toyota, with Holden, with Alcoa, with Electrolux, with Forge in Western Australia, and with SPC Ardmona—when one of their own members even stood up for those jobs. Then we saw it again, only today, when they brought into this place legislation which is likely—

Mr Wyatt: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member for Makin should come back to the matter of public importance, which is about the lack of commitment from the federal government to Western Australia as to funding, because he is straying to other issues.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Craig Kelly): I thank the member for Hasluck. The member for Makin has the call.

Mr ZAPPIA: We saw it again, only today, when they brought into this place and guillotined legislation relating to the Qantas sale which, again, directly affects jobs and puts at risk the jobs of over 30,000 people in this country.

Again, what they want the Australian public to believe is that they support Western Australia, but, as we heard today, they have an audit commission report in their hands which obviously spells out the cuts that they are going to make but are too gutless to release the findings of prior to the Senate election in Western Australia. Why? Because they do not want the people of Western Australia to know what they have in store for them.

Mr GOODENOUGH (Moore) (16:15): Those members on this side of the House who have been in business and understand finance know that government spending is not the only source of infrastructure. Private sector investment is a major source of infrastructure. The private sector must be encouraged to invest in infrastructure. Labor’s mining and carbon taxes are holding back the Western Australian economy and, in doing so, holding back the private sector in its investment in the mining industry and the infrastructure which this nation needs.

Nevertheless, the coalition is committed to delivering infrastructure in Western Australia despite being left with the legacy of a $123 billion budget deficit and $667 billion in debt. Despite economic and fiscal challenges, the coalition has a significant platform of projects to get underway in Western Australia. The coalition will invest $3.8 billion in transport infrastructure projects across Western Australia, including: $615 million for the Swan Valley bypass, $307 million towards the Great Northern Highway from Muchea to Wubin, $174 million for the North West Coastal Highway between Minilya and Barradale, $59 million on Leach Highway near High Street, $140 million on grade separations for the Tonkin Highway, and $339 million for equity investment in the Oakajee Port. In addition, the coalition will continue to fund Roads to Recovery and black spot projects, in addition to the $300 million for the bridges renewal program.

The coalition government recognises that transport infrastructure in Western Australia is essential to not only the prosperity of Western Australia but also the wellbeing of the national economy. Without a strong economy, government cannot afford to spend on infrastructure projects, and that is why the coalition is committed to making the difficult decisions to strengthen and grow the Australian economy through solid macro-economic policy, as well as encouraging micro-economic reform.
If the member for Perth is so concerned about Western Australia, she may assist by convincing her colleagues to support the coalition's bills to abolish the carbon tax, which are currently being blocked by the Senate. This will save the average Western Australian family $550 on their electricity bills.

Much mention was made of the Howard government's record. For the record, the Howard government delivered 10 budget surpluses whilst Labor delivered six budget deficits—the largest budget deficits in Australia's history. The coalition will be delivering infrastructure in Western Australia without the burden of a mining tax, despite the former regional investment fund being totally devoid of funds due to Labor’s miscalculation on the revenue raised by the mining tax.

Labor's anti-Western-Australian policy agenda is detrimental to investment and employment in Western Australia. Only the election of a strong Liberal Senate team from Western Australia will back up the state's 12 members of the House of Representatives who are committed to ensuring that the best infrastructure deal for Western Australia is achieved and are prepared to stand up for their home state by their actions rather than their words.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Craig Kelly): There being no further speakers, the discussion is concluded.

BILLS

Governor-General Amendment (Salary) Bill 2014
Primary Industries (Excise) Levies Amendment (Dairy Produce) Bill 2014
Excise Tariff Amendment (Tobacco) Bill 2014
Customs Tariff Amendment (Tobacco) Bill 2014
Tax and Superannuation Laws Amendment (2014 Measures No. 1) Bill 2014

Returned from Senate

Message received from the Senate returning the bills without amendment or request.

Fair Work Amendment Bill 2014

Second Reading

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

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR (Gorton) (16:20): I just want to resume where I left off before question time on this very important bill, the Fair Work Amendment Bill 2014, and why the opposition has grave reservations about some of the provisions of the bill. I want to go to the full recommendation that was in the expert panel's review commissioned by the previous government and the fact that the current government has asserted that it is relying upon that recommendation to realise the provision that is currently in the bill before the House. But the fact is that the full recommendation is missing, and that is an alarming reflection of this government's approach to workplace relations, and may indeed reveal the genuine intention behind the construction of this provision.

We know that the Liberals are waging a war on penalty rates, from their submission to the Fair Work Commission, and from the comments of everyone, from their backbench to their
Treasurer. And let us not forget the fact that they are holding back on their workplace review until after elections in South Australia, in Tasmania and in Western Australia. The government, when in opposition, went to them at the last election, suggesting that they would commence the Productivity Commission review of the Fair Work Act within six months. Those six months end tomorrow, and yet we have not seen anything to do with that review, and we know why. It is because they have concerns that the voters of Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia would be aghast at what the government are looking to do in this area of public policy.

To return to the provisions of this bill: the opposition does not consider it reasonable for workers to trade away significant amounts of their take-home pay for non-monetary benefits. Low-paid workers in particular would be very vulnerable if the provisions of this bill were enacted by the parliament. Unless the government is going to implement recommendation 9 of the expert panel, as it promised, in its entirety, we must conclude that it is the first step to an open slather on cutting penalty rates and allowances for Australian workers.

I would contend that Australians simply cannot believe a word that this government says on workplace relations. The government's amendment also omits the panel's recommendation 10 that, upon the making of an individual flexibility arrangement, the Fair Work Ombudsman must be notified in writing of the details. The expert panel itself expressed that this would enable the Fair Work Ombudsman to investigate as to whether these arrangements were being abused by a particular employer or employers in a particular industry. Although the Liberal Party did not commit to recommendation 10, it is incidental to the proper workings of recommendation 9, especially if the Liberals get their way in undermining basic conditions like penalty rates.

But it does not stop there. The government has included a requirement for employees to provide their employers with what is misleadingly labelled 'a genuine needs statement'. This statement is intended to capture 'an employee's state of mind at the time the IFA was agreed to'. The government has tried to pass this off as an employee safeguard, but what it really does, if enacted, is provide employers with a deferred defence to any future claim that they contravened the flexibility term in agreeing to an IFA. The employer will already have a statement signed by the employee at the time the IFA was agreed to, declaring that the employee was better off overall.

The Liberals' real intent here is betrayed by their own words. They say that this provides: … an employer with a defence to an alleged contravention of a flexibility term provided that the employer's belief that it had complied with the requirements … based on the facts and circumstances in existence at the time of making the individual flexibility arrangement, was reasonable. While I acknowledge that the Fair Work review panel recommended that the act be amended to provide a defence to an alleged contravention of flexibility, the proposed amendment is not in the spirit of the recommendation. Again, it is entirely and unfairly weighted to advantage employers, ensuring that they have a paper defence to any future claims by an employee of agreement contravention.

The amendment goes beyond the scope of the recommendations of the Fair Work review panel, but of course it does not err on the side of employee protection. For example, there is nothing here about making sure that employees are provided with information about what
they are trading and the value of what they are losing, especially if the flexibility is proposed by the employer and not requested by the employee.

On the government's proposed amendments to greenfield agreements, the opposition has concerns that the effect of the changes will see employers basically negotiating with themselves and setting terms and conditions themselves—or, rather, sitting on their hands. This is a clear return to the employer-only agreements that were a hallmark of the Liberals' Work Choices.

The government has suggested that the proposed amendments will improve the bargaining process for greenfield agreements by resolving impasses that arise from time to time at the negotiating table. The opposition opposes these amendments because the government's only solution to resolving an impasse is to remove altogether the need to bother to try to agree. The Liberals clearly believe that bargaining is improved by simply removing one party from the negotiating table, and agreement making is improved by removing the need for parties to agree.

If this bill were enacted, it would provide employers with the ability to set terms and conditions that will affect prospective employees without those employees having a real voice. Consider where the government-proposed amendments skew the bargaining process for greenfield agreements to an employer's advantage. Employers can choose to bargain with only one employee organisation which has representation at the workplace, even if another employee organisation represents the majority of employees. After an employer agrees to bargain with an employee organisation, the employer at any time could issue a notice to commence a three-month negotiation period. It is not a fixed process but a bargaining tool just for employers to use when it suits them best. This countdown clock does not stop once it starts. An employer could essentially walk away from the negotiating table and simply wait for those three months to expire.

The idea that good-faith bargaining plays any real role in this process is simply wrong. Good-faith-bargaining orders, if you get one in time, just cease to have effect at the end of the three-month period. At the end of the three months, the employer—and only the employer—could take their document to the Fair Work Commission for assessment and approval. The bill does not require agreement. The only thing required is that the union has an opportunity to sign up, and, if they do not, the legislation presumes that they have agreed.

This is a snapshot of where the proposed amendments unfairly advantage employers at the expense of employee organisations who want to negotiate in good faith. It is time this government understood that enterprise bargaining is a two-way street, not an employer-driven dead-end.

Labor believe in freedom of association. It is our strongly-held belief that employees should be free to join or not join a union if they so wish. If a worker does choose to be part of a union, it is important that unions are able to represent them. But the government's proposed changes undermine that simple principle. It is important, therefore, that right-of-entry provisions are sensible and not weighted too heavily in favour of unions or employers.

Debate interrupted.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The SPEAKER (16:30): It being 4.30 pm, I propose the question:
That the House do now adjourn.

International Women's Day

Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (16:30): This Saturday, we will celebrate International Women's Day. On 8 March every year for over 100 years in countries all over the world, we have marked International Women's Day. It began as a day to advocate for women's suffrage and over time it has become a day to call for equal opportunity for women in the workplace and to demand an end to violence against women.

In Australia it is also a day to reflect on the work that has been done by the women who have come before us, to honour those on whose shoulders we stand and to pay tribute to them for the sacrifices they made so that we can enjoy the rights we do today. Examples of these are: the right for female public servants to keep their jobs even after they are married, the right for women to drink in any bar in Australia and, most importantly, the right for women to have access to contraception and family planning.

Of course there are still battles yet to be won. In Australia women are paid 17 per cent less than men. In Australia women retire with less superannuation than men and are more likely to live in poverty in their old age. In Australia women still bear the majority of unpaid caring and household responsibilities. In Australia one woman is killed every week by a current or former partner. So on Saturday, while we will celebrate the rights we have won, we will also be united in our determination to continue to progress the agenda for genuine gender equality in this country because we are not there yet.

International Women's Day will also be an opportunity for Australian women to stand in solidarity with our sisters around the world. Violations of women's fundamental rights remain widespread in so many countries. Women across the globe live in poverty and deprivation and in many countries hard-fought-for advances for women are being wound back.

This is a topic I would like to focus on today, and in particular I would like to focus on the very great risk that the women's rights that have been won in Afghanistan over the last 12 years might be wound back. When I have spoken to Australian soldiers who have served in Afghanistan and when I have spoken with their families and friends and loved ones here in Australia, one of the things that they are proudest of is the advance we have made as Australian forces and the international presence in helping secure women's rights in Afghanistan. In particular the work that is being done in building schools, including schools for girls and ensuring that girls have the freedom to attend these schools, are things that every Australian can be proud of. Since the 2001 fall of the Taliban, there have been substantial improvements for women and girls in Afghanistan, including increased education enrolments, increased life expectancy and a proportion of seats reserved for women in the Afghan National Assembly and provincial councils. As the majority of Australian troops come home and the ongoing draw-down of ISAF troops continues, protecting these rights must be of utmost importance. Australia and our ISAF partners must act to ensure that the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan are not traded away or degraded. Women must be central to the negotiation and reconciliation processes. They must have meaningful political representation and strength and capacity in public life. Most importantly, they must have their human rights protected.
In 2012, I was so proud to be a part of the Labor government when we launched Australia's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, implementing the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325. This resolution is about the importance of involving women in peace building and post-conflict reconstruction. But launching our action plan is not enough. We must ensure that the principles of 1325 are implemented in Afghanistan and help Afghanistan to develop their own action plan.

This week I met with Sophie Nicol and Ming Yu from Amnesty International Australia. Amnesty is just one of the many great organisations working to protect women's rights in Afghanistan. Sophie and Ming Yu spoke to me about the great importance of protecting women's rights in the lead-up to and in the wake of the Afghan presidential elections in April of this year. Australia has the unique opportunity to use our position on the United Nations Security Council to protect women's rights in Afghanistan.

This International Women's Day I will be thinking about our sisters in Afghanistan and I ask my parliamentary colleagues to do the same. Australia has a responsibility to do all we can to protect women's rights in Afghanistan and there is a great deal that we still need to do. Happy International Women's Day.

South Australian Election

Mr PASIN (Barker) (16:35): I rise today to speak about something that is extremely important to me as a very proud South Australian, that is, the decision that will be made by the electors of my home state on 15 March. It is my melancholy duty to report to this place the very sad situation in South Australia after 12 years of Labor government. Of course for much of the period that Labor has been in power it has been wantonly aided by country Independents, who have purported to represent their generally conservative electorates but always go weak at the knees whenever Labor comes a-courting. That sounds frighteningly familiar to those of us here in the House of Representatives!

South Australia has the highest percentage of underemployment for workers on mainland Australia, according to ABS data released this week. In the year to September 2013, the number of underemployed workers increased by 11,200 in South Australia, an increase of close to 18 per cent. Of all employed persons in South Australia, nine per cent are now underemployed. This compares to a national percentage of underemployed workers of some 7.5 per cent. I think these statistics are bona fide proof that South Australian business confidence has been completely stifled by the Weatherill Labor government. No wonder many are saying that South Australia is in the midst of a jobs crisis—since the June 2013 budget 25,000 full-time jobs have been lost in South Australia. Labor has no plan to grow the South Australian economy and no plan to put our state back on track.

But there is hope. The state Liberals have a positive plan of action to put our state back on track. Only the SA Liberals can restore much needed confidence to the good people of South Australia by providing a state government that encourages their ingenuity and rewards their hard work. I am strongly encouraged by the strong team of Liberal candidates standing as part of Steven Marshall's team for the election on Saturday week, especially those who are standing for seats within Barker.

I wish incumbents Mitch Williams, Adrian Pederick and Tim Whetstone all the best for what will hopefully be their re-election on Saturday week. I also congratulate and encourage
two new candidates: Troy Bell in my home town of Mount Gambier, and Stephan Knoll in Schubert. I have my fingers crossed that they are on the cusp of what will be long and successful parliamentary careers. As to Mr Bell, can I inform the House that he has made for an exceptional candidate and will make for an exceptional member if he is given the privilege. He is a leading educator who took the decision to resign his employment and focus full time on the campaign in the critical seat of Mt Gambier. He is a candidate that has achieved change through his candidature, something that is not always easy to achieve. I speak here of the Patient Assistance Transport Scheme, which will increase by $2.5 million, thanks to his advocacy; and the campaign he has launched to convince the federal government to establish an MRI licence for Mt Gambier.

Dare I neglect the Upper House. It is with a great sense of expectation that I will follow the fortunes of my good friend Ms Nicola Centofanti, a Barker local and proud Riverlander, in her quest to be elected to the South Australian Legislative Council. My state Liberal colleagues are committed to creating business conditions in South Australia that encourage our businesses to grow and prosper. I commend their commitments to cut payroll tax, introduce no new taxes and levies, and reduce business red tape—a familiar theme.

The Liberal Party wants to take Labor's handbrake off the South Australian economy and get our proud state moving again. South Australians deserve a government with better priorities to put our state back on track and, with any luck, they will elect a Steven Marshall-led Liberal government on 15 March to do just that.

**Child Mental Health**

Mr WATTS (Gellibrand) (16:39): No member will disagree with me when I say that the core mission of our education system is ensuring that our children can achieve their full potential and overcome any barriers to that achievement. Yet, often, barriers to children reaching their potential in the classroom are created by events beyond the school gates. One such barrier are the mental health issues that face many children in Australia today. It is only in recent years that mental health has begun to receive the attention it deserves in our workplaces, our health care system and our schools. We are only now beginning to examine the incidence of mental health issues in children.

However, we know that this issue is by no means an isolated or uncommon one. Research suggests that 14 per cent of Australian children and adolescents aged four to 17 have mental health issues or behavioural problems, yet only one out of every four young people with mental health issues has received professional mental health care. So while awareness of these issues may be rising there is still much work that needs to be done to address the issue. The loneliness and social isolation of depression, stress and anxiety are compounded when felt by those who are not old enough to articulate these emotions and those who cannot comprehend exactly what they are going through and do not understand the source of their emotions. Action is needed from both schools and government to make sure that mental health issues facing our children are effectively addressed. This is particularly important in communities which have undergone rapid social dislocation.

This is soon to be the future of many families in Melbourne's west. The loss of the Toyota plant in Altona, due to the negligence of the Abbott government, has cost 2,500 workers their jobs. A further 1,000 jobs at the BAE shipyards in Williamstown are currently under threat and could be saved by the government now if it wished to act. Imagine the impact on your
sense of identity when, having committed decades of your life to building a unique skill set in our manufacturing industries, you are then told that you can never use that skill set again. Research has shown us the emotional toll that this has on workers. Middle-aged workers who lose their jobs have a decrease in life expectancy of 1½ years. The stress literally takes more than a year off their lives. Both the parents and children of affected families share this trauma.

It is hard for the stress within the family home not to be felt by children, creating fears and anxieties that they are unable to understand. This stress has been shown, tragically, to have an impact on children’s ability to learn. Studies show that the child is 15 per cent more likely to repeat a grade at school if they have a parent who has lost their job. So communities undergoing social dislocation and mass redundancies need support services to address the spikes in anxiety and depression that both children and their parents will be feeling. Our communities and schools need to be equipped to deal with these mental health issues so they do not hamper the ability of these children to learn and to reach their full potential.

There is one government supported mental health program targeted at primary schoolchildren that deserves particular recognition. The KidsMatter program is being run throughout primary schools in Australia and is designed to improve the mental health of children by equipping them with the emotional tools necessary to understand their fears and anxieties. At the most basic level this may be by teaching children to identify their best self and classifying their feelings according to their colour. The gains to emotional intelligence through these programs are substantial. Children as young as nine and 10 can distinguish between assertiveness and aggression, and understand what it is to feel overwhelmed and unacknowledged.

Primary school teachers and principals have told me how important they believe this program is to their children. This innovative method of mental health care has been producing results in academia as well. An extensive study of the program was recently undertaken by Flinders University. This study found that the more effectively the program was introduced in a school, the higher the level of student academic achievement at that school. In fact, the difference in achievement equated to six months more schooling by the end of year 7.

The KidsMatter program is the sort of program that will help our children deal with the ramifications of the changes threatening my community. The 28 schools in Melbourne's west that currently have this program in place should be commended for taking such an innovative approach to their children's learning. This program should be rolled out in as many schools as possible across the country, but particularly in Melbourne's west, which is currently facing the mental health pressures associated with mass redundancies.

However, the future of this program hangs in the balance, as funding for KidsMatter expires at the end of June this year and Abbott's axe hangs over the future of the program. The Abbott government should recognise the effectiveness of this program and commit to providing it with the additional funding it needs to continue operating. Given the coalition government's negligence in allowing the jobs of thousands of constituents in my electorate to be lost in the manufacturing sector in Melbourne's west, it is even more important than ever that the Prime Minister supports the programs that will support these children through a period of significant emotional stress in their lives.
Tasmanian Election

Mr NIKOLIC (Bass) (16:44): I attended a dinner in the Great Hall last Wednesday night, and I acknowledge that you, Madam Speaker, graced us with your presence at that dinner, which was about showing support for the forestry industry. It was an honour to hear our Prime Minister speak, but many of the things that he said gave me cause for sombre reflection. He talked about my home state of Tasmania as having the lowest wages in the country, the lowest GDP in the country, the lowest life expectancy in the country, the lowest education attainments in the country and the highest unemployment in the country. And given these indicators of our economic and social wellbeing, it is little surprise that Tasmanians are struggling at the moment—struggling with the cost of living. For example, retail electricity prices have increased by 66.8 per cent since 2008.

What we have seen in Tasmania during the last 16 years of 'hard Labor' is what I can only describe as 'strategic drift'. Yet how did it come to this? After the 2010 election there was a minority government formed between Labor and the Greens. Yet no-one, no party, said before the 2010 election that they would support such an outcome. Indeed, the then Premier David Bartlett said he would never do a deal with the devil. Immediately after the election, he did exactly that.

This was a peculiar minority government. I do not describe it as peculiar because it had two Greens ministers within the Labor cabinet—even though they were peculiar individuals—but because they were accorded the option of removing themselves from cabinet under what the Cabinet Handbook described as 'matters of significant concern'. So when:

… a Greens Minister forms the opinion that he or she could not support the decision without potentially compromising his or her standing within Tasmanian Greens party—

they were allowed to absent themselves from cabinet. What a joke! No Tasmanian voted for a get out of jail card for the Tasmanian Greens designed specifically to circumvent the central principle of the Westminster system and collective cabinet responsibility.

Yesterday in Hobart, Greens leader, Nick McKim, talked about the fact that the Greens had served their apprenticeship and they were ready to go back into government. He said, 'We've done our apprenticeship'. When people do apprenticeships, they learn skills and acquire knowledge and attitudes that prepare them for the next stage of their life or the next stage of the endeavour they are undertaking. It is clear, though, that the principles of responsible government have passed by the Greens and Labor since 2010 in Tasmania.

The centrepiece of the Greens' election campaign is another social and economic extravagance, a Legoland approach to public transport—a light rail system to the northern suburbs of Hobart—but there is no reference to the total cost, no reference to the demand that would support the economics of this project and no reference to the fragile budget in Tasmania that desperately needs less Greens intervention and more investment to replace the social services and front-line services that have diminished under the Labor-Greens government over the last four years in education, health and policing.

Yesterday there was yet another report into the Tasmanian health system, which found it wanting. The Grattan Institute report suggested that Tasmanian hospitals have racked up tens of millions of dollars in avoidable costs. Healthcare improvements in Tasmania under this Labor-Greens minority government have a lot of parallels with Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for
Both can be described as absurdist. After 16 long years of government in Tasmania, Labor are tired and out of ideas. They fight amongst themselves. One of the Labor candidates in Braddon, Brenton Best, is calling for the resignation of Labor Premier Lara Giddings—one of her candidates. If that is not dysfunction, I do not know what is!

Tasmanians, on 15 March, get an opportunity to change after 16 years of 'hard Labor'. To give our state the chance it deserves for a better future, to restore the front-line services and the economic credibility that Tasmania once had and deserves to have in the future, my request, my plea, to the people of Tasmania is: please vote one to five for your Liberal candidates in your electorate. No more than that. Do not nourish the Greens with those leaked preferences that occur when you put more than the numbers one to five on your ballot paper. In that way you guarantee majority Liberal government in Tasmania, and you give our state the chance it deserves for a brighter future.

National Urban Policy Forum

Mr GILES (Scullin) (16:49): I rise to speak this evening on the role of the Commonwealth in urban policy, and I do so in the context of revelations at Senate estimates last week that the Urban Policy Forum's future is under a cloud—and a pretty dark cloud at that. We now know that it has not met since the election, since September, and that it is unlikely to meet again. The member for Bass just spoke of Waiting for Godot. Perhaps Samuel Beckett could also have touched upon this matter in that work? Indeed, the Urban Policy Forum seems to have been erased from existence; the department's website has airbrushed it out.

The Urban Policy Forum was established in 2012, in recognition of the long-term challenges facing Australian cities and, equally importantly, the need to harness the great opportunities that these communities are presented with. It was central to a consistent policy vision that recognised the critical role of governments, in partnership with the private sector, in supporting the development of cities in Australia and working towards achieving more productive, sustainable and liveable cities with our progress marked by regular reporting to the public of the State of Australian cities. The forum brought together experts from across all levels of government, industry and academia to collaborate and advise on how to reach this goal; to serve as a stakeholder forum as well as to develop innovation by sharing ideas and experiences with decision makers and supporting evidence based public policy work.

But now we are witnessing the dismantling of national urban policy, as well as this government maintaining its consistent approach to independent experts—it simply gets rid of them. Closing down the Urban Policy Forum and the capacity of its members to contribute comes on top of the abolition of the Major Cities Unit, attacks on the independence of Infrastructure Australia and an ideological rejection of public transport that flies in the face of what communities need. As even the Napthine government acknowledges, Melbourne needs the Melbourne Metro project to go ahead. Productive cities need strong public transport links. And of course this also takes place in the context of cuts to important programs, which are impacting at a local level. I think about the impact of cuts to the Lalor Tennis Club and to the Epping Memorial Hall as decisions of this government that will impact significantly on communities and also community-building in the Scullin electorate. This is a government that knows the cost of everything but the value of nothing. At the last election, Labor committed to a minister for cities, but the coalition had nothing to say. This silence continues and is
simply not good enough for residents in Scullin and in cities right across Australia. In the
most urbanised country on earth, let us remember that 80 per cent of economic activity takes
places in our major cities. Making more productive cities is everyone's business.

Our local government structure, by and large, does not naturally enable city-wide or
regional decision making. Structures are evolving to remedy this. I think of my own area and
the work of the northern region councils of Melbourne, working together to better serve our
dynamic regional economy and working with other layers of government. Here is a thought
for members opposite: perhaps regions are not only a phenomenon of the bush?

This is a model that is working well elsewhere. The work of Melbourne's Grattan Institute,
also touched on by the member for Bass, is full of insight in this regard, and the Brookings
Institution has effectively and persuasively highlighted the 'metropolitan revolution' that is
turning around many cities in the United States, recognising that cities are hubs of policy
innovation. Such a revolution will not just happen by itself. We need to build a dialogue
around how we make our cities more productive, more sustainable and more liveable. We
need to support and work with our evolving local government and industry stakeholders to
harness all the capacity of the Commonwealth to this task.

As the member for Scullin, I am excited by the possibilities of growth in the communities I
represent. It is a good thing that so many families, and others, are making their homes in new
estates like Aurora and Lyndarum., and that they are engaged about how they can make the
places they are so rightly proud of even better. But this optimism must be tempered by a
recognition of the challenges that come with growth. Building communities is about so much
more than just building houses. It is about finding ways to enable people to live their lives
well, critically to find work relatively near where they live. This is a huge issue as our big
cities grow outwards while jobs are further concentrated in the inner city, as the SMH
acknowledged in an interesting piece yesterday.

As well as the economic costs of failing to manage the growth of our cities, there is also a
troubling social cost. Rates of family violence and the incidence of mental health issues must
be a call to action. This need not be an overly partisan debate. Indeed, the evidence recognises
that the key to success in this area of public policy making is co-operation. Conservative
governments in the UK, Europe and much of the US acknowledge this. Bodies like the Urban
Policy Forum are vital to enabling effective co-operation. I call upon this government to make
use of the forum, not to hide it away, and to embrace the challenge of developing more
productive cities based on the best, independent sources of advice.

South Australian Election

Mr WILLIAMS (Hindmarsh) (16:55): I want to pay tribute to the community groups that
helped out on Clean Up Australia Day last Sunday. I know that many members from around
our great nation participated. Last year I was down at Semaphore Park helping to clean up
rubbish and making the place a more beautiful spot. This year I was out with the Ahmadiyya
Muslim Association and it was great to see over 150 of their community participating in
Clean Up Australia Day at West Beach and also in other areas of Adelaide. I then went down
to Henley Beach, where the Underwater Explorers Club of South Australia were diving under
the jetty and pulling out all sorts of things. It was great to see them working as well.
Congratulations to everyone who participated.
One of the candidates for the next state election, Terina Monteagle, the candidate for Ashford, was out there with her community groups. I pay tribute to the work she did as I am sure did many other Liberal candidates. Terina has been very impressive in the way she has worked with local soccer clubs and football clubs, helping them get federal grants, which we are looking forward to delivering.

Joe Barry, the candidate for Colton, ran a small business and has worked in the education sector. Late last year I visited Henley High School and was impressed with the school's leadership, vision and plans. Importantly, I also sensed a positive atmosphere in the school grounds, watching the learning that was going on with the students and the teachers. Following the visit, I talked with Joe Barry. We believe we should get some funding for the school, given their plans. So we asked for more detail and I am proud to say that this week the state Liberal Party announced they would fund a new science centre costing $6.8 million if they are successful in winning government. We all acknowledge that science and knowledge based areas are most important for our economy going forward. Support for science facilities will greatly assist that.

Back to the South Australian election. Can South Australia really afford another four years, making 16 years of a Labor government? As I mentioned earlier in this House today, I am greatly concerned for my children's future job opportunities. The CommSec State of the states report talks about South Australia's economy showing the worst economic performance on mainland Australia. Like my colleague here, the member for Bass, we have economies which are challenged and interestingly have had state Labor governments for too many years. Domestic spending contracted in the September quarter and in 2012-13, South Australia was the only state to decline in exports.

I congratulate the Committee for Adelaide on their report which said in November last year that for people to stay in our state they need the opportunity for employment in a thriving labour market. The reality is that the labour market is not thriving. That is because the state Labor government is not thriving as well. I have not mentioned the state debt but I want to reflect on it: six deficits in seven years, only marginally better than their federal Labor colleagues who never delivered a surplus in six years; and $14 billion is the forecast debt, which is at the highest level.

The state Labor government bragged about the AAA credit rating but former Premier Rann, Treasurer Foley and Snelling promised to keep the AAA credit rating because, if we did not, it would send our states spiralling into an abyss of debt. He is correct, it has gone into the abyss of debt because they have lost it. We have had five credit rating downgrades in two years.

I want to pay tribute to the candidates who are soldiering on. We have some good councillors. David Speirs is in Bright, whom I visited at the Masonic Homes with your good self, Madam Speaker, and had a lovely morning tea and a forum. Carolyn Habib is in the community sector. Liz Davies runs a successful storage business. Liz has been active, fighting for local issues such as the AAMI stadium redevelopment, and is omnipresent in her community. Serge Ambrose is in West Torrens. We have Glenda Noble and also Duncan McFetridge, the current Liberal member for Morphett. I look forward to Duncan making a significant contribution in the Marshall Liberal government. In the Legislative Council we
have Nicola Centofanti and Andrew McLachlan. I wish them all the best, as well as the other candidates.

I congratulate these fine candidates. I have worked with them doorknocking and at supermarkets. They have been great at attending community events, really engaging well in the community. I wish them the best of luck on 15 March to deliver a better economic future for South Australia. That will only come with a change to a state Liberal Marshall government.

Debate interrupted.

House adjourned at 17:00

NOTICES

The following notices were given:

Mrs Griggs to move:

That this House:

(1) joins with the Prime Minister, Opposition Leader and Defence Minister in acknowledging the service of the more than 30,000 Defence Force personnel deployed in the Middle East since October 2001;

(2) supports the sentiment of appreciation outlined in the Prime Minister’s speech at the welcome home parade for more than 250 Darwin-based soldiers marking the end of their deployment to Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan, during 2013;

(3) acknowledges the enormous sacrifice of Australia’s decade long mission in Afghanistan—the nation’s longest military operation—during which 40 soldiers lost their lives and more than 260 personnel were injured;

(4) pays tribute to these personnel through its support for the national day of commemoration to be held on 21 March 2015 to recognise the contribution and sacrifice of Australian troops who served in Afghanistan and the Middle East; and

(5) wishes the citizens of Afghanistan every success and a commitment of ongoing support as they strive to solidify their fledgling democracy now and into the future.
CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Fokianos, Mr Dimitrios (Jim)

Ms VAMVAKINOU (Calwell) (09:31): An inevitable part of life, especially in an ageing population, is coming to terms with the passing of many loved people, especially community stalwarts and personalities in our electorates. My electorate of Calwell lost one such resident to cancer last year. Jim Fokianos passed away at 74 years of age. He was a well-known and very respected member of the Broadmeadows community. Jim was known for his advocacy for justice, his witty humour and his passion for sharing home-grown produce from his vegetable patch with his neighbourhood. He was also a long-time football—in this instance, soccer—fan and referee, and he always made sure that the elderly people were never forgotten.

One of five children, Jim was born in a small village on the island of Lesbos. When his father lost his eyesight, Jim was 13 years of age and he was forced to leave school and travel to Athens to find work in order to support his family. It was during his military service in the Greek navy that he went to Rhodes and met the woman that he would later marry, Maria. When she migrated to Australia in 1963, Jim followed her and they soon married. Jim and Maria would have celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary last year. Despite his lack of education and his initially limited English-language capacity, Jim was always able to find work. When he was not at work, he was at yet another committee meeting, whether it was for his union, the Labor Party or the local community.

He was very much the life of every family and community party and was usually the last to leave. He was proud of his soccer refereeing—a sporting career that lasted over 40 years. An accredited referee with the Victorian soccer federation, Jim refereed at the highest level of the sport in Australia, at the national league level, for both seniors and juniors. He sat on numerous committees, including the referees committee of management, the inspection committee and the examination committee, and he acted as a referee inspector and examiner.

Jim also contributed to local clubs by helping with their administration and serving as a volunteer on committee executives. He was involved for over 10 years at the Kos Club brotherhood, serving on the committee through the period of club's acquisition of its current hall in Northcote. In his last 10 years, he was secretary of the Greek Orthodox Community of Broadmeadows and District. In December 2010, Jim received the Resident of the Month Award from the City of Hume in recognition of his services to the community.

A few years ago, his beloved wife, Maria, was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, and he devoted himself to her care. When Maria died last year, Jim of course was heartbroken. It was a 50-year marriage. Unfortunately, he passed away three months later, after enduring his own battle with lung cancer. Jim is survived by his four children, Con, Peter, Vicki and Christo, and 11 grandchildren. It was a pleasure to have known him. It was a pleasure to have worked with him.
Mr JOHN COBB (Calare) (09:34): I rise to speak about a good news manufacturing story in Calare. Last Friday I was absolutely delighted to take part in the inaugural firing of the first new civilian rifle to be designed and built in Australia for around 50 years. I am very excited to say that it is being undertaken in the town of Lithgow in my electorate, that part of Australia first found by Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson just over 200 years ago. Thales Australia are set to release three calibres of civilian rifles which will be produced at the Lithgow Small Arms Factory, making it the only factory produced civilian rifle in Australia. Thales has been operating in Lithgow since about 2006, mostly producing small arms for the Australian military. Prior to this, the factory operated as an Australian government owned armaments supplier. In fact, the factory was established just prior to World War I, in 1912, following the government's decision to break free from its dependence on British munitions and armaments.

When the factory officially opened in June 1912 it was known as the Lithgow Small Arms Factory and had 190 employees. This rose during the Second World War to around 6,000 employees in Lithgow, with another 6,000 stationed in Orange, Bathurst, Cowra and other towns in the central west. It is also interesting to note that during the war effort many women worked in a factory. It was probably one of the first places where women did that sort of work in Australia. The factory currently employs around 120 locals and has provided employment in the region for well over 100 years now.

Thales's decision to expand into the civilian market will help sustain the factory and its workforce over the coming years—and in my part of the world that is no bad thing. It is a decision of diversification and, I sincerely hope, a fruitful one for our region, which has experienced productivity losses associated with the general downturn in manufacturing. For me, shooting is both a hobby—it is what I have always done as a farmer—and something that I am very interested in. I greatly value the contribution Thales make to the Lithgow region, to the electorate and to the Australian Defence Force. It is wonderful to have their presence in the electorate.

Thales have invested heavily in modernising the factory yet value its history. State-of-the-art machinery is situated in the original factory buildings on 100-year-old timber floors. You know the history of this place the minute you walk into it. I look forward to the factory remaining in Lithgow for many more years to come. I welcomed the opportunity I had to, as it were, launch on behalf of Thales their new Rimfire commercial production and I had the pleasure of being one of the first to fire the rifle.

Mr HAYES (Fowler—Chief Opposition Whip) (09:37): I rise today to pay tribute and bid farewell to one of my constituents and a prominent member of the Chinese community in Sydney, Mr Thanh Ha. Mr Ha, best known in my local community as the former president and chairman of the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society, passed away on Monday, 10 February 2014, at the age of 92. Mr Ha's hope of a better life drove him, when he was aged 15, to leave China for Vietnam, where he became a successful businessperson. Following the fall of Saigon, he and his family escaped as refugees, first into Malaysia, before finally being settled in Australia with his wife and eight children in 1980. In addition to many accomplishments in the business world, Mr Ha dedicated much of his life to giving back to the community through his philanthropic efforts.
the community, primarily through his efforts with the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society and the Mingyue Lay Temple at Bonnyrigg.

I have had the honour of witnessing firsthand what Mr Ha has been able to achieve in advancing the interests of the Mingyue Lay Temple in Bonnyrigg, making it one of the largest and most recognised Buddhist temples in Australia. Given that the temple had very humble beginnings as a small fibro house in 1982, it stands today as a testament to the commitment of people like Mr Ha. During the temple construction, Mr Ha travelled back to China to engage artists for the design work for the new arch entrance, the Kuan Yin Fountain and the garden of the temple. I have visited the Mingyue Lay Temple on many occasions and I can certainly testify that these works of art are truly impressive. I also acknowledge Mr Ha's outstanding contribution during his time as chairman of the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society, particularly in mentoring his successors, James Chan and Vincent Kong, who do a remarkable job at the temple. I am very proud to say they are close personal friends of mine.

Through Mr Ha's efforts, much of the Buddhist culture and many of the traditions have been taught and practised—particularly involving young people. The temple not only has supported the various religious observances of the Buddhist society but has been a centre of major charitable fundraising activities for humanitarian causes both locally and overseas. Mr Ha's community service and compassion for others will never be forgotten. He will always be remembered as a hardworking, honourable man. I am very privileged to have been associated with him in the work of the Mingyue Lay Temple.

I offer my sincere condolences to Mr Ha's family, including his eight children, as well as to the wider Chinese community in this very sad time. May he rest in peace.

O'Sullivan, Mr Edward

Mr KEENAN (Stirling—Minister for Justice) (09:40): Today I would like to pay tribute to a man of great integrity who was a World War II veteran and a pillar of the Stirling community. Edward O'Sullivan, known fondly as Ted, was born in March 1926 and passed away on 27 December 2013.

I first met Ted just after I became the member for Stirling, and he was a frequent and welcome visitor to my office over the past decade. He was the secretary of the Osborne Park RSL club, a position he held for seven years. Ted ran the local Anzac service at Osborne Park for 10 years and also coordinated the Poppy Appeal collection for the better part of a decade.

At age 18, Ted joined the Royal Australian Air Force as a mechanic and served our country during World War II. Ted was passionate about educating children about the Anzac tradition—as he knew it would be Australia's children who would be carrying on the Anzac message for future generations. Ted established an educational program on behalf of the Osborne Park RSL to encourage local primary school students to become actively involved in the RSL. The program encouraged school groups to visit the RSL throughout the year to look at and learn about the incredible collection of memorabilia located at the hall. The children would then be provided with a healthy lunch cooked by RSL members—Ted was passionate about educating children on the importance of an active and healthy lifestyle as well.

It was my honour to be able to assist Ted through securing a grant from the Department of Veterans' Affairs to help him and the Osborne Park RSL run this educational program for our local kids. Right up until he passed away, Ted was still a very frequent visitor to my office.
and we were assisting him with an application for the Anzac Centenary Local Grants Program on behalf of the RSL. It deeply saddens me that Ted will not be here for such a significant event in Australia's Anzac history, something he was very proud of.

Ted was not just an active member of the Osborne Park RSL but was also involved in a number of other community organisations throughout his life. He volunteered with the St John Ambulance service as an ambulance driver and was the divisional superintendent of the Osborne Park brigade of St John. He was awarded the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem in recognition of his hard work and dedication. Ted was also regularly involved in training local cadets. Later in life Ted joined the Men of the Trees organisation, working with young children and the community in planting trees all over Perth.

My heartfelt condolences go to his children, Rena and Wayne, and their families. Ted was a hardworking, dedicated man who devoted much of his life to bettering the community, and for that he will always be remembered fondly. He was a very welcome visitor when he came to my office. My electorate staff liked him very much and we will miss his presence and his regular visits. I salute a true gentleman.

**Employment**

Mr WATTS (Gellibrand) (09:43): It is now almost a month since Toyota announced that they would be closing their manufacturing plant in Altona, a month since the 2½ thousand workers at Toyota went home and told their families that they would not have a job in the future. This decision will have a momentous impact on my electorate, not only for the 2½ thousand workers now facing unemployment but for the thousands of manufacturers of component parts who have now lost their main source of work. This harm may be multiplied with the potential loss of more than 1,000 jobs at the BAE shipyards in Williamstown in the coming months.

Action is required to address this employment shock looming in my electorate. A comprehensive plan is needed to mitigate the damage done by the Abbott government. However, the Abbott government has still not acted. The Abbott government initially promised a support package for the workers of Toyota, who are currently facing the stress of an uncertain economic future alone. So far the only thing the Abbott government has provided is blame—and they have directed that blame at Toyota's workers, as if these workers are somehow responsible for the federal government refusing to assist the industry and for the loss of their jobs.

What is needed right now is a retraining and assistance package for these workers. The Abbott government must act now and act decisively. Toyota workers are planning for their future post Toyota now. They are thinking about their economic prospects now. They need assistance from the government now.

If the government has no ideas on what this assistance package should contain, it can start by investing in the three-point plan proposed by Labor. Firstly, it should provide a $200 million innovation and investment fund to bring new manufacturing projects to Adelaide and Melbourne. This will allow new Australian start-ups in the high-tech manufacturing sector to flourish and attract international businesses seeking high-tech manufacturing labour. Secondly, it must invest in skills training and redundancy assistance for these workers and support the workers who are unable to find alternative employment by establishing Altona as
a priority employment area. It should also provide targeted employment support to the local employment coordinator in Altona.

Finally, the Abbott government must accelerate defence contracts to bring jobs to Melbourne's west. New defence contracts at Williamstown could secure more than 1,000 current jobs in Williamstown while retaining the shipbuilding skills that Australia could use to form the foundation of a strongly growing industry in the future as the construction of supply ships, patrol boats and future frigates for the Australian Navy continues in the coming decades.

The manufacturing sector in Melbourne's west is facing tough times. However, I know that the Labor Party is strongly committed to assisting the workers who have been abandoned by this Liberal government. I will support my constituents as much as possible so that the impact on families in Melbourne's west is minimised and workers can successfully transfer into alternative lines of work. The Prime Minister may have forgotten the workers of Melbourne's west, but the Labor Party and I will do all that we can to ensure these workers are not abandoned.

**Petrie Electorate: Select Lifestyle Services**

Mr HOWARTH (Petrie) (09:46): A few weeks ago I visited Select Lifestyle Services, an organisation within my electorate that is providing unique quality support for people with disabilities. With 12 years experience in the disability sector, company director Sarah Holland saw the need for a provider with a holistic approach that would give people with disabilities access to the community through flexible, individualised and life-enriched programs. Since its launch in 2008, Select Lifestyle Services has steadily grown. In its first year, the organisation supported 36 individuals and their families. By 2013, that number had increased to 80. Sarah has a support team; she does not work there alone. She has two managers, other employees and a team of volunteers who are doing a fantastic job.

During my visit to the property at Scarborough in my electorate, I noticed a couple of things that stood out. First of all, I walked into the facility and the users of Select Lifestyle Services were in the kitchen, cleaning and preparing food. I walked out onto the verandah for a meeting and users were out there sweeping. They were learning about everyday chores. People with disabilities were getting skills that will help them get a job. I recently held a jobs forum in my electorate, and Sarah from Select Lifestyle Services came along and was a voice for people with disabilities. She spoke about the need to provide jobs not just for everyday working Australians in my electorate but also for people with disabilities. The coalition government, as we know, is committed to ensuring that more jobs are created, and I am committed to ensuring more jobs are created locally in my electorate. People with disabilities will also benefit from this.

The other thing that stood out to me were the relationships. Sarah and the staff at Select Lifestyle Services value relationships. In my maiden speech, I said that life is about relationships. It certainly is. This company is doing a fantastic job. They are not solely relying on government funding. They are making a difference in people's lives, and that is the important thing. They also have a vision for the community. They have a vision to establish a cafe in the electorate so that people with disabilities can work in the cafe and learn customer service, to cook and to run a small business. That will help them get a job in the workforce. I would like to say, 'Well done, Select Lifestyle Services.' Finally, to everyone involved in the
disability sector throughout the electorate of Petrie, I would like to thank you for what you do. You do a fantastic job helping people every day, and I am proud to be part of that.

**Indi Electorate: Women**

Ms McGOWAN (Indi) (09:49): To the unsung heroes of rural and regional Australia, Saturday, 8 March, International Women's Day, is our day. To the 50,000 women and 13,000 girls who live in my electorate of Indi, this day allows us to pause and reflect on women's achievements. These are the women and girls throughout rural and regional Australia who are the mothers, aunts, nannas, sisters and daughters caring daily for older parents, children and those with physical and mental health issues. These inspiring women also organise events, fundraise, volunteer and speak up for positive change in our communities. Like gorgeous flowers, these are the women who have bloomed where they were planted. As I travel throughout my electorate I have the great privilege of listening to their stories—stories of the Bevs, Joans, Annes, Alannahs, Jills, Tias, Sylvias, Karens, Sandras, Julies, Kates, Sues and so many more marvellous women.

During the election campaign we undertook extensive doorknocking. Right across the electorate teams of volunteers asked residents about their issues. We continue to do this. For the women of Indi the issues were many and varied, but there was consensus that they needed support and recognition for their caring roles: Women also talked about improved access to reliable and safe public transport, to reliable and consistent mobile phone coverage, and to local and affordable health care. They stressed the need for appropriate education for their children and retraining opportunities for themselves and for job flexibility, and they wanted to feel safe.

Underlying these issues was the desire for effective representation and improved participation in decision making. Women want to have their voices heard and take pride in their community leadership roles. At the community level, we know women form the backbone of committees such as school councils and kindergartens, sporting clubs and service groups and many volunteer organisations. These groups continue to reflect community needs because of the strong voices of women. At another level, each year we see women increasingly taking on political leadership roles in local, state and federal government.

It is simple, really. Women want to participate in decision making which impacts on their lives. It boils down to asking for 'Nothing about us without us!' Today I acknowledge Prime Minister Tony Abbott as the Australian minister for women. I ask that he continues to heed the call of women for greater participation in the decision making that affects their lives—nothing about us without us!

I take this opportunity to celebrate the role women play in our communities, especially Indi, and say happy International Women's Day.

**Robertson Electorate: Woy Woy Oval**

Mrs WICKS (Robertson) (09:52): Sport is a big part of everyday life in my electorate of Robertson. Right around the Central Coast every week you will see people of all ages, skills and abilities participate in or watch sport of some kind at one of our sporting grounds or facilities. Sport is a big part of our community life, and just this week our Australian team the Socceroos announced they will be based in Terrigal and train at Central Coast Stadium at Gosford to prepare for the FIFA World Cup in Brazil. What a coup for our area, to be hand-
picked as the Socceroos' home before they fly out to what is arguably one of the world's biggest sporting events.

It is crucial that our infrastructure matches what sports players and fans need. One of these major pieces of infrastructure is Woy Woy Oval—a great oval in a wonderful location that is sorely in need of redevelopment and new facilities. The oval is used by a number of sporting groups from across the Central Coast, including the Woy Woy Roosters Rugby League Club, which was established in 1927. The Roosters kick off the season on Saturday, 15 March, against arch rivals the Wyong Kangaroos, and I would like to wish them all the best. The Woy Woy Lions Rugby Union Club also rely on the oval. I was able to personally wish the Lions good luck for the season at a luncheon two weeks ago.

As part of the coalition's Growth Plan for the Central Coast, we have committed $3.5 million to invest in the redevelopment and renewal of Woy Woy Oval and provide modern facilities for players, match officials and spectators. Where there is now a wire fence enclosing the grandstand, Gosford City Council has a plan for a new pavilion to seat hundreds of spectators. With this $3.5 million commitment from the coalition government, their plan can now become a reality. The pavilion will include a scoreboard, change rooms, first aid room, kiosks, clubhouse, amenities, warm-up area and forecourt that will help transform the oval into a place where our sporting folklore can be written for generations to come.

A renewed Woy Woy Oval will provide much-needed investment in community and sporting infrastructure on the Central Coast. It will become a civic centre for a suburb that is adored by locals and visitors, and it will contribute to job creation in the area. I am working closely with Gosford City Council and our hardworking stakeholders to see this project come to life. I thank Karen Tucker, Karen O'Mara and Paul Anderson from the council for their hard work and dedication.

Many other local people and groups are supporting this project, and I thank John Jewiss from the NRL; Chris James from the Woy Woy Rugby League; Country Rugby League Infrastructure and Development Officer Graham Boland; Fred Hartup from Central Coast Division Rugby League; John Kenney and Stuart McGoldrick representing Woy Woy rugby union; and Central Coast Rugby Union President Larry Thomson.

Thank you also to Josh Collins, the former CEO of Easts Woy Woy Leagues Club, who was a passionate and determined advocate for this project, and to all the team at East Woy Woy Leagues Club. Paul Tonkin, from Tonkin Drysdale Partners, has represented the Woy Woy business community, while many others, including Matthew Wales, the President of the Peninsula Chamber of Commerce, also played an important role.

In the first few months of being in office, we have outlined more than $10 million in our election commitments. This commitment to Woy Woy Oval forms part of that. I am honoured to be part of a government that is delivering on infrastructure in our communities.

Northern Territory: Roads

Mr SNOWDON (Lingiari) (09:55): I had cause yesterday to look at a press release which went out on 3 August 2012 headed: 'Encouraging productivity by investing in Territory bush roads'. This press release announced that the federal Labor government and the Northern Territory government had announced a significant investment in bush roads across the Northern Territory. The announcement states:
Federal Infrastructure and Transport Minister Anthony Albanese said this is a significant investment in the future of the Territory, and will encourage growth and development in a number of communities and local industries.

It also states:

The Federal Labor Government is committing $90 million towards a new Regional Roads Productivity Package and the Northern Territory Government will contribute $16 million towards the package.

Remember, this announcement was made on 3 August 2012. The press release continues:

Among the identified projects are upgrades to six regional roads:

- Roper Highway …
- Port Keats Road …
- Santa Teresa Way …
- Central Arnhem Road …
- Buntine Highway …
- Arnhem Link Road …

The then Northern Territory Minister for Regional Development, Malarndirri McCarthy, said at the time:

These regional roads are major arteries connecting and providing access to communities, supporting tourism, the cattle and resources sector as well as improving the economic opportunities for Territorians living in remote areas.

This was a commitment of $106 million by the former federal Labor government and the Northern Territory government. Imagine my surprise when I saw a joint media release between Deputy Prime Minister Warren Truss and Adam Giles, NT Chief Minister and the minister for economic development, dated 5 March 2014, which says:

NT’s economy to be boosted through upgrades to six remote roads

The six projects are expected to involve the following works—

Oddly, they are:

- Roper Highway …
- Port Keats Road …
- Arnhem Link Road …
- Buntine Highway …
- Central Arnhem Road …
- Santa Teresa Road …

This announcement is a repeat of the announcement made in 2012. So here we have the Northern Territory Chief Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister of Australia trying to con the Australian public that this announcement, which they made on 5 March, was a new announcement. It was not a new announcement. This money had been committed as a result of an agreement between the former Labor government—a government of which I was a member and responsible for pushing these issues to make sure we got them funded—and the former Northern Territory Labor government. That was where the agreement was and that is when the money was made available. Yet, now we have the Deputy Prime Minister and the
Northern Territory Chief Minister trying to con the Australian public that this announcement, which they made yesterday, 5 March—a repeat of the announcement made on 3 August—is somehow new and demonstrates their commitment to infrastructure in the Northern Territory. What it demonstrates is their lack of any ideas. What it demonstrates is their total lack of commitment to providing new policy initiatives for Northern Australia. *(Time expired)*

**Pearce Electorate: Communications**

**Mr PORTER** (Pearce) (09:58): The issue of communications is a very live issue throughout the 14,000 square kilometres of the Pearce electorate. Many constituents face difficulties with respect to mobile phone reception, internet connections and landline services or some combination of these three services. The range and significance of the difficulties were highlighted on 12 January of this year. On this date, the electorate sustained very significant property damage from bushfires within the suburbs of Stoneville, Parkerville and Mount Helena, within the Shire of Mundaring—a matter I have already spoken about, with specific respect to the good work done by volunteers.

Unfortunately, the locations of these fires coincided with parts of the electorate where mobile coverage is notoriously poor. During these fires, two sites within the fire affected areas were impacted by subsequent interruptions to the mains electricity supply, which then impacted on landline services. The end result was that a number of the residents within the fire-affected areas found themselves without access to any reliable communications during the critical times of the fire. One example put to my office was from Mr Richard Janes, a resident of Bullsbrook. He was a Bushfire Ready street coordinator charged with the responsibility of activating the Phone Tree communication system. This worthwhile system notifies local residents of a fire incident so that they in turn can notify others who may be affected within the community. Unfortunately, because of the exchange difficulties affecting landline services, Mr Janes found himself relying solely on mobile services to undertake his activation of phone tree warnings and, due to the poor mobile phone reception available, it was practically impossible for Mr Janes to get messages through, placing his and numerous other homes at risk.

Obviously, the inability to effectively communicate during fire emergencies is a real safety issue. The coalition government's program for these areas is most welcome, and the coalition's mobile black spot program will be welcome relief for many communities who have found their needs until now neglected. The coalition's mobile black spot program will provide $80 million for a mobile network expansion program that will improve mobile phone coverage along major transport routes in small communities and in locations prone to experiencing natural disasters, such as those vulnerable areas in my own electorate.

This program, which is modelled on the successful regional mobile communications program in Western Australia, will provide funding to mobile phone network providers who are prepared to expand the coverage and quality of their mobile networks into regional and remote areas that lack sufficient coverage. It is expected to generate at least an $80 million additional investment from the major mobile phone carriers. Obviously, strong submissions will be made for the improvement of services in the Pearce electorate by both myself and the community, and the process is already well underway.

In the short term, however, I am happy to report that, following my submissions to Telstra regarding the landline issue that arose during the recent fires, there has been an undertaking to
upgrade the priority levels of the relevant exchange sites within the fire affected areas to reflect that they are in a fire hazard area and that Telstra will increase the priority of attendance to the sites in the event of further mains failures. Additionally, I have been assured that the battery reserves at the relevant sites which are critical to maintaining services during adverse weather events will now be replaced as soon as possible. I welcome this response to the concerns of the constituents and consider it to be a positive step in the right direction for local residents.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Goodenough) (10:01): Order! It being 10.01, I propose the question:

That the Federation Chamber do now adjourn.

**Rare Disease Day**

Ms VAMVAKINOU (Calwell) (10:01): International Rare Disease Day was on 28 February. The day gives us an opportunity to support those whose lives have been impacted by a rare genetic disorder. It is also an opportunity to raise awareness about the importance of supporting the many families, friends and carers who live with the rare disease on a daily basis. Rare diseases are life threatening, often chronically debilitating and complex, and an estimated 2,000,000 Australians are suffering from one or more 8000 registered rare diseases. Collectively, rare diseases are surprisingly common, affecting 10 per cent of the Australian population with 400,000 of those being children.

My electorate has its fair share of residents suffering from rare diseases, but all too often we forget the personal story and the incredible support system that often surrounds these special people. Today I would like to make special mention of 16-year-old Caitlin Caruso, who has ataxia telangiectasia, known as AT; 25-year-old Sammy Joe Listro, who was diagnosed with trichothiodystrophy, TDT; and four-year-old Caleb Faria, who has Hunters syndrome.

Caitlin Caruso is 16 years of age and lives in Craigieburn. At 18 months she was misdiagnosed with cerebral palsy, due to a lack of understanding at the time of AT and at seven years she was finally diagnosed with her condition, AT. The disease is so rare that epidemiologists estimate its frequency to occur in one in every 40,000 births. It is incurable and there is much research still to be done on this recondition. AT is a progressive, degenerative disease that affects a startling variety of body systems. The onset of this ataxia marks the beginning of progressive degeneration of a part of the brain that gradually leads to a general lack of muscle control and eventually confines the patient to a wheelchair. Even though AT is a multisystem disorder, the children afflicted have and maintain normal or even above normal intelligence. This could not be more true for Caitlin. Caitlin has a sharp sense of humour and enjoys drawing and the arts. She loves taking pot shots at her Uncle Paul for worrying about his hair loss when in reality she is the one who has the condition that Paul, I am sure, does not have. Caitlin goes to Glenroy specialist school enjoys fashion design and debating. Caitlin wants to be a vet, but realises there may be some limitations but at the moment is just happy to work with animals. If Caitlin's grandparents' dog Max is anything to go by, then Caitlin has chosen her profession well. Max the dog cannot wait for Caitlin to visit and waits by the front door for her to arrive. Once she is within his sights, Max never
leaves her side. Despite her illness, like many others who suffer from rare diseases, Caitlin enjoys a rich, full life which is made possible by the support of her parents, her younger brother, Jake, her grandparents and an extended family of uncles and aunts.

Sammy Joe Liistro has many supporting family members around him, but it was the unfaltering support of a mother's love that brought me into contact with Sammy Joe many years ago. Sammy Joe's mother, Maria, approached me to help her help her son live the best possible life he could after he was diagnosed with trichothiodystrophy at the age of 13. Sammy Joe has recently turned 25. Maria Liistro, in an attempt to spread awareness about her son's condition, went on to establish the Friends of Sammy Joe Foundation in 2006, an organisation which offers support to other families in similar situations. According to her information, 68 families in Australia are affected by TDD. TDD is a rare genetic disorder that affects many parts of the body. Those with the condition have brittle hair and skin sensitivity to light and ultraviolet rays. It can also produce immune deficient cells, premature ageing in facial features, poor weight gain and autistic characteristics.

Sammy Joe is truly a miracle child. He is now 25 years of age. He has managed to survive against the odds. He is an inspiration to his family, his friends and his brother, Christian, who absolutely adores him. He is the apple of his father's eye. I had the great pleasure of meeting Sammy Joe a few years ago and I can tell you that he is an absolutely delightful human being. Unfortunately, the condition he has does not allow him to go outside. He has to be very careful. The sun, for this young man, poses a great danger. I congratulate Maria for her devotion to her son Sammy Joe. (Time expired)

Lachman Family

Mr WOOD (La Trobe) (10:07): Today I am going to tell the chamber about an amazing family that lives in my electorate of La Trobe—the Lachman family. In 2007, Alan Lachman, his wife, Maria-Franca, and their three daughters decided to leave Italy and make Melbourne their home. Alan, originally from Australia, had moved to Milan where he had set up a business and eventually met Maria-Franca and raised a family. The move to Australia was not only about lifestyle change; they moved to Melbourne to enrol their youngest daughter, Francesca, in the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind.

Francesca was born blind. The Lachmans had done their research and several years previously had decided that the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind in Melbourne was the best place to send Francesca to be educated. Unfortunately one year later, in 2008, after 142 years, the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind announced its closure. The students were going to have to find other places to receive their special education. Many of the blind students were going to have to integrate into mainstream government schools. Imagine that—your son or daughter being forced to go into a state or private school where, sadly, there are no teachers to teach them Braille.

Alan and Maria-Franca were stunned. They knew that the education alternative for their daughter would simply not have the quality of a specialist school education. Alan, an extremely successful entrepreneur and businessman, was not going to take this lying down. He took charge, representing the group of parents and students affected—arranging a 15,000-name petition and widespread press coverage. However, this was not enough to stop the closure of Victoria's only school for the blind.
Not giving up, Alan resolved to open another school for blind students in Victoria—and not only one school but many schools. Late in 2008, the Lachman family and a small group of affected parents committed to the foundation of what has become known as the Insight Education Centre for the Blind and Vision Impaired. The journey had commenced.

A meeting with the Brumby Labor government for seed funding fell on deaf ears. But the team kept their resolve. The Insight Education Centre was to be built, no matter what. The famous and blind Italian singer Andrea Bocelli gave his full support to Insight and produced a video.

But the real breakthrough came for the group in 2010 with the Victorian state election. Now with a Liberal state government, Insight received $2.14 million in seed funding. Thanks must go to the state education minister, Martin Dixon, and also Wendy Lovell. Alan's vision could now start to take shape. A new greenfields site was established at Monash University's Berwick campus for the Insight Education Centre, and a mobile classroom in the form of a special converted Ford Transit van was purchased. I have seen this van. The whole purpose of it is to have satellite schools for those who are blind and visually impaired across the state and, eventually, across the country.

I met Alan in 2012 at the Casey Citizen of the Year awards. I sat beside Alan and he told me his amazing story. That night I said to Alan, 'If there is anything I can do to help, give me a phone call.' Guess what happened? The federal election was on and I got the phone call. Alan needed $1.5 million because there was a shortfall and if he did not receive that funding the project would fall over. I must give special thanks to Senator Mitch Fifield and Minister Greg Hunt for both personally intervening on the Thursday before the election date to secure this funding. There was no media. There was no fanfare. But this was one of those projects we were so happy to get behind.

However, there were then blow-outs in costs and the centre needed money urgently, so I got a phone call on 13 November. Guess who it was? Alan had driven up from Melbourne to Parliament House in Canberra to tell me that he urgently needed $1.5 million. We went around to the office of Minister Jamie Briggs and also made phone calls to Senator Mitch Fifield and Minister Greg Hunt. They gave their full support. The fantastic news is that Prime Minister Tony Abbott, who had previously met Francesca at my campaign opening, got behind this cause and signed the cheque. The great news is that this morning I got an SMS from Alan saying that the centre will be open in a month. Alan, you are a fantastic ambassador for the blind and visually impaired, and your family is too.

Asylum Seekers

Ms McGOWAN (Indi) (10:12): Today I rise to talk about the treatment of asylum seekers in Australia's detention centres here and overseas. Many of my constituents are concerned about the current treatment of refugees who seek asylum in Australia and feel there must be a better way. I have received phone calls, emails and letters about this issue. I have had conversations with constituents distressed about what is happening to people in detention, especially to women and children. I have seen candle-lit vigils held across Indi. My constituents are saying: Australia is better than this. My constituents are practical, pragmatic people who run small businesses, own farms and know the meaning of hard work. While their priorities lie with their families and communities, they still care very deeply about human suffering around the world.
There is no doubt that the issue of asylum seekers is complex and controversial. I believe the political process has simplified this complexity to the detriment of social justice and human rights. When the politics are stripped away, two points emerge that have consensus in this place. Firstly, Australia as a sovereign nation has the right to vet the people who come to this country. Secondly, Australians expect our government to uphold human rights and respect human dignity. Despite consensus on these points in this place, government after government has found it difficult to consistently uphold them.

The most recent example is the violence on Manus Island. One person is dead, many are injured, Australian guards are traumatised and the local PNG people question whether this facility belongs in their domain. The recent issues on Manus have been affecting our relationships with our neighbours in Papua New Guinea and also Indonesia. The Australian government, whose decision it is and long has been to deal with asylum seekers through a process of mandatory detention, has a duty of care to protect the safety and health of the people we choose to detain. I believe that this duty of care has been breached, and my constituents are asking me why, despite the millions in taxpayer funding spent on buildings and running these facilities, people are not safe. Why, despite the years of debate on this topic, do we not have a solution that is both effective and humane? My constituents are asking me about the budget implications. 'It is getting very expensive, Cathy.' Has the government given them an open cheque?

I commend the government for reducing deaths at sea. This is a big achievement. However, I ask that the government give equal importance to the process of reducing deaths, upholding human dignity and the mental and physical health of asylum seekers. I call on the government to respond to my constituents' concern and create a solution that not only stops people risking their lives at sea but also ensures that on the other side of our detention process people are healthy, sane and, most importantly, alive. I call on the government and the opposition to work together and use debate in this place to deliver comprehensive solutions to this issue that maintain our sovereignty for Australians and gives safety for asylum seekers. I ask the members in this place who advocate in their party rooms to keep talking. We need a solution and we need you to have the debate.

I call on the government and the opposition to take our agreements with the United Nations seriously rather than following them only to the letter. The intention of the conventions we are signatory to must be our guide. Today in Geneva the United Nations Commission on Human Rights will call on the Australian government to review its treatment of asylum seekers and its agreement with Papua New Guinea. We must heed these requests from the international community.

I believe we are a clever and resourceful parliament. We can protect our borders, we can reduce deaths at sea and we can treat the people under our care with dignity and humanity. I am not being sentimental or soft on this issue. I know it is hard, hard work, but I am up to the challenge, and I remind this House that asylum seekers are human beings. We have a duty of care. We can and we must do better.

Flynn Electorate: Roads

Mr O'DOWD (Flynn) (10:17): Today I want to talk about roads in Flynn. Flynn is 130,000 square kilometres and has many roads. Some are federally funded, some are state funded and some are local government funded. There is an immediate need in Flynn for the
Woorabinda-Bohemia Downs road to be upgraded and sealed. The Blackwater-Rolleston Road has 17 kilometres of road still unsealed. From Springsure to Tambo there is a stretch of probably about 80 kilometres that need doing quickly. The Panorama Creek crossing at Rolleston holds up traffic on the inland highway to the north and to the west every time there are a few inches of rain, which is really badly needed at the moment. The state government do the highways on a four-to-one basis. That is four by the feds and one by the state in every situation.

But it is not all bad news over the last few years. We have partaken in some really good big projects. First I will talk about Yeppen roundabout just south of Rockhampton. In the 2008, 2010 and 2013 floods Rockhampton was cut off at Yeppen. In late November we opened the Yeppen Bridge, and now we are continuing with that project in stage 2. It is a $296 million project that will go from the Yeppen Bridge and roundabout to Egans Hill. That cost will be split $60 million from the state and $236 million from the federal government. The $85 million project which was opened in November is working well and does not allow the bottlenecks that did exist between Gracemere and Rockhampton.

The Calliope Crossroads, the much-needed $150 million project that was talked about for the last 20 years, is finally finished and traffic is now moving freely north, south, east and west. It has not been officially opened yet, but once the upgrades to the Dawson Highway to facilitate a new service station—which was built over with the new highway—are complete it will be open in the very near future.

We are continuing to upgrade the highway between Mount Larcom and Laws Creek, a $7.8 million project on the Bruce Highway that should commence by March of this year.

The Kin Kora roundabout is a joint venture between the state government and the federal government—$12.5 million from each government. It will alleviate the 13,000 cars a day jammed up on that roundabout at Kin Kora and Philip Street. Main Roads are having a lot of trouble because there are a lot of services underneath the current roundabout. I am talking about water, electricity and telephone. That all has to be relocated, and that is the probably half the problem of building the new upgraded lights that Kin Kora.

Presently there is work going on on the Bruce Highway at the intersection at Marmor. That is a $4.1 million job. That will take away the safety issues there, and it is also a truck stop for many trucks. We have regulations where our truck drivers have to pull over at certain times and of course we need to have facilities for those guys to pull over.

A lot of work has been done at Gin Gin, both north and south. The entrances to Gin Gin on both sides have been ridiculed over the years, but these have finally been fixed. It is 1.6 kilometres south and another at 6.3 kilometres north. That will improve the north-south Gin Gin road.

In all, we are working hard to alleviate the disadvantages on the roads because those roads do carry a lot of equipment, both large and small, to the mining industry—(Time expired)

**Australian Symbols**

Mr WATTS (Gellibrand) (10:22): I rise today, conscious of the symbolic importance of speaking in this chamber. We have heard contributions this week on issues large and small, from the future of Australia's biggest airline to the work of our nation's volunteers in festivals around the country. All members who have spoken in this place of the contributions of their
communities know how symbolically important acts of recognition are in our system of representative democracy.

Symbols matter, and the symbols of our Australian democracy matter a great deal to our identity. They form a prism through which we see ourselves and through which we see the rest of the world. So it is important that these symbols represent the Australia that we live in today. It is also important that these symbols change over time as our nation changes.

I would like to examine three symbols of our nation today to demonstrate this. The first is the Australian flag. Our flag is a powerful symbol of Australian identity. Its place in the Australian consciousness is now so strong that to many it feels like an unchangeable part of our national identity, but if you look at Tom Roberts's iconic big-picture portrait of the opening of the first Australian parliament in 1901 you will see three flags in use: the Union Jack flag, the Red Ensign and the Blue Ensign. Through the early years of our nation there was confusion over who was permitted to fly which flag and when they were able to do so. As a result, the Australian Red Ensign was commonly flown by Australians until 1953 when Prime Minister Menzies passed the Flags Act 1953 and made the Blue Ensign the national standard. It is notable that our conception of something as seemingly unchanging and fundamental of Australia's flag has actually changed substantively over the last 100 years of our nation's history.

The second symbol that I want to discuss today is perhaps the most important symbol in our system of government: that of citizenship. The concept of citizenship, the right to be a full participant in our community and our democracy has also changed significantly over time. In 1901, down the road from the opening of the federation parliament in Melbourne, in Little Bourke Street's Chinatown, there was another celebration to mark the presence of the Duke and Duchess of York in Australia for the opening of the federation parliament.

The Chinese traders of Little Bourke Street decorated Swanston Street with flags and lanterns and a Chinese arch, with two pagoda-style towers, was adorned with a banner for the royal party, which read: 'Welcome by the Chinese citizens'. Unfortunately, despite their obvious civic pride, this banner was erected more in hope than in truth as at the time the vast majority of Chinese Australians were not Australian citizens. Before Federation, most Australian colonies passed laws banning Asians from being naturalised in Australia, and post Federation this position was formalised through the Naturalization Act 1903. No-one in this place today would deny that Chinese immigrants deserve the right to be recognised as equal Australian citizens. Yet it was not until 1949 that a legal mechanism to do so was introduced.

What these examples show is that the symbols of our nation and our system of government have naturally changed with the changes in our society throughout our nation's history. They give lie to the conservative claim that our national symbols, our democratic symbols, are somehow immutable and that the concept of what is Australian is set in stone. This brings me to the third symbol that I want to speak about today—a symbol that requires further political change in order to reflect the changes that have already occurred throughout Australian society. I refer to our outdated constitutional ties with the British monarchy.

Australia's British heritage will always be a major part of our cultural fabric. This is overwhelmingly for the better. Our Westminster tradition is a gift beyond measure for our nation. But as the symbols of our nation and our democracy have changed with society since Federation so too must the ultimate symbol in our system of government—our head of state.
The push for a republic is not a repudiation of our roots any more than adulthood is a repudiation of childhood. The ethnically and culturally diverse Australia of today looks very different from the official white Australia of Federation. Is there any among us who would say that this is not for the better, that the Australia of the start of the 21st century is not a far greater nation than the Australia at the start of the 20th century? Is there anyone among us who is not proud of how far we have come as a country since the days of Edmund Barton?

If we can recognise that our nation has changed and changed for the better, we should also recognise that the symbols of our nation that have become outdated as a result of this change should also change. The British monarch is no longer the single thread that unites us as a nation. It is at best an irrelevance and at worst a symbol of our inability as a nation to recognise who we really are and who we have become.

I speak today to keep the embers of an Australian republic burning in this place, to make a symbolic contribution recognising and acknowledging that our identity as Australians is a living thing. Over the past 100 years, our identity as Australians has grown more independent, more diverse and more confident. It is time we had a system of government that recognised this.

Swan Electorate: Albany Highway

Mr IRONS (Swan) (10:27): First built in the 1850s, the Albany Highway has always been a famous and strategically important road for Western Australia. It is the key connection for residents in my electorate of Swan, extending from north to south, straight down the centre of the electorate, and linking all the suburbs in between. It has always been a major connecting route for the state between Perth and Albany—WA’s oldest settlement. The significance of the road is perhaps illustrated by the number of members of this place who have their office on the Albany Highway—for example, the member for Canning and some state members as well as senators.

But as well as connecting people, the road has always been an essential commercial strip for the state. In fact, it is considered to be longest main street in Australia by the Town of Victoria Park. I spoke last week about the motor vehicle trading part of the Albany Highway and the benefits that this brings to the area, and I expressed my support for its future.

Today I want to focus on the huge variety of small businesses on the Albany Highway commercial strip that forms the backbone of the diversified local economy. There are many retail shops on the Albany Highway, ranging from the niche enterprises such as Nosh Gourmet Food and Gifts and Flowers in the Park, which is just off Albany Highway, to franchises in the big shopping malls, such as the Cannington Carousel—WA’s biggest shopping mall. There are also many restaurants of all different types and cultures, which are often vaunted at our citizenship ceremonies, as well as some historic public houses, such as the Broken Hill Hotel in Victoria Park. There are also many commercial businesses on the strip, such as real estate agents, printers and financial services—just to name a few. It is a hive of activity. These businesses bring people into the area and create jobs for the local economy, so we need to do everything possible to make sure that they are successful and that the area remains successful.

I was concerned to read this week an article by Michele Nugent in Tuesday's Southern Gazette entitled: 'Parking meters on highway—Traders' road rage'. The article states:
Some Albany Highway businesses are seeing red following the installation of parking meters which they say will dissuade customers from shopping and dining in the area. They fear a drop off in trade as potential clients go elsewhere to avoid paying for parking and the possibility of being stung with fines for overstaying their welcome.

I note that local real estate agent Davide Palermo has put up a blog on this issue, entitled 'Paid Parking Fury!', which has been very popular, with many comments concerned about the council's decision. I note Mr Palermo posted that he also interviewed people at Oats Street train station, adjacent to areas where paid parking has also been introduced. Patrons have told him that, instead of paying for the paid parking, they would park in neighbouring streets to save the $10 a day. Residents like Mr Palermo are clearly concerned about the impact of the new parking regime on the local economy. We do not want people retreating to shopping malls where they can guarantee free car parking, which could lead to a decline in the Albany Highway Precinct.

I can also provide an example of what has occurred around the Monadelphous building in Victoria Park, where my office is. Since the parking restrictions and paid parking have been brought in, the streets are deserted—it has been like a ghost town since the parking metres were put up. Hardly anyone parks around the perimeter of the building anymore at all. The PostNet shop closed down last year due to a lack of business while the intermediary restrictions were in place, and there are number of restaurants and a hairdresser that also operate at that site.

I wrote to the Town of Victoria Park on 24 September 2012 in relation to the draft management plan. I stated that while the solutions proposed may well combat some of the issues or hotspots in the short term, I fear they will be less than effective at solving the problems in the medium to long term for the area as a whole. I went on to say: 'As such, and given the cross-government issues at stake, I suggest that the Town of Victoria Park considers holding a roundtable forum with all stakeholders, including restaurants, businesses and state and federal representatives and departments. Such a roundtable should also include the opportunity for public submissions to further discuss ways to address the parking issues in the Town of Victoria Park. I would be happy to assist in facilitating such a roundtable.'

The Town of Victoria Park replied that they did not feel a roundtable was needed at that stage. However, considering the circumstances that are now brought along to all the businesses and to the people of the Town of Victoria Park, that roundtable is now required. I would also like to let the ratepayers of the Town of Victoria Park know that there was one particular councillor who had his own blog about promoting paid parking in the area, and also travelled at the expense of the ratepayers to a conference in Queensland. He is probably behind all of this. (Time expired)

Human Rights: Vietnam

Mr HAYES (Fowler—Chief Opposition Whip) (10:32): As the House is aware, I have spoken on many occasions in respect of human rights. It is a matter that is very close to my heart. For me, human rights equate with the right to be treated with dignity and to live life free of oppression.

As many will recall, Vietnam has been a signatory to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights since 1982. Now, 30 years on, little progress appears to have been made when it comes to the rights of people. In last year alone there were 61 reported cases of
political activists being convicted and sentenced in Vietnam, which is a remarkable step up from the 40 cases of the year before. Among the arrested were lawyers, doctors and religious practitioners—hardly criminals by our standards.

Last month, I met with a delegation from VOICE—the Vietnamese Overseas Initiative for Conscience Empowerment—an advocacy organisation operating in a number of countries advocating for human rights in Vietnam. This is a not-for-profit, non-government organisation advocating for the improvement of human rights for the people of Vietnam. The delegation took part in the 2014 United Nations Convention on Human Rights in Geneva, and enjoys strong support from the Vietnamese community in Australia. Leading the group was an Australian human rights lawyer and cofounder of VOICE, Mr Hoi Trinh. He was accompanied by a number of prominent human rights activists, including Mrs Thi Tram Nguyen, the mother of Le Quoc Quan, who was recently convicted and is being sentenced to 2½ years’ incarceration.

In respect to Mr Le Quoc Quan, he was a prominent human rights lawyer who has been engaged to defend the human rights of others in Vietnam. He is a person who the United Nations Human Rights Council has also previously urged Vietnam to release. Mr Quan is very well known for his extensive work in human rights, both as a blogger and in providing representation to other human rights defenders. His refusal to be submissive has seen him been arrested on a number of occasions, most recently on 27 December 2012—on this occasion on very loose charges of tax evasion.

When I met with his mother two weeks ago, she explained to me many of the matters associated with her son and the work he has been undertaking for many years in the area of human rights. A couple of weeks ago, a Hanoi appeal court upheld the conviction, with Mr Quan to remain incarcerated for another 2½ years. Silencing activists with trumped-up tax evasion charges is a common way for the Vietnamese government to fight those who question their methods or stand in their way.

There are parallels between this case and a recent incident involving Mr Nguyen Bac Truyen, the chairman of one of Vietnam’s prominent civil right groups, and his wife. They were targets of a vicious physical attack before a meeting with Australian diplomats about human rights issues. Mr Truyen and his wife were followed for days after arriving at Hanoi airport. The attack was clearly an attempt to prevent them from meeting with the Australian diplomats to raise human rights issues. Mr Truyen had already served a 3½-year sentence, having been released in 2010. He and his wife arrived at the Australian embassy with considerable injuries requiring medical attention. Understandably, this incident not only affected Mr Truyen and his wife but was also most distressing to the embassy staff, bringing into stark focus the issue of human rights abuses in Vietnam.

I would like to acknowledge the efforts of Mr Hoi Trinh and VOICE, who have worked tirelessly to protect and promote human rights and support those in Vietnam who are prepared to stand up and voice their concerns about human rights abuses. As an Australian, I believe that we have a moral responsibility to take part in the promotion and protection of human rights. I believe it is a reflection of our national values and forms an underlying principle of Australia’s engagement with the international community. I hope and pray that this year we see a genuine improvements in human rights in Vietnam.
Canning Electorate: Broadband

Mr RANDALL (Canning) (10:37): I am pleased this morning to give the chamber an update on the NBN rollout in the electorate of Canning, which I represent. The area of Mandurah was earmarked to be one of the first in Western Australia to get the NBN—along with Victoria Park in the electorate of Swan and Geraldton in the electorate of Durack.

The people of Mandurah were very excited about this. But that excitement waned when the scheduled date for connection came and went. In fact there were a whole lot of false starts and false dates. Initially, the Mandurah rollout was delayed for around six months because the former Rudd-Gillard-Rudd government could not get contracts into place effectively in Western Australia. We have seen the mess they made with the company they employed, Syntheo.

NBN work in Mandurah finally commenced in 2011 with its much vaunted fibre to the premises. NBN Co told everyone it would be around 12 months before they could connect. During the election campaign, I was doorknocking around those areas of Mandurah and people were saying, 'The cabling has just gone past my house, but I can't connect.' I vividly recall going down Tuckey Street, near the telephone exchange in Mandurah, and seeing the earthworks and fibre running down the street—but people were still telling me that they could not connect. It was quite bizarre. Finally, two years after the commencement of the works, people were able to start connecting around December 2013—after the federal election, surprisingly. At the end of January, building had commenced at around 4,500 properties and 6,700 premises had been passed with fibre, yet only 88 services had been activated, with approximately 200 orders pending for NBN fibre—out of all the thousands of properties I just mentioned. That is the take-up rate. I am told that this take-up rate in the Mandurah area has been slightly slower than that anywhere else, particularly in the eastern states. It is not surprising given the misinformation that plagued the NBN rollout and its shambolic nature in my electorate under the former Labor government.

There were many false rumours perpetrated by Labor about the NBN rollout. They said under the coalition's broadband policy it would cost $5,000 to connect. We know that is not true. They said under Labor's NBN model, it would be free. I recall seeing pamphlets that went in people's letterboxes and under their doors in the area where they were laying fibre saying there would be free connection. We know that was an absolute falsehood. We know that if you are going to connect you have to pay fees. There is nothing free in this world. I fully support delivering better telecommunications to my electorate of Canning. I was never against the idea that the NBN could do this. It was just that aspects of Labor's legislation and poor administration of the rollout were concerning.

The government is now working hard—and thank goodness we have a telecommunications minister with credibility in this area in Malcolm Turnbull—to clean up the mess and get on with providing faster broadband sooner and more affordably for those people who wish to take it up. Interestingly, in some of these areas people already had reasonable broadband, and yet there were areas in the electorate that had none. Labor were providing another service down streets where there was already sufficient broadband.

We will communicate clearly and honestly with the people about the progress of the NBN. It was NBN Co that advised the government the NBN should be completed using a mixture of technologies. From what I understand, the staff at NBN Co just want to get on with the job,
rather than being hamstrung by these delays. While it is possible we may see more fibre rolled out in the areas adjacent to the current Mandurah fibre footprint—and perhaps see the fibre rollout actually happen in Pinjarra town centre, which was planned previously but never happened—we will also see a number of areas benefit quickly through the completion of the NBN wireless network. Remember how they were going to be a one-trick pony with just fibre to the home? Now they are talking about wireless, which is quite sensible because there should be a mixture of those technologies.

In the short period of time that I have left, I will say that finally an NBN Co representative came to see me the other day to tell me where the towers may be and about the co-location of facilities. It was refreshing because for the last three years we could not get anyone from NBN Co to talk to us. The key point was that they were told they were not allowed to talk to coalition members of the opposition. No wonder we could not get any information.

Mrs ELLIOT (Richmond) (10:42): I rise to talk about my community’s great distress at hearing yesterday that the National Party plan to close the children’s ward at Murwillumbah hospital. I join them in their condemnation of Lismore’s Nationals MP Thomas George for his government’s cruel plans to close the children’s ward. We saw the report in our local paper, the Tweed Valley Weekly, and we are very concerned about that. It really is the ultimate betrayal of families on the North Coast, because locals deserve to have access to their own children’s ward when their kids are sick. Instead, we have Thomas George and the National Party closing that down. It really is one of the most heartless and cruel acts by the local National Party.

This comes on the top of last week when we had paid parking plans introduced by the Tweed Nationals MP Geoff Provest. Even today in our local paper, the Tweed Sun, a headline on page 3 says ‘Paid parking at hospital is a necessary evil, says Provest’. It is not a necessary evil. It is a cruel, heartless act by the National Party to make sick and injured people pay for parking when they go to Tweed Hospital.

Now on the back of that we have Thomas George closing the children’s ward at the Murwillumbah hospital. As I said, it appeared in the Tweed Valley Weekly. It said on the front page ‘Children’s ward to close’. I will just read one of the paragraphs to you. It says:

The proposed closure is being justified—

because it is said that—

… the provision of health services for children has changed and new treatments mean more are being cared for at home.

What a load of absolute rubbish! What are they saying now to parents? Are they saying, ‘You have to care for your sick children at home’? Are we supposed to repair their broken arms or broken legs? What diseases or injuries are we supposed to treat them for? What if they have meningitis, meningococcal or something else really serious? Are they saying, ‘Care for them at home’? What an absolute load of rubbish we are hearing from them. This matter of course was also raised in the New South Wales parliament yesterday. I commend the shadow minister for the North Coast, Walt Secord, for raising it in question time. He asked the leader of government in the Legislative Council, Mr Michael Gallagher:
In light of the $3 billion in cuts to health in NSW, will you confirm the Northern NSW Health District this morning met with staff and announced that they had plans to close the children's ward at Murwillumbah Hospital?

They refused to deny it; they said nothing. I thank Walt Secord for raising that issue in the New South Wales upper house yesterday.

What is really galling about all of this is that there is a very long history of North Coast National Party MPs and the National Party talking about the need to protect Murwillumbah Hospital. We can go right back to June 2008 when the member from Lismore, Thomas George, had a motion in the New South Wales parliament on the government's potential downgrading of health services in Murwillumbah. We also had Geoff Provest, the member for Tweed, speaking on it. Don Page, the member for Ballina, spoke on it too, and they all raised their concerns. Thomas George said it was 'purely a cost-cutting exercise'. Don Page talked about what a large catchment area Murwillumbah Hospital had and that it was very important to protect it. Of course, a day later Thomas George puts out a press release, 'Hands off Murwillumbah Hospital, North Coast Nats warn' on 27 June 2008. The final line of that press release has Thomas George saying:

… the Murwillumbah community will not accept any cutbacks and will continue to fight them by marching in support of Murwillumbah Hospital.

They are not doing that now; they are closing the children's ward.

There was a protest: a couple of days later more than 6000 residents got out there and protested. At that protest the member for Lismore and the member for Tweed both spoke. The Tweed Daily News on 14 July 2008 reported the member for Tweed, Geoff Provest, saying:

"This is a day that Murwillumbah stood up and said they have had enough," he said. "It is going to be a long and hard battle but our hospital deserves it."

They do deserve it. It is the National Party that is abandoning them—both the member for Lismore and the member for Tweed.

There they were at that rally with 6000 people, saying they would defend the hospital. It is not just the local National Party MPs who have a history of talking about the need for putting more resources into Murwillumbah Hospital. There is also Senator Fiona Nash, who is now the Assistant Minister for Health—though perhaps it should be the disgraced Assistant Minister for Health—and who was yesterday censured by the Senate. She used to visit us on the North Coast quite a lot and she spoke about one of her visits on 11 November 2008. She told the Senate how she went up there, met with the then mayor and Thomas George and the Save the Hospital committee. They had their photos taken in front of the hospital; they were so concerned. She put out a press release, 'Local pollies demand Murwillumbah Hospital fix'. They have all been there for the photo opportunities and they have put forward motions, but now that they are in government—state and federal—what have they done? Nothing! They close the children's ward. It is an absolute disgrace. For years and years they stood there claiming, 'We need more services here,' and now their first move is to shut the children's ward.

Families in Murwillumbah and the surrounding area desperately need that ward open for their sick children. These people committing this shameful act will be remembered by the people in our community. What is even more shameful is that they made all these comments over the years; they went to the rallies and pretended to care. It is one of the most heartless
acts I have ever seen. I thought paid parking was bad last week—that was cruel enough—but shutting a children's ward in a growing area is absolutely cruel.

Petition: Climate Change

Dr JENSEN (Tangney) (10:47): It is my pleasure to present a petition. Normally, we do not necessarily associate ourselves with petitions but I certainly associate myself with this.

The petition read as follows—

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

This petition by citizens and taxpayers of Australia draws the attention of the House to large sums of Government income that are being spent on programs, subsidies, compensations, commissions, etc. with the aim of achieving a national target of a 5% reduction in the human production of carbon dioxide from that of the year 2000 by 2020, without a high-level, incisive cost/benefit study having been conducted.

We the undersigned, being citizens of Australia, request The House to do all in its power to establish an inquiry to determine the real benefits and the total costs to this nation from Government spending to reduce human production of carbon dioxide and from subsidies for renewable energy and regulations limiting the use of carbon-based fuels.

from 424 citizens

Petition received.

These policies relating to climate change are costing us a fortune. One needs just look at the Renewable Energy Target and the carbon tax to see that these policies are making many of our industries uncompetitive. Indeed, the bill that has been brought on in the House today by the Labor opposition, the Qantas bill, highlights the cost of this tax and these policies to our industry. Qantas has had to pay $106 million over a 12 month period in carbon tax. Tell me that that is something that is sustainable and that business and industry can afford. The thing we need to look at is some of the background to what is actually causing these policies—that is, the whole climate change issue. Look at the Bureau of Meteorology. The Bureau of Meteorology stated that last year was the hottest year on record. They base that on the fact that their records went back to 1910. In fact, the records go back a lot longer than that. The 1890s and very early 1900s were very hot, but the bureau says that data was unreliable. Okay, let us accept that as being true. If the data prior to 1910 in Australia was unreliable, what does that say about other places in the world? Think of Africa and Dr Livingstone, I presume, in 1871. The IPCC data goes back to 1850: how reliable is that data? Even if the rest of the planet's data is reliable, for Australasia, a huge chunk of the planet, there is unreliable data, but the Bureau of Meteorology is quite happy using that data. You cannot have it both ways.

The Bureau of Meteorology also processes or manipulates, or however you want to call it, data. This needs to be adequately explained. I am not saying that there is anything insidious about it but the methodology that they use needs to be explained. Why is it that processed data from a number of temperature measuring stations shows a significant warming trend when the actual raw data shows flat or decreasing temperature trends? Once again, I am not saying that it is a conspiracy, but it would be good to know the methodology. Why is it that models used by the IPCC and the Bureau of Meteorology have been unable to project future outcomes accurately and they have been changed retrospectively to reflect what in fact has occurred? Have a look, for instance, at global average temperatures: 95 per cent of the global circulation models used by the IPCC have been unable to replicate the halt in temperature that we have
seen in the last decade and a half. Mechanisms proposed to try to explain this halt, such as
deep ocean warming sucking up the heat that would otherwise have gone into the atmosphere,
neglect a few facts, such as why was this mechanism inoperative between 1975 and about
2000, when there was warming of the atmosphere? Indeed, given that the science is so-called
settled, why were these mechanisms not used prior to this halt to predict the halt? Why have
they been unable to predict precipitation changes? Why is the signature expected of the major
feedback mechanism, the water cycle in the so-called upper tropical troposphere hot spot,
nowhere to be found that is associated with positive feedback of the water cycle? Why is it
that rent seekers like a whole lot of the Pacific islands, such as Kiribati, talk of inundation due
to sea level rise when, for instance, Kensch et al have found that the majority of those Pacific
islands have increased in size since World War II? Why the lack of being forthcoming with
data such as the shonky scientist Michael Mann of hockey stick infamy, Phil Jones of the
Hadley CRU— *(Time expired)*

### Education Funding

**Ms KATE ELLIS** (Adelaide) (10:53): I rise today to remind the House that Australians
were told before the last election that the Abbott government was on a unity ticket with Labor
when it came to education and school funding reform. What an absolute sham that has turned
out to be. I would like to take this opportunity to place on the record once more some of the
now government's words before the election. Before the election Prime Minister Tony Abbott
said:

> We will honour the agreements that Labor has entered into. We will match the offers that Labor has
> made. We will make sure that no school is worse off. We think that money is important.

Well, that promise that no school should be worse off is a promise that this government has
now refused to repeat in the parliament because they know that it was nothing more than a
cruel joke. But there was more. The now Minister for Education, Christopher Pyne, said:

> You can vote Liberal or Labor and you'll get exactly the same about of funding for your school

Prime Minister Tony Abbott said:

> As far as I am concerned, as far as Christopher Pyne is concerned, as far as the coalition is
> concerned, we want to end the uncertainty by guaranteeing that no school will be worse off.

Further, the education minister said in print in *The Daily Telegraph* on 29 August—in written
form, so that we can take it that it should be believed:

> We have agreed to the government's school funding model.

He went on to say:

> We are committed to the student resource standard, of course we are. We are committed to this new
> school funding model.

We know that is nothing more than a farce. We know that the model that Labor put forward
would have seen an extra $14.65 billion flowing to Australian schools. We know that under
the model that has now been adopted by the Abbott government that figure is now just $2.8
billion. Far from a unity ticket: 2.8 billion versus 14.65.

*An opposition member interjecting—*

**Ms KATE ELLIS:** And while my colleague says it is shameful, and I absolutely
wholeheartedly agree with her, what is even worse is there is no guarantee that the $2.8
billion will not be entirely undermined by the fact that they have opened the door to state
government cuts of the magnitude that we have seen in Western Australia by the Barnett
government.

We know it is in years 5 and 6 of the school funding model that we really see the money
start to flow. In years 5 and 6 we would expect to see $7 billion in additional money flowing
from the Commonwealth to Australian schools. And while I believe that all of those
statements before the election were nothing more than a sham, were nothing more than
cylical politics, dishonesty and an absolute betrayal of the Australian public, we will find out
for sure in just 10 weeks when we see the federal budget. The budget will speak far louder
than any of the statements that the government tried to put forward. We can expect that if they
are on a unity ticket with Labor when it comes to school funding reform, then we should
expect that we will see part of this $7 billion of additional funding for our schools included in
this budget. Over the next 10 weeks, in the lead-up to budget day, we will hear from parents
and we will hear from teachers from across Australia—all of whom believe that they were
misled by this government—urging those opposite to do the right thing and include this
funding in the budget.

The other commitment that we expect to see in the budget is the commitment for students
with disabilities so that the additional loading will be rolled out in Australian schools from
next year, as was promised in the coalition's media release of 23 August. They explicitly
stated:

… [this] will be used to deliver more funding for people with disability through the ‘disability loading’
in 2015.

There is no room for excuses. There is no room for weasel words. There is no room for the
education minister to try to argue that black is white and white is purple. This is the time
when we see for sure: we need to see the beginnings of this $7 billion in additional funding in
the budget in just 10 weeks. And if this funding is not included in the upcoming budget, we
will make sure that every parent, that every educator, that every principal, that every student
in Australian schools know full well that all of these statements were nothing other than the
biggest betrayal of the Australian community in a cynical move to try to get elected without
meaning an absolute word of it.

Cruise Tourism

Mr TEHAN (Wannon) (10:58): I want to bring some seriousness back to the chamber
after what can only be seen as a little bit of hilarity. Cruise tourism is a very important sector.
It is a fast-growing sector for Australia's tourism industry. Total cruise passenger expenditure
was $574 million in 2012-13. This was 29.7 per cent up on 2011-12, and 152.1 per cent up on
2008-09. The sector is an increasingly important contributor to the tourism 2020 objectives.

We were privileged enough to have the head of Carnival Australia speak to the coalition's
Friends of Tourism group this week. As she pointed out, in 2012-13, there were 19 Carnival
ships carrying 325,000 passengers and made 310 calls to Australian ports. Once again, that is
44.8 per cent of all Australian port calls.

We often think of the standard cruise ship pulling into ports in Melbourne or Sydney, a
visitor only to our capital cities. But cruise ships also, importantly, go to regional areas. One
of the important regions that cruise ships are about to come to is the south-west of Victoria.
This coming weekend, on Saturday, we are about to see the first cruise ship come to the port of Portland. It is a European cruise ship, the *Europa*, and it will be carrying 660 Europeans on board. They will be embarking at Portland and they will be going to see some of the fantastic tourism sites that the south-west of Victoria has to offer: the 12 Apostles and some of our wonderful tourist attractions around Warrnambool and around Portland. It will be of real benefit to the local economy.

One of the things that I have been pleased to hear is that we are having this first cruise ship come in next weekend but already there are three cruise ships which potentially will be coming next year. The hope is that we will be able to grow the business for the port of Portland so that we could have up to 21 cruise ships docking in Portland during a year. That will be wonderful for our local economy. Tourism provides much-needed jobs—and it is jobs for everyone and, in particular, for our Indigenous communities. We often find Indigenous workers in the tourism sector.

It is going to be terrific for these Europeans to be able to embark on what will be a wonderful adventure for them in the south-west of Victoria. I look forward to being there to welcome them. I look forward to being there to say, 'Welcome to our wonderful country but also welcome to western Victoria and all that it has to offer.' This is a very, very important development for my part of the world, for the part of the world that I represent. I am incredibly excited about what this can potentially mean in terms of adding another important industry into regional and rural Victoria and, coming with that, the extra provision of jobs and the extra provision of income and growth for our sector. We already have important industries, but it is great that we are able this weekend to welcome another one—in the cruise shipping industry.

**Workplace Relations**

**Ms CHESTERS** (Bendigo) (11:03): Today in the House debate on the Abbott government Fair Work Amendment Bill will resume—a bill that, in my opinion, will radically change workplace relations in this country again. I rise to advise the chamber of an electronic petition that I have been made aware of on this very issue. Over 5,000 people have signed this petition started by Vanessa Harmer, a Melbourne and United Voice member paramedic who is worried about losing her weekend and evening rates because of the government's new individual contracts. The petition reads:

Greetings,

Tony Abbott: Please respect our sacrifice

Please respect the sacrifices of hard-working Australians and withdraw your new laws allowing penalty rates to be stripped and traded away.

Australians trusted you when you promised that you would not touch our penalty rates.

These new laws are a betrayal of that commitment.

That is why 5,000 people already have signed this petition. It is because the government has in fact betrayed the commitment they made to the Australian people prior to the election.

United Voice members like Vanessa are the backbone of our community. They are the paramedics, they are the cleaners, they are the bakers and they are the security guards who work around the clock to keep our society functioning. They make an extraordinary sacrifice to do an important job, and they deserve to be compensated for these sacrifices. These are the
people who have the most to lose from these radical new laws. The government knows this, and that is why it is trying to hide behind simple words. It is trying to hide behind what it calls simple amendments. These are not simple amendments.

The PM and his cabinet are saying that people like Vanessa will get a choice—a choice about whether they sign these new contracts or not. But in the real world under the Abbott government's individual contracts there will not really be a free choice; it will be 'Sign here or else.' It will be 'Your workmate's done it, you should too.' It will be 'If you want the job, this is what you sign.' There are very few protections in what is being put forward to stop that from happening. Further still, once they have signed that piece of paper, it does not go to Fair Work Australia; it simply sits in the boss's in-box or in their filing cabinet. The PM wants to make sure that it is harder and harder for workers to access information and support from their union. If that piece of paper is sitting in your boss's in-box, you cannot have a union official, organiser or delegate look at it because their ability to access the site under these proposed changes will be restricted. So it will make it even easier for employees to be ripped off because they will have less access to their union organisers and their union representation. Vulnerable workers like young people and migrants, who may not be aware of what their workplace rights are, have the most to lose.

Labor is going to stand and oppose the Fair Work Amendment bills for these very basic principles. It is a continuation of the government's crusade against employment conditions for workers across Australia and it is a continuation of the government's race to the bottom of labour standards. They cannot change their DNA on this one. It is time that they came clean and told the truth. If they want to take away people's working conditions then they should at least be open enough to tell people about it. Instead, they are hiding behind what they call 'minor amendments'.

As I have demonstrated, these are not minor amendments. The government's changes to the individual flexibility agreements are a return to Work Choices conditions. Their changes to right of entry provisions are a return to Work Choices conditions. Their changes around the transmission of business are a return to Work Choices conditions. Their changes around greenfields agreements are a return to Work Choices conditions. The Prime Minister said that Work Choices was 'dead, buried and cremated' but what we see from this legislation is that the ghost remains.

It does not matter how hard they try and hide behind the rhetoric, the reality is the reality. Whilst they allow employers to trade off penalty rates, to take them away from people, the community will know, just like United Voice members like Vanessa knows, that this government have once again broken their promise.

Moore Electorate: Education

Mr GOODENOUGH (Moore) (11:08): A strong university, vocational education and training sector is vital to develop the skilled workforce necessary to drive local economic development in the electorate of Moore. Located within the central business district is the strategic hub known as the Joondalup Learning Precinct, which comprises key educational institutions, including the West Coast Institute of Training, Edith Cowan University, the Western Australian Police Academy, as well as the nearby College of Electrical Training and the Motor Industry Training Association. While these organisations are educational leaders in their respective fields, steady population growth in the region places greater demand on
resources and the need for ongoing capital works to expand both tertiary and vocational education training facilities.

The West Coast Institute of Training currently has approximately 300 full-time equivalent academic and support staff delivering more than 130 different training qualifications, ranging from certificate 1 to advanced diploma in a wide variety of subject areas. In particular, the Academy of Hospitality and Culinary Arts located at the Joondalup campus has partnered with Hospitality Group Training to deliver accelerated apprenticeships in commercial cookery. It has received numerous industry awards. The institute's Pavilion Restaurant allows students to practice their skills with paying members of the public as customers. Similarly, each week the WCIT Trades North campus in Clarkson trains approximately 900 students in pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships and trades training in the areas of bricklaying, electrical, metal fabrication, carpentry, tiling and plastering. At the completion of the courses, graduates are workforce-ready to join the building industry.

The nearby College of Electrical Training is operated by the National Electrical and Communications Association of Western Australia and has the capacity to train up to 1,000 apprentice electricians. The federal government provided a $2.7 million grant to build this training facility, which is a leader in its field.

Also located in Joondalup, the Motor Industry Training Association provides a range of automotive courses in mechanical repairs, electronic diagnostics, panel beating and spray painting. Catering for both light passenger vehicles and heavy vehicles, the facility is operated by the Motor Trade Association of Western Australia and provides a hands-on practical learning experience for apprentices and technicians, as well as group training and short courses.

As the cornerstone of the Learning Precinct, Edith Cowan University's Joondalup campus is the main hub for 24,000 students enrolled across three campuses. Of particular interest is research and development. The university's Office of Research and Innovation had a budget of approximately $15.7m in 2012. Of this, $8.1m was funded by the federal government. The university's work in the area of the commercialisation of Australian inventions and technology provides a source of strategic competitive advantage in ensuring that our domestic economy benefits from innovation and invention. As an example, on a recent visit I was given a demonstration of a smart crop sprayer which uses laser technology to distinguish between weeds and crops—selectively applying herbicide and so minimising the impact on the environment and reducing costs for farmers. Home-grown innovations such as these will make our economy more competitive.

In summary, continued investment by the government in the Joondalup Learning Precinct at Edith Cowan University, at the West Coast Institute of Training and at vocational education and training facilities will maximise the career opportunities available to my constituents, particularly our youth, and provide the skilled workforce required to build a stronger economy.

**Climate Change**

Ms BURKE (Chisholm) (11:13): I rise today to explain why I am very pessimistic about my children's future. This week we saw the release of the CSIRO's third *State of the climate* report, but did not see the Prime Minister or his Minister for the Environment respond to its
serious findings. Instead, we had the Prime Minister declare that we need to cut down more
trees and we saw the continued ideological drive to remove a climate change policy which has
actually led to a decrease in our emissions. We have also seen the government move to close
down the only body that gives independent climate change advice to the government—the
Climate Change Authority. We saw the unveiling of a welcome drought package, but when
this was done the government was adamant that the drought was a natural disaster—there was
no mention of climate change. Indeed, in the government's white paper on agriculture, climate
change is not mentioned once.

What action have we actually seen on climate change from this government—an issue they
say they believe in and they say is important? They have spruiked their 15,000-strong Green
Army, who are going to be planting 20 million trees. That is why I am incredibly pessimistic
about my children's future and the future of the planet we inhabit.

What did the climate report tell us? It says:
• Australia’s climate has warmed by 0.9°C—
nearly one degree—
since 1910, and the frequency of extreme weather has changed, with more extreme heat and fewer cool
extremes.
• Rainfall averaged across Australia has slightly increased since 1900, with the largest increases in the
northwest since 1970.
• Rainfall has declined since 1970 in the southwest, dominated by reduced winter rainfall. Autumn and
eyear winter rainfall has mostly been below average in the southeast since 1990.
• Extreme fire weather has increased …
• Global mean temperature has risen by 0.85°C from 1880 to 2012.
• The amount of heat stored in the global oceans has increased, and global mean sea level has risen by
225 mm …
• Annual average global atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations reached 395 parts per million …
in 2013 and concentrations of the other major greenhouse gases are at their highest levels for at least
800 000 years.
• Australian temperatures are projected to continue to increase, with more extremely hot days and
fewer extremely cool days.
• Average rainfall in southern Australia is projected to decrease, and heavy rainfall is projected to
increase over most parts of Australia.
• Sea-level rise and ocean acidification are projected to continue.

It is a most alarming report. Nobody has talked about it. If you go to the Liberal Party
website, there is not even a policy on climate change there. What they talk about is their
Direct Action policy. They say that they are committed to a five per cent reduction in
emissions by 2020. They say:
• We will establish an Emissions Reduction Fund of $3 billion to allocate money in response to
emission …

What have they done? They have put out a paper for discussion—no action—and they will
establish the 15,000-strong Green Army.
There has been alarm within the academic community and the media over the report from CSIRO, but nothing from government. 'Rising temperatures are inevitable,' say the experts. 'Brace yourself for more,' were the screaming headlines. I quote from The Sydney Morning Herald:

The Abbott government has vowed to scrap the carbon price and replace it with a so-called direct action plan to pay polluters to curb emissions. Whether the program can succeed in cutting Australia's total emissions by 5 per cent on 2000 levels by 2020 remains in doubt as emissions continue to rise, deforestation rates increase and the mining industry prepares for a major expansion of coalmining and liquefied natural gas production.

We have this alarming report, and what do we have? The Prime Minister goes to an event on Monday night. I quote from The Guardian of 5 March:

In what amounts to Abbott's most in-depth comments about the environment since forming government, the prime minister outlined a philosophy based largely on what people can derive from natural resources.

"When I look out tonight at an audience of people who work with timber, who work in forests, I don't see people who are environmental bandits, I see people who are the ultimate conservationists," he said.

He talks about man working in concert with the environment. He says Australia is 'open for business for the forestry industry'. He says:

We have quite enough National Parks, we have quite enough locked up forests already. In fact, in an important respect, we have too much locked up forest.

The best thing we can do for our environment is to lock up more forest. Every report and expert tells us this, yet the Prime Minister wants to unlock the forest and, at the same time, plant 20 million trees. At what point is someone going to care about the future of this planet? (Time expired)

O'Connor Electorate: Grain Harvest

Mr WILSON (O'Connor) (11:18): I take this opportunity to report to the parliament the record-breaking 2013 harvest across my electorate of O'Connor. As a farmer myself, I experienced the swings in growing conditions throughout the season, from the great rains in May to the devastatingly dry June and July. The saviour was the rains in August-September, followed by perfect harvest conditions. Western Australia's grain handler, Co-operative Bulk Handling, or CBH, has reported the 2013-14 harvest to be the biggest on record, receiving nearly 16 million tonnes and breaking the previous record by 750,000 tonnes. I estimate that the electorate of O'Connor contributed over 8.6 million tonnes to that impressive total. When you consider that the total harvest, according to the Grain Industry Association of Western Australia, or GIWA peaked at over 17 million tonnes, these are impressive figures indeed.

With three port zones servicing my electorate, I am pleased to announce that the largest shipment of grain ever to leave Western Australia left the Esperance port in February, conveying almost 80,000 tonnes of barley destined for Saudi Arabia, the largest importer of feed barley in the world. In January, the largest ever shipment of canola, some 60,000 tonnes, left Albany port destined for Europe. Even today, ships are still lined up waiting for berths to load in order to transport grain to over 30 destinations internationally. Unfortunately, the fully allocated shipping capacity at the Albany and Esperance ports has led to a lack of liquidity in the cash market for all grains across these shipping zones. However, the bulk of the wheat

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crop was priced during harvest at the quite healthy levels of $280 to $300 per tonne. For farmers, this bumper harvest translates to reinvestment in the farm enterprise, increasing equity and reducing their overall debt burden. Possibly even more significant is the much-needed boost of confidence to farmers across the electorate. This has a flow-on effect with more money being spent locally and benefiting local economies across the electorate.

Unfortunately, not every area in my electorate experienced a good season. A pocket of farms in the Yilgarn and Westonia shires never received the substantial rainfall that others received and have suffered crop failures. Many are struggling through their fourth poor season in a row. According to GIWA, while some farmers at Corrigin are averaging 2.7 tonnes per hectare, at Bullfinch 200 kilometres to the north-east they averaged as low as half a tonne per hectare, demonstrating a huge disparity in yield despite the small geographical difference.

While visiting the drought affected regions of WA in February this year, I met with local farmers at Southern Cross and could sense their increasing despair as they saw their eastern states counterparts highlighted in the media whilst their plight remained largely unrecognised. Assuring them that I would make their case heard in Canberra, I can now acknowledge the timely announcement of the federal government's $320 million drought assistance package.

The Prime Minister and the Minister for Agriculture, Minister Joyce, have acknowledged that some pockets of Western Australia's wheatbelt have been subjected to drought conditions and should qualify for assistance—a welcome announcement for farmers in these areas. The $280 million drought concessional loans scheme will be available to affected farmers, allowing them to restructure their existing loans. Assessed on a case-by-case basis, this new system will be much fairer than the old lines-on-the-map criteria. While final details are being negotiated with the state government, eligible farmers should be able to borrow up to $1 million or 50 per cent of their debt at an interest rate of around four per cent for up to five years. As part of the drought assistance package, the family support program and targeted community care in areas such as mental health will be of great benefit to farmers and their families in crisis recovery.

As the Prime Minister has stated, these people do not want a handout; they are just reaching for a hand up so they can get back to the job of primary producers as soon as possible. This is not a government bailing out unviable businesses. These measures are designed to restore dignity and reduce the suffering of affected families, assisting them with getting back on their feet and back to business. These farm businesses are viable but have been subject to adverse weather events. Short-term support measures coupled with climatic normalisation will see them restore the integrity of their businesses and contribute as primary producers for generations into the future.

In conclusion, I would like to extend my congratulations to the farmers in my electorate who, through a combination of innovation, hard work and sheer determination continue to work towards feeding this nation and contributing to Australia's GDP earnings in the export of food and fibre. I would like to reiterate my support for each and every one of them in their endeavours, and I say to the farmers of O'Connor: this government, from the Prime Minister and the Minister for Agriculture down, is committed to standing by our farmers through the good times and the bad and working together to create a more prosperous and profitable future.
Mr GILES (Scullin) (11:23): A key feature of the electorate of Scullin, much like the electorate of my friend and colleague the member for Calwell, is suburban growth. Communities in suburbs such as South Morang and Epping North are experiencing extraordinary growth. Areas that were farmland relatively recently are now developed suburbs. I note that in the very near future one in five Australians will be living in outer suburban communities. I am excited by the possibilities of this growth but also recognise it poses significant challenges. Indeed, one of the things that has dominated my thinking and my actions since I was endorsed as Labor's candidate for Scullin is what I can do and what governments can do to help shape these communities to ensure their viability.

Often we think of major infrastructure issues, and I have often had occasion to speak up for the provision of public transport infrastructure, be it buses that link up with these new communities or heavy rail. I have also spoken up for significant road improvements such as the duplication of Epping Road, the extension of Edgars Road and the O'Heans Road interchange. These are vital infrastructure questions that I will continue to pursue, but today I wish to raise an infrastructure matter that may seem small but reflects a dire situation that is affecting many of the people that I represent.

I refer to the dire situation which faces residents in Epping North that relates to the proposed traffic lights on the corner of Epping Road and Harvest Home Road in Epping. During the election campaign last year I door-knocked in this area and residents were quick to raise this as well as other infrastructure issues. They continue to do so with great frequency and often with quite some vigour. I am presently holding a series of community catch-ups, including at Wollert just up the road, and I have already been contacted by several constituents foreshadowing to me that these infrastructure issues are of great concern and they wish to spend time with me to go through what I can do to assist them.

On Tuesday of this week local residents were joined by my state colleagues Lily D'Ambrosio and Bronwyn Halfpenny to discuss the hazards that the lack of traffic lights at this intersection presented, as well as some other issues facing the area. I would have liked to have been there to continue my advocacy and better inform myself of the concerns of residents, particularly in light of some recent accidents. It was noticable that no-one from the Victorian coalition government attended this meeting. This lack of concern by the Baillieu-Napthine governments has become worryingly familiar for the residents of Epping North. Residents are enduring constant buck-passing between VicRoads, developers and often Telstra. The City of Whittlesea, the relevant local government body, is one of the fastest-growing municipalities in Australia. It needs urgent investment and strategic planning support from the Victorian and Commonwealth governments. The council has resorted to launching a campaign, Access Denied, to highlight the systemic issues in the area. Part of this includes a mobile billboard, which I understand will circle the Victorian parliament during sitting days. These are extraordinary lengths for the council to have to go to just to get the attention of government.

The intersection at Epping Road and Harvest Home Road is symptomatic of the lack of planning with the ever-growing suburbs of Melbourne. In Epping North we see the failure of this neoliberal developer-driven approach to urban planning, with something as simple as the installation of traffic lights developing into a Mexican stand-off between different groups and
with no-one assuming responsibility. In contrast, federal Labor went to the last election with a more cooperative approach to urban planning, with a minister for cities. The Urban Policy Forum was at the centre of our approach, whereby planning experts could provide valuable advice to decision makers about big issues on managing growth and on smaller issues like traffic lights on intersections. This was to deal with the concerns about greater productivity that we often speak of in this place and also the concerns of liveability, including personal safety. I am disappointed, though not surprised, to find that one of the first acts of this federal government was to junk the Major Cities Unit. The coalition never proposed a minister for cities, so this is one commitment they can be regarded as having kept.

But what this means for residents of Epping North is more of the same. As the federal member I am keen to work with state and local governments to give the residents of Epping North the government they deserve, a government that will listen and act in their interests. There is only so much local government can do by itself. Fortunately, the people of Victoria go to an election on 29 November and have an opportunity to vote for a party with a plan to manage growth and congestion, and to support communities.

I want, again, to pay tribute to the work of the local Aurora Community Association—in particular, the indefatigable Toni Wueffert, Cara Horner and Tony Francis. They are working to build a stronger sense of community and a sense of agency for residents who feel powerless, but who should not. I am pleased to speak here in support of their work and do all I can to ensure that Melbourne’s future does not become a tale of two cities.

Great Artesian Basin Sustainability Initiative

Mr COULTON (Parkes—The Nationals Chief Whip) (11:28): I would like to speak this morning about the Great Artesian Basin Sustainability Initiative, otherwise known as GABSI. The Great Artesian Basin Sustainability Initiative was a commitment over 15 years in three five-year periods starting in 1999. My predecessor in this place, John Anderson, was the minister at the time and brought that into being. The Great Artesian Basin is the largest and deepest artesian basin in the world, stretching over 1,700,000 square kilometres. It covers 22 per cent of Australia, including New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and the Northern Territory. The basin provides the only reliable source of fresh water for much of Australia.

Beginning in the 1950s regulation required that all new bores be fitted with control flows, and each state implemented its own programs to upgrade and control bores. However, due to inadequate technology and lack of commitment from governments, the programs were largely ineffective. The GABSI was implemented in 1999 in response to inefficiencies—

A division having been called in the House of Representatives—

Sitting suspended from 11:29 to 12:44

Question agreed to.

Federation Chamber adjourned at 12:44