COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

House of Representatives

Official Hansard

No. 1, 2016
Thursday, 4 February 2016

FORTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—EIGHTH PERIOD

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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FORTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—EIGHTH PERIOD

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

House of Representatives Office Holders
Speaker—Hon. Anthony David Hawthorn Smith
Deputy Speaker—Hon. Bruce Craig Scott MP
Second Deputy Speaker—Mr Robert George Mitchell MP
Members of the Speaker's Panel—Mr Russell Evan Broadbent MP,
Ms Anna Elizabeth Burke MP, Ms Sharon Catherine Claydon MP,
Hon. John Kenneth Cobb MP, Mr Patrick Martin Conroy MP,
Mr Ian Reginald Goodenough MP, Mrs Natasha Louise Griggs MP,
Ms Sarah Moya Henderson MP, Mr Stephen James Irons MP,
Mr Craig Kelly MP, Ms Michelle Leanne Landry MP, Ms Clare Ellen O’Neil MP,
Mrs Jane Prentice MP, Ms Melissa Lee Price MP,
Dr Andrew John Southcott MP, Mr Michael Sukkar MP,
Mr Ross Xavier Vasta MP and Mrs Lucy Elizabeth Wicks MP

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

Party Leaders and Whips
Liberal Party of Australia
Leader—Hon. Malcolm Bligh Turnbull MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Julie Isabel Bishop MP
Chief Government Whip—Ms Nola Bethwyn Marino MP
Government Whips—Mr Ewen Thomas Jones MP and Mr Brett David Whiteley 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>Whiteley, Mr Brett David</td>
<td>Braddon, TAS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wicks, Mrs Lucy Elizabeth</td>
<td>Robertson, NSW</td>
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<td>Wilkie, Mr Andrew Damien</td>
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<td>Williams, Mr Matthew</td>
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<td>Wilson, Mr Richard James</td>
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<td>Wood, Mr Jason Peter</td>
<td>La Trobe, VIC</td>
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<td>Wyatt, Mr Kenneth George, AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zappia, Mr Antonio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zimmerman, Mr Trent</td>
<td>North Sydney, NSW</td>
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PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

Heads of Parliamentary Departments
Clerk of the Senate—R Laing
Clerk of the House of Representatives—D Elder
Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—R Stefanic
Parliamentary Budget Officer—P Bowen
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<th>Minister</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prime Minister</td>
<td>Hon. Malcolm Turnbull MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Indigenous Affairs</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Nigel Scullion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Women</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Michaelia Cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet Secretary</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Michaelia Cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Mitch Fifield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Digital Government</td>
<td>Hon. Michael Keenan MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Counter Terrorism</td>
<td>Hon. Michael Keenan MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister</td>
<td>Hon. Alan Tudge MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister</td>
<td>Senator Hon. James McGrath</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Productivity</td>
<td>Hon. Dr Peter Hendy MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Senator Hon. Scott Ryan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development (Deputy Prime Minister)</td>
<td>Hon. Warren Truss MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Territories, Local Government and Major Projects</td>
<td>Hon. Paul Fletcher MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister</td>
<td>Hon. Michael McCormack MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>Hon. Julie Bishop MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Trade and Investment</td>
<td>Hon. Andrew Robb AO MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for International Development and the Pacific</td>
<td>Hon. Steven Ciobo MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Tourism and International Education</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Richard Colbeck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister Assisting the Minister for Trade and Investment</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Richard Colbeck</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attorney-General (Vice-President of the Executive Council)</td>
<td>Senator Hon. George Brandis QC</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Leader of the Government in the Senate)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Justice</td>
<td>Hon. Michael Keenan MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Concetta Fierravanti-Wells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Hon. Scott Morrison MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Small Business</td>
<td>Hon. Kelly O’Dwyer MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Treasurer</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister to the Treasurer</td>
<td>Hon. Alex Hawke MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Finance (Deputy Leader of Government in the Senate)</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Mathias Cormann</td>
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<td>Acting Special Minister of State</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Mathias Cormann</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources</td>
<td>Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Anne Ruston</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science (Leader of the House)</td>
<td>Hon. Christopher Pyne MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Resources, Energy and Northern Australia</td>
<td>Hon. Josh Frydenberg MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Science</td>
<td>Hon. Karen Andrews MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Innovation</td>
<td>Hon. Wyatt Roy MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Minister</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Immigration and Border Protection</strong></td>
<td>Hon. Peter Dutton MP</td>
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<td>Senator Hon. Concetta Fierravanti-Wells</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for the Environment</strong></td>
<td>Hon. Greg Hunt MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acting Minister for Cities and the Built Environment</td>
<td>Hon. Greg Hunt MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Health</strong></td>
<td>Hon. Sussan Ley MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Aged Care</strong></td>
<td>Hon. Sussan Ley MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Sport</strong></td>
<td>Hon. Sussan Ley MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Rural Health</strong></td>
<td>Senator Hon. Fiona Nash</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Health</td>
<td>Hon. Ken Wyatt MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Defence</strong></td>
<td>Senator Hon. Marise Payne</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Veterans’ Affairs</td>
<td>Hon. Stuart Robert MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC</td>
<td><strong>Hon. Stuart Robert MP</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting Minister for Defence Materiel and Science</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Marise Payne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Defence</td>
<td>Hon. Darren Chester MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Communications</strong></td>
<td>Senator Hon. Mitch Fifield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for the Arts</strong></td>
<td>Senator Hon. Mitch Fifield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Manager of Government Business in the Senate)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Employment</strong></td>
<td>Senator Hon. Michaelia Cash</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Social Services</strong></td>
<td>Hon. Christian Porter MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Human Services</td>
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<td>Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Concetta Fierravanti-Wells</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Education and Training</strong></td>
<td>Senator Hon. Simon Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Vocational Education and Skills</td>
<td>Hon. Luke Hartsuyker MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Deputy Leader of the House)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Tourism and International Education</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Richard Colbeck</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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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. Assistant Ministers in italics are designated as Parliamentary Secretaries under the Ministers of State Act 1952.
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<td>Hon. Bill Shorten MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister Assisting the Leader for Science</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Kim Carr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister Assisting the Leader on State and Territory Relations</td>
<td>Senator Katy Gallagher*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Women</td>
<td>Senator Claire Moore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager of Opposition Business (Senate)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Cabinet Secretary</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Jacinta Collins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Opposition</td>
<td>Hon. Michael Danby MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Hon. Ed Husic MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary Assisting with Digital Innovation and Startups</td>
<td>Terri Butler MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy Manager of Opposition Business (Senate)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Deputy Leader of the Opposition</strong></td>
<td>Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Development</td>
<td>Hon. Matt Thistlethwaite MP</td>
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<td>Senator the Hon. Penny Wong</td>
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<td>Dr Jim Chalmers MP</td>
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<td>and Water</td>
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<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Manufacturing</td>
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<td>Hon. Jason Clare MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Early Childhood Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for School Education and Youth</td>
<td>Senator Sam Dastyari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry</td>
<td>Hon. Joel Fitzgibbon MP</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Resources</td>
<td>Hon. Gary Gray AO MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Health</td>
<td>Hon. Catherine King MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Ageing</td>
<td>Hon. Shayne Neumann MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Mental Health</td>
<td>Senator Katy Gallagher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Sport</td>
<td>Dr Jim Chalmers MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Health</td>
<td>Stephen Jones MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Families and Payments</td>
<td>Hon. Jenny Macklin MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Disability Reform</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Housing and Homelessness</td>
<td>Senator Katy Gallagher*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Human Services</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Doug Cameron</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Carers</td>
<td>Senator Claire Moore</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Families and Payments</td>
<td>Senator Carol Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Child Safety and Prevention of</td>
<td>Terri Butler MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Violence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Immigration and Border Protection</td>
<td>Hon. Richard Marles MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Citizenship and Multiculturalism</td>
<td>Michelle Rowland MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration</td>
<td>Hon. Matt Thistlethwaite MP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Shadow Cabinet Ministers are shown in bold type.

* Senator Katy Gallagher’s appointment to the Shadow Ministry is effective from 1 November 2015. Senator the Hon. Jan McLucas will serve as Shadow Minister for Housing and Homelessness and Shadow Minister for Mental Health, and represent the Shadow Minister for Northern Australia, the Shadow Minister for Health, the Shadow Assistant Minister for Health, the Shadow Minister for Sport and the Shadow Minister for Indigenous Affairs in the Senate until 31 October 2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Shadow Minister</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Indigenous Affairs</td>
<td>Hon. Shayne Neumann MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Indigenous Affairs</td>
<td>Hon. Warren Snowdon MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations</td>
<td>Hon. Brendan O’Connor MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Employment Services</td>
<td>Hon. Julie Collins MP</td>
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The SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Smith) took the chair at 09:00, made an acknowledgement of country and read prayers.

BILLS

Tax Laws Amendment (Small Business Restructure Roll-over) Bill 2016

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Hawke.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr HAWKE (Mitchell—Assistant Minister to the Treasurer) (09:01): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill amends taxation laws to allow small businesses to change their entity structure without incurring a capital gains tax liability at that time.

Small businesses account for 97 per cent of all Australian businesses. They employ over 4.7 million people and they produce over $340 billion of economic output per year.

To support this vital sector of the economy, the government announced a $5.5 billion Growing Jobs and Small Business package in last year’s budget.

This parliament has already passed legislation for the 1.5 per cent small company tax cut; the unincorporated small business tax discount; the immediate deductibility of assets under $20,000; and the immediate deductibility of professional expenses measures.

In addition, from 1 April this year, small businesses that provide their employees with qualifying work related portable electronic devices, will be allowed a fringe benefit tax exemption. This was another measure announced in the Growing Jobs and Small Business package, and passed by this parliament.

This bill contains the final tax measure from the Growing Jobs and Small Business package.

Schedule 1 allows small businesses to change the legal structure of their business and have the capital gains tax liability disregarded and deferred until eventual disposal.

Sometimes a small business will start operating within a legal structure that is not necessarily best suited to the owner's needs. This can occur because they did not receive advice or the advice was inadequate or because the business has developed beyond the original aspirations of its owners.

For small business owners who find that they are running a business through the wrong entity structure, there can be additional administrative burdens and cash flow impediments. To remedy this situation, a small business owner could choose to restructure their business, but this restructure is currently likely to require the owner to pay capital gains tax on the assets of the business even though there is no change in its ownership.
This aspect of the tax law means that small businesses are effectively locked into the structure they choose at the inception of their business at a time when many small business owners do not have the time or money to seek professional advice on the best legal structure for their business.

To alleviate this problem, this measure will allow small businesses to roll over assets from one entity to another, provided the underlying economic ownership of the assets remains unchanged.

This bill has a cost to revenue of $40 million over the forward estimates period and, along with the other tax measures announced in last year's budget, will provide over $5 billion of support to Australia's hard-working small business owners.

The government are proud of their commitment and we have shown to small businesses through this package of measures that we are committed.

Small businesses not only provide income for their families and jobs in their communities, but have great ideas and great visions that can change our country and in some cases can conquer the world. Australia's new free trade agreements present a major opportunity for these businesses to expand into new markets.

This government has a policy focus on small business.

We want small business to be as strong as it can be and for the hard-working people in small business to succeed.

We must continue to foster an entrepreneurial culture and reduce regulatory barriers so that people can take advantage of the opportunities afforded by a growing, diversifying and adapting economy.

This means getting the balance right on tax, to make sure our tax system is not putting obstacles in the way of our ability to innovate, to adapt and to diversify.

We look forward to seeing many more businesses across the country as the benefits of this initiative are felt.

Full details of the measure are contained in the explanatory memorandum.

Debate adjourned.

**Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2015-2016**

**First Reading**

Message from the Governor-General transmitting particulars of proposed expenditure and recommending appropriation announced.

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Hawke.

Bill read a first time.

**Second Reading**

Mr HAWKE (Mitchell—Assistant Minister to the Treasurer) (09:06): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Today, the government introduces the additional estimates appropriation bills. These bills are:

- Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2015-2016; and
- Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2015-2016.
These bills underpin the government's expenditure decisions.

Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2015-2016 seeks approval for additional appropriations from the Consolidated Revenue Fund of just over $1.3 billion.

I now outline the significant items that are sought in this bill.

First, the bill will provide the Department of Immigration and Border Protection with just over $447 million, this reflects additional funding for enhancing the management of the onshore immigration detention network; further support for refugee resettlement arrangements; and additional support for the accommodation and processing of asylum seekers.

Second, the bill would provide the Social Services portfolio just over $277 million. The Department of Social Services would receive just over $102 million primarily to provide support services to resettle an additional 12,000 refugees who are fleeing the conflict in Syria and Iraq. The bill would also provide the National Disability Insurance Agency with just over $108 million for the transition to the full National Disability Insurance Scheme, as agreed with New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania. The Department of Human Services would also receive just over $11 million for Addressing Welfare Reliance in Remote Communities, which will provide increased incentives for job seekers to work and to strengthen the mutual obligation framework in Community Development Program regions.

Third, the bill would provide the Department of Defence with just over $186 million, largely reflecting supplementation for foreign exchange movements and the net effect of the reallocation of funds between operating and capital costs.

Details of the proposed expenditure are set out in the schedule to the bill and the portfolio additional estimates statements tabled in the parliament.

I commend this appropriation bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2015-2016

First Reading

Message from the Governor-General transmitting particulars of proposed expenditure and recommending appropriation announced.

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Frydenberg.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong—Minister for Resources, Energy and Northern Australia) (09:08): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2015-2016, along with Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2015-2016, which was introduced earlier, are the additional estimates appropriation bills for this financial year.

This bill seeks approval for appropriations from the Consolidated Revenue Fund of just over $905 million for
I now outline the significant items provided for in this bill.

First, the bill would provide the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development just over $385 million reflecting, primarily, additional funding for the Roads to Recovery program to help local government and councils maintain Australia's roads.

Second, the bill would provide the Department of Health with $125 million to be used as capital by the Biomedical Translation Fund following its establishment. The fund will be used to invest in promising medical discoveries and will complement the Medical Research Future Fund through the commercialisation of health and medical research.

Third, the bill would provide for the Australian Taxation Office just over $74 million largely for implementing single touch payroll reporting and for improvements to data and analytics infrastructure.

Details of the proposed expenditure are set out in the schedules to the bill and the portfolio additional estimates statements tabled in the parliament.

I commend this appropriation bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

**Food Standards Australia New Zealand Amendment (Forum on Food Regulation and Other Measures) Bill 2015**

**Consideration of Senate Message**

Bill returned from the Senate with amendments.

Ordered that the amendments be considered immediately.

*Senate's amendments*—

1. Clause 2, page 2 (table item 4), omit the table item.
2. Schedule 2, page 21 (line 1) to page 26 (line 13), omit the Schedule.


[Mr STEPHEN JONES (Throsby) (09:11): The bill, when it was originally presented to this House in the last session of 2015, attracted for the most part the support of the Labor opposition. There were a set of proposals that we found problematic. They were proposals to make some significant changes to the composition of the board of Food Standards Australia New Zealand. The board's key decision-making body in FSANZ is charged with developing and implementing the food code, and Labor has consistently defended the balance of this board for over 15 years. It has a public health focus and its composition is finally balanced.

The amendments that we put at the time that the bill was originally introduced were refused in this House. Amendments in similar forms were put in the other place, and I am happy to advise the House that those amendments, identical to the ones that were refused in this place, were accepted in the Senate. We thank the crossbenchers and eventually the government for accepting those amendments, and they enjoy the support of the opposition.

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

Mrs GRIGGS (Solomon) (09:13): The response to the government's plan to curb excessive credit card fees has been broad, considered and overwhelmingly positive. I would like to spend some time going through some of the commentary that followed the Prime Minister's announcement last October that the government would act on disproportionate card surcharges.

Under the headline 'Plan to rein in excessive surcharges on plan payments,' John Collett in Fairfax pointed to widespread community frustration at the current free-for-all fees regime. On 25 October last year, he wrote:

It's a common trap. Consumers are seduced by the headline price of an airfare or concert ticket only to find themselves slugged with a hefty booking fee for the privilege of paying with a credit or debit card. The price of convenience is an astonishing $1.6 billion a year. That's how much Australians pay in surcharges for card payments, according to a survey commissioned by MasterCard last year.

If you think it's too much, you are not alone. Consumer organisation Choice has been railing against excessive surcharging for years, while a Change.org petition calling on Jetstar to drop its surcharge of $17 for a return fare has collected about 110,000 signatures so far. Now we might finally see some action—

John Collett writes—

The Turnbull government, as part of a broader response to an inquiry into the financial system, announced last week it would crack down on excessive surcharges. The government announced it would legislate a ban on surcharges that exceed the "reasonable costs" faced by merchants in accepting cards. The move is likely to have bipartisan support so it's going to happen, it's a question of when, and what it will mean in practice. No one disputes that there is some cost to the merchant of accepting cards, the question is what is the "reasonable cost"? Choice has estimated that MasterCard or Visa transactions cost about 1 per cent of the transaction total to process while Amex and Diners Club are more expensive, up to 2 per cent.

He continues:

Choice has described Qantas and its low-cost offshoot, Jetstar and Cabcharge as among the worst offenders in excessive surcharging of their customers.

I will deal with the question of reasonable cost later in this debate, but Collett goes on to detail in his article some of those excessive costs:

Virgin Australia charges $7.70 a ticket whether paid by credit card, debit card or PayPal. The surcharge can amount to about 8 per cent on top of the typical cost of a Sydney to Melbourne flight. Qantas charges $2.50 for payment for domestic tickets, which includes New Zealand, paid by debit card. It charges $7 for domestic tickets paid by credit card. For international tickets, the surcharge is $30 by credit card and $10 by debit card.

Other media outlets have mirrored the positive line taken by Fairfax. On 20 October, under the headline 'Turnbull government to crack down on excessive credit card surcharges', online newspaper The Guardian wrote:
The government has agreed to take action to improve fee and surcharging arrangements for credit card transactions, which could reduce the costs faced by consumers when they buy products at shops and restaurants.

Also on 20 October, under the headline 'Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull declares an end to credit card gouging', News.com wrote:

One of the most frustrating shopping experiences will soon be a thing of the past, as the Australian Government flags an end to unfair credit card surcharges. Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has declared that the fee charged at the cash register for using a credit card must be no more than the merchant's cost of processing the transaction—typically a mere 0.5 per cent. Many retailers charge at least double this amount, and in extreme cases the surcharge can be as much as 20 times higher, in a practice that has infuriated customers. Treasurer Scott Morrison said that credit card surcharges 'have to pass the fair dinkum test'.

The fact that the media was virtually 100 per cent behind the government's actions is a sign that something desperately needed to be done to curb credit card fee gouging.

The survey referred to earlier was initiated by Klaus Bartosch and, as of late last night, it had collected 110,855 signatures. That, and responses to David Murray's financial system inquiry report, where 5,000 of the 6,500 submissions referred to the surcharge, signal a win for people power and the collective will over dodgy business practices.

While this legislation sets out to put an end to fee gouging, the government acknowledges the need for businesses to recoup fees accrued from customer credit card payments. If, like me, you thought credit card surcharges had been around forever, then think again. As a point of history, it is interesting to note that credit card surcharges were only introduced in Australia back in 2004. An article in online news magazine The Conversation said that, in 2003, the Reserve Bank of Australia introduced a series of payment system reforms, including the elimination of the pre-existing no-surcharge rules. This meant retailers could recover the cost of accepting a credit card from a customer who chose to use the card. What the Reserve Bank failed to do was limit the size of the surcharge the retailer could set. Not surprisingly, given the success of surcharges in Australia, the RBA rules have been followed all around the world.

The Conversation makes a strong case for the retention of credit card surcharges but at a rate commensurate with the cost to the retailer of taking the credit card payment. Credit cards, it says, are relatively expensive payment tools compared to other card forms such as debit cards and, of course, cash. Under a no-surcharge rule, it follows that there would be excessive use of credit cards because of their popularity with consumers because they are very easy to use. It makes sense that customers would choose to use a credit card, because the cost would be shared at the price-point by people who pay cash or use debit cards. This excessive use would further jack-up costs for businesses, which in turn would be passed on to consumers. It is a vicious retail circle. While this shared cost would benefit the credit card user, it would be patently unfair for other, non-credit card, consumers.

Surcharging changes this by levying a fee on the credit card user rather than unfairly spreading it to all customers. But, as is now clear, it is the level of the fee that has become of such concern for potentially millions of Australians who make purchases with their credit cards. The Murray inquiry's recommendation was simple and succinct. Recommendation 17 said government should:
Improve surcharging regulation by expanding its application and ensuring customers using lower-cost payment methods cannot be over-surcharged by allowing more prescriptive limits on surcharging.

In other words, we should protect the credit card user from businesses that take too large a cut from the credit card transaction while also protecting the consumer who does not pay by credit card.

And this is exactly the balance the government has sought in the legislation that we are debating today. The Competition and Consumer Amendment (Payment Surcharges) Bill was introduced by the Assistant Treasurer during 2015’s final parliamentary sitting, with the very clear objective of limiting surcharges to no more than cost recovery or the cost to the business of the transaction fee.

Contained within the second reading speech was an extraordinary set of figures, and I would like to share them with you. Each month around $45 billion in purchases are processed in Australia through more than half a billion card transactions. It does not take much imagination to realise the possible scope of savings through shutting down what the Assistant Treasurer referred to as the 'widespread problem of excessive surcharging'. This measure, in other words, will provide considerable savings overall to Australian consumers.

The laws will be given enforcement muscle through the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission being responsible for enforcing this ban to ensure that consumers are treated fairly. The Reserve Bank of Australia will play a key role in setting the costs a merchant is permitted to recover by surcharging. A few problem industries, such as ticketing, airline and travel industries, have created most of the consumer complaints and distorted price signals in the payments system. The enforcement muscle comes in the form of heavy fines to businesses that seek to profit from consumers who pay with credit cards.

The ACCC will be able to require merchants and other payment system participants to provide documents or information to help it assess the costs incurred against any surcharges imposed by the merchant. It will be an offence to fail to provide the documents or information requested by the ACCC. If the ACCC forms the view that a merchant has engaged in excessive surcharging, it may issue an infringement notice, including a penalty for listed corporations of up to 600 penalty units, currently $108,000, for each alleged contravention.

This bill will sit alongside other existing legislation designed to protect consumers from dodgy business practices. Australian consumer law requires that pricing is communicated to consumers in a manner that is not misleading or deceptive and that allows businesses to compete on a level playing field. The ACL states that prices presented to customers must state the total price of the good or service as a single figure, with the total price to be displayed at least as prominently as any part price. This ensures that consumers can easily compare the prices of different goods and services.

'Drip pricing' occurs where a headline price is advertised at the beginning of an online purchase process and additional fees and charges, which may be unavoidable for consumers, are incrementally disclosed. On 17 November 2015, in action pursued by the ACCC, the Federal Court found that Jetstar and Virgin Australia had in some specific instances engaged in drip pricing through misleading and deceptive conduct and through making false or misleading representations about the price of particular advertised airfares. In October 2014, Ticketek and Ticketmaster adjusted their pricing practices in response to concerns raised by the ACCC regarding drip pricing. In April 2015, media reports suggested that Aldi had not
adequately disclosed surcharges to customers at some stores despite adjusting their disclosure practice in August 2014 after concerns raised by ASIC in relation to their powers regarding misleading and deceptive conduct in the provision of financial services.

These are the practices the government hopes to stamp out with the passage of this bill. Addressing excessive card surcharging is a priority for the Turnbull government, and this is reflected in the speed with which these measures have come before parliament since the release of our response to the Financial System Inquiry. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr HAWKE (Mitchell—Assistant Minister to the Treasurer) (09:26): I want to thank all members who have contributed to this debate in the parliament. It has been a good debate, and a constructive one. Each month, around $45 billion of purchases are processed through more than half a billion card transactions. There is no doubt that consumers and businesses are both better off because of the convenience, security and flexibility offered by cards and other alternative payment methods. This is not to say that merchants do not face additional costs in accepting certain types of payments. Recovering these costs is not unreasonable. Profiteering, however, while pretending to recover costs, is misleading and frustrating for consumers and undermines the efficient operation of the payment system as a whole.

Addressing excessive and unfair payment surcharging by merchants is an important part of the government's financial system agenda in response to the Financial System Inquiry chaired by David Murray AO. The inquiry highlighted that this is an important issue from both a consumer fairness and a system efficiency perspective. Surcharging of payments allows merchants to send a price signal about the relative costs of different payment methods. However, a surcharge is excessive when it is above the costs incurred by the merchant for accepting that payment. Excessive surcharges, sometimes up to 10 per cent or more, have generated substantial angst in the community.

This bill gives effect to the government's commitment to ban these excessive payment surcharges by merchants by amending the Competition and Consumer Act 2010. It also gives the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission the powers to enforce that ban with its usual suite of powers provided in the Competition and Consumer Act 2010. These excessive surcharges can give consumers a false impression that certain payment methods cost more than they actually do. The community raised concerns through the Financial System Inquiry that merchants are profiteering from excessive surcharges. As a result of the measures in this bill, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission will be well placed to respond to excessive surcharges by merchants and protect the interests of customers.

As new, smart and innovative methods of payment are developed and rolled out in this digital age, the government wants to make sure that Australia has a system in place whereby it can compete on a level playing field. Innovations should not be subjected to inaccurate overstatements of their true costs to ordinary Australians through excessive surcharging. I commend this bill to the House.

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

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Bill—by leave—taken as a whole.
Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (09:29): by leave—I move Greens amendments (1) to (17) together:

(1) Schedule 1, item 2, page 3 (after line 27), after subsection (2F), insert:

(2G) In addition to the effect that this Act (other than Parts IIIA, VIIA and X) has as provided by another subsection of this section, this Act (other than Parts IIIA, VIIA and X) has, by force of this subsection, the effect it would have if:

(a) each reference in Part IVD to an ATM transaction were a reference to an ATM transaction that occurs:

(i) by means of a postal, telegraphic, telephonic, or other like service (including electronic communication); or

(ii) by means of an automatic teller machine provided by a bank (other than a State bank), or any other institution engaged in banking, in the course of banking (within the meaning of section 51(xiii) of the Constitution); and

(b) each reference to a corporation included a reference to a person not being a corporation.

(2) Schedule 1, item 3, page 10 (after line 32), after Part IVC, insert:

Part IVD—ATM transactions

Division 1—Preliminary

55N Object of this Part

The object of this Part is to ensure that:

(a) account holders are not charged for ATM transactions made using automatic teller machines owned or leased by the persons with whom their accounts are held; and

(b) amounts charged for other ATM transactions:

(i) are not excessive; and

(ii) reflect the reasonable costs of allowing a person to make an ATM transaction.

55P Definitions

In this Part:

ATM transaction means a cash deposit to, a cash withdrawal from, or an enquiry about the balance of, an account that is made by means of an automatic teller machine.

55Q Part not to apply to State banking

This Part does not apply with respect to State banking that does not extend beyond the limits of the State concerned.

Division 2—Limit on charges for ATM transactions

55R Limit on charges for ATM transactions

No charges for ATM transactions made using own-branded ATMs

(1) A corporation must not, in trade or commerce, charge a person an amount (however described) for making an ATM transaction if:

(a) the corporation is an ADI (authorised deposit-taking institution) for the purposes of the Banking Act 1959; and

(b) the transaction relates to an account held by the person with the corporation; and

(c) the automatic teller machine used to make the transaction is owned or leased by the corporation.

ATM transactions made using foreign ATMs must not be excessive
A corporation must not, in trade or commerce, charge a person an amount (however described) for making an ATM transaction that is excessive (see subsection (3)) if:

(a) the corporation is an ADI (authorised deposit-taking institution) for the purposes of the Banking Act 1959; and

(b) the transaction relates to an account held by the person with the corporation; and

(c) the automatic teller machine used to make the transaction is not owned or leased by the corporation.

For the purposes of subsection (2), an amount charged for making an ATM transaction is excessive if the amount exceeds the amount permitted by a standard determined under section 18 of the Payment Systems (Regulation) Act 1998.

For the purposes of subsection (3):

(a) the Reserve Bank of Australia must ensure that there are at all times in force standards under section 18 of the Payment Systems (Regulation) Act 1998 permitting amounts for the purposes of subsection (3); and

(b) the making of such standards is taken to be in the public interest; and

(c) an amount permitted for an ATM transaction must reflect the reasonable costs of allowing the person to make the transaction.

55S Acquisition of property

Scope

(1) This section applies to the following provisions of this Act:

(a) section 55R;

(b) any other provision to the extent to which it relates to section 55R.

Effect of provision

(2) The provision has no effect to the extent (if any) to which its operation would result in the acquisition of property (within the meaning of paragraph 51(xxxi) of the Constitution) otherwise than on just terms (within the meaning of that paragraph).

(3) Schedule 1, item 4, page 11 (line 2), after "55B,", insert "55R,"

(4) Schedule 1, item 5, page 11 (after line 5), after subparagraph (ia), insert:

(ia) section 55R;

(5) Schedule 1, item 6, page 11 (line 7), after "55B,", insert "55R,"

(6) Schedule 1, item 7, page 11 (line 9), after "55B,", insert "55R,"

(7) Schedule 1, item 8, page 11 (after line 12), after subparagraph (ia), insert:

(ia) section 55R;

(8) Schedule 1, item 9, page 11 (line 14), after "55B,", insert "55R,"

(9) Schedule 1, item 10, page 11 (line 16), after "55B,", insert "55R,"

(10) Schedule 1, item 11, page 11 (line 18), after "55B", insert "or 55R"

(11) Schedule 1, item 12, page 11 (line 20), after "55B", insert "or 55R"

(12) Schedule 1, item 13, page 11 (line 22), after "55B", insert "or 55R"

(13) Schedule 1, item 14, page 11 (line 24), after "55B", insert "or 55R"

(14) Schedule 1, item 15, page 12 (line 3), after "55B,", insert "55R,"

(15) Schedule 1, item 16, page 12 (line 5), after "55B,", insert "55R,"

(16) Schedule 1, item 17, page 12 (line 12), after "55B", insert "or 55R"
The minister, in summing up, said—I am paraphrasing slightly—that recovering costs is not unreasonable but profiteering is. That is a very good principle and it is one that, under these amendments, we are seeking to extend not just to credit cards but to ATM transactions. At the moment in Australian society you pretty much have no choice but to use a card. You use a card either to get your cash out of the bank or to make a payment. What the bill does—and this is why we are supporting it—is say: if the way you are making your payment is through a credit card then the merchant can charge you a fee for processing but they cannot profit out of it. Under this legislation, when it goes through, the merchant will only be able to charge a fee that reflects the cost to them of processing transactions et cetera. That is a good move. But what the bill does not do is tackle one of the other ways in which banks make hundreds of millions of dollars from people, which is through the $2 to $3 ATM fees that you see.

Most people now go to their own bank to get money out in order to try and avoid these $2 to $3 ATM fees. That is a good thing. People should not be charged for the privilege of accessing their own money. In modern society, you cannot get by without having a bank account. Banks get huge amounts of money put into their coffers with people's salaries, welfare payments and so on. If you go to your own bank to get money out you should not be charged for it. That is what most banks are doing now. That is a good thing, and it will be enshrined in law if these amendments are passed.

We all know there are many, many times when, despite your best efforts, you find yourself without enough cash in your wallet. It might be that the place you are wanting to purchase at does not take a card, so you cannot use payWave or you cannot use a credit card; or you might have some urgent purchase to make and you have nothing in your wallet and the only ATM nearby that you can get to is one that is not of your own bank. When you go to that bank to get money out you can be charged a fee of $2, $2.50 and sometimes even as high as $3. We know it is worse in many rural and regional areas. But what we also know is that the real cost to the bank for providing that service, of letting you get your money out even though it is not your own bank, is about 77c. The rest of the money is the cream on top of that, which the bank is making. Banks who are making world-leading record profits in this country should not be allowed to profit from people accessing their own money. You should have a right to access your own money from an ATM. If there is a cost because you are not going to your own bank but to another bank then let us do what this bill is doing for credit cards and limit the cost of the ATM fee to a reasonable cost to the banker for providing the service.

These amendments will allow a standard to be set. The RBA, the Reserve Bank of Australia, will set that standard with regard to the cost to the bank for recovering the cost of the transaction. So banks will not be left out of pocket by this amendment, but consumers will be better off. We are saying: let us take a very, very good principle that this government is applying to credit cards and also apply it to ATM fees. It is essential, because people are sick of seeing that $2 or $3 fee come up when they are getting their own money out. People are sick of being charged for the privilege of accessing their own money, because often they have tried their best to get to their own ATM and they just cannot for whatever reason.

What we also know is that these fixed fees hurt the poor and low-income earners more than everyone else, because they are the ones who are most likely to withdraw small amounts of money. When you take $20, $40 or $50 out the ATM, whacking a $2.50 fee on top of that is a
much, much bigger impost on these people than it is on someone who is in a position to take out several hundreds of dollars at one particular time. So it is an equity measure as well.

Consumer groups and the Greens have been campaigning for years to rein in excessive ATM fees that are just another way for the banks to make money. When we remember that the big four banks are the most profitable in the world and are bringing in in the order of $30 billion profit combined, this is one small way that they could give back to the community. They could say: we are no longer going to profiteer from people getting access to their own money. I commend these amendments to the House. If the minister sincerely believes, as I am sure he does, in the spirit of these amendments for credit card fees, there is no logical reason not to extend them to ATM fees as well.

Mr HAWKE (Mitchell—Assistant Minister to the Treasurer) (09:35): In addressing the amendments that the member for Melbourne has put forward, I would start by saying that I do not doubt his genuine sincerity in having a discussion about ATM fees. I do not necessarily think, though, that his advice to the banking industry would be well received. If the member for Melbourne were to open a bank on the principles he has outlined here in the House today and call it the Greens Bank, for example, and he were to run it at a loss—he sort of railed against banks making a profit—and he were to charge no fees for service and provide free money, I am not certain that there would be a rush from the Australian population to put their money into the Greens Bank. I am not sure his advice to the banking industry is really that accurate or that well regarded.

In terms of the series of amendments that he has put forward, the first point to make is that the Financial System Inquiry did not make a recommendation on ATM fees. This bill is about excessive surcharging by merchants—that is, where merchants are charging a fee that is not related to the cost of providing that service—which was found by the Financial System Inquiry to be a matter of concern. It is a problem that all Australians know about. It is a problem that they reported to the Financial System Inquiry. It is a problem that David Murray highlighted from the inquiry. It is a specific recommendation. This is why the opposition and the government are united in this endeavour. We do not want to see merchants surcharging excessively the public in an unrelated way to the actual fees for providing that service.

ATMs—and there are many ATMs around the country—and ATM fees might be a legitimate issue for discussion in another forum, in another context. It would not be good law. It would not be good process to start tacking on everybody’s pet issue to the back of serious bills about reducing credit card surcharging. It would not be a good process. It has not been a recommendation of the Financial System Inquiry. There are whole different issues at play about the fees for service at ATMs. Of course there are different issues at play, because providing an ATM service does have a cost structure to it and, regardless of the member for Melbourne’s fictional economic understanding of these things, it does cost money to provide terminals in place and banks ought to have the right to recover cost and to charge fees for service for accessing money. Fee for service of a business is a well understood principle. The levels and the nature of those fees, when they are applied or not applied, are legitimate items for discussion in a different forum and in a different way, and the government is open to a conversation about those things in the future.

This bill is so important, because we are addressing something quite different, and I do not think it is accurate for the member for Melbourne to conflate these two issues. There are
different issues at play, and here specifically David Murray, a well-respected individual, has inquired into these issues at length. He has identified this as a specific problem, and of course the government has responded very quickly and strongly with this legislation to ensure Australians can now have confidence that when they are charged for the use of a credit card it is entirely 100 per cent related to the cost of providing that service. We can now all have confidence in that.

The government will not be supporting the amendments of the Greens in relation to this, and I urge them, if they want to have a conversation about this, to take it to the appropriate forum and the proper place and we can have that conversation.

Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (09:38): Obviously, there is not going to be support for these amendments in the House, so I will not delay the matter further—and I elaborated the reasons for supporting these amendments further in my second reading speech. But I will ask the minister whether he believes that the principle of cost recovery for fees—namely, that you should only be able to charge a fee, if it reflects the real cost to the person providing that fee—should extend to ATM fees as well or whether it is limited only to credit card fees?

Secondly, the minister said that now is not the appropriate time and that there are other appropriate forums. Does the government have any plans to tackle excessive ATM fees; and should we be expecting any moves from the government on this any time soon?

Mr HAWKE (Mitchell—Assistant Minister to the Treasurer) (09:39): Again, I reiterate in relation to these amendments that this bill is about excessive credit card surcharging, so this is not a debate about ATM fees. There may be a proper time and place to have that debate and that discussion. Certainly it is the government's view that banks need to make a profit. There needs to be competition in our economy and a competitive and well-regulated banking sector. That does not mean that we seek to run every single aspect of the banking sector and every single aspect of their business.

There are good arguments in relation to the cost of ATMs, and this is a great era we are in, where people can access their own capital in more ways than ever before, whether they be through payWave services, digitally online or through an ATM terminal. And of course we have to continue to innovate and exploit that era, but we are not running the banks, I have to say, to the member for Melbourne. We regulate to ensure that there are strong capital and liquidity requirements in Australia and that we have confidence in the banking sector, but we do not want to be day-to-day bankers and run every single aspect of their business. This is not a bill about the banks; this is a bill about excessive credit card surcharging, which has been identified by the Financial System Inquiry as a serious area of concern to most Australians that needs tackling. The government agrees that merchants should not be allowed to add unreasonable and excessive charges on top of credit cards for people to access credit.

This is a worthy bill so we seek your support. We seek for you to drop these amendments so we can get this through. And if you have serious concerns, have carefully analysed every aspect of ATMs and other fees and want to present a report, go ahead and do it. But I suspect you would not be able to tell us today exactly the cost structure of providing 15,000 ATMs around the country. I suspect you would not be able to tackle it today, so rather than waste this House's time with an endless debate about something which is not what this bill is about, simply support what is—I think you would agree—a very worthwhile measure and something the government is doing that you can support. You do not always have to rail against the
Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (09:42): This government sure is full of people whose egos exceed their capacity. The minister may not have heard, but in my second reading speech and opening words to moving my amendment I commended the bill and said we were going to support it. It does some very good things, and that is why we are giving it our support. And what I also said was, 'Can we extend this principle to ATM fees?' Then the minister just could not help himself and decided to have a very long tail to his answer to my question and said, 'We're not able to get up and talk about the cost structure of providing ATM fees.'

The minister may not be aware but the Reserve Bank has actually looked into this and, coming out of all that, there has been a finding that the average cost of a third-party provision of ATM services—a bank providing it for another bank's customer—is around 77c. So this issue has been inquired into, and we have brought private members' bills before to this parliament to try to address the issue, underpinned by exactly that research. So the facts are out there and they have been put before this place many, many times.

I can only take from what the minister has said that he does not believe that the current levels of ATM fees being charged are excessive. He does not believe that a $3, $2.50 or $2 ATM fee is worthy of the attention of this parliament, so I will not be holding my breath for the minister to come back with any proposals. It is clear from his answer that this government does not see ATM fees as excessive, despite the significant evidence available and everybody knowing, when they see that message come up on the screen as they are getting their card out of the ATM, that they are being charged $2.50. Everyone knows it is a problem, and all we were seeking to do is extend a very good principle in a bill that we have commended on credit card fees to ATM fees.

Mr HAWKE (Mitchell—Assistant Minister to the Treasurer) (09:44): I simply reiterate that this bill is a worthwhile bill in itself. It does not address the issue of ATMs—it was not a recommendation of the Financial System Inquiry—and the member for Melbourne's simplified explanation of ATM fees is not able to be discussed in this debate today in the House. Simply getting up and putting your own particular view about one particular component of one particular report is not a way to make law in this country. It is not a fair way to make law or have a debate in this country. Mr Bandt's amendment tacked onto a bill about something else is not a way to run an economy, not a way to run a government, not a way to provide certainty and confidence for consumers or businesses. It is not really right for him to come in here and raise one aspect of one pet thing that might be of concern to him and suggest that we just tack it onto the back of a bill about something else. That is what the government's principal objection is here. We make no claims about the other matters that he raises, because this is not the forum to discuss them. It is very simple. It is not appropriate to come in here and just add something that is very complex, something that does bear discussion and consideration by government, something that does concern Australians, something worth considering in other forums in other ways, onto the back of something else.
and pretend we have had a reasonable discussion about it. There are many complex issues related to those matters.

I say to the House again that the government and the opposition have carefully looked at these matters in the Financial System Inquiry and the reason we have come to the same view is that that is the strong recommendation of Mr David Murray. I say to the member for Melbourne: you have many forums, you have many opportunities, you have many ways of raising those matters but it is not a good process, it is not good law, it is not good for the economy or consumers or businesses to be attaching minor pet issues onto the back of every single piece of legislation about other matters when people are unable to have the proper debates or the proper considerations about the issues that you want us to legislate on.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Mitchell): The question is that the amendments be agreed to.

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

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

Question negatived, Mr Bandt and Mr Wilkie voting yes.

Bill agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr HAWKE (Mitchell—Assistant Minister to the Treasurer) (09:51): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

BUSINESS

Rearrangement

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong—Minister for Resources, Energy and Northern Australia) (09:52): I move:

That the order of the day No. 2, government business, be postponed until a later hour this day.

Question agreed to.

COMMITTEES

Publications Committee

Report

Mr COULTON (Parkes—The Nationals Chief Whip) (09:53): I present the report from the Publications Committee sitting in conference with the Publications Committee of the Senate. Copies of the report are being placed on the table.

Report—by leave—agreed to.

CHAMBER
CHAMBER

BILLS

Building and Construction Industry (Improving Productivity) Bill 2013 [No. 2]
Building and Construction Industry (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2013 [No. 2]

Second Reading

Cognate debate.
Debate resumed on the motion:
That this bill be now read a second time.
to which the following amendment was moved:

That all the words after "That" be omitted with a view to substituting the following words:
"the House declines to give the bill a second reading because the objective of dealing with alleged wrongdoing in Australian society would be better achieved by establishing a broad-based national anti-corruption watchdog."

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Mitchell) (09:54): If it suits the House, I will state the question in the form that the amendment be agreed to. The question now is that the amendment be agreed to.

Mr MATHESON (Macarthur) (09:54): The building and construction industry employs more than a million people, representing approximately nine per cent of the Australian workforce. It is a critical part of the fabric that makes this country productive, prosperous and internationally competitive. The people of Macarthur understand the importance of the building and construction sector to the economy. They know that cost blowouts and project delays as a result of industrial bullying cost time and money, which ultimately costs us all.

I stand here today, proud to be part of a coalition government which recognises the importance of an industry that is vital to job creation and essential to Australia's economy. I believe the Building and Construction Industry (Improving Productivity) Bill 2013 [No. 2] is a positive step forward. It encourages productivity and high levels of employment in the building and construction industry. It will ensure that the government's policy to deliver the infrastructure of the 21st century is delivered. In my electorate alone, this bill will protect jobs and investment by ensuring thousands of employers and workers in the industry can get on with the job without fear of intimidation.

One of the most crucial parts of this bill is the regulation to uphold and promote respect for the law to ensure respect for the rights of everyone in the building industry. It contains provisions to ensure that unlawful actions, including unlawful industrial actions, are dealt with appropriately. It also ensures the ability for the courts to impose significant penalties for individuals and organisations that participate in this unlawful action.

The Australian Building and Construction Commission was a strong and productive watchdog. It was established by the coalition in 2005 following the 2002 Royal Commission into the Building and Construction Industry. The royal commission found that the building and construction industry was characterised by widespread disregard for the law. It catalogued over 100 types of unlawful and inappropriate conduct. This included illegal strikes, pattern bargaining, right of entry infringements and the coercion of non-unionised subcontractors. The royal commission also found that existing regulatory bodies had
insufficient powers and resources to enforce the law. This is why one of its recommendations was to establish a specialist and permanent regulatory body to look into this conduct.

It was the Howard government that established the ABCC in 2005 and the commission was instrumental in curbing illegal industrial action and lawlessness in the construction industry. It took a strong stand against union thuggery in the industry by keeping disputes to a minimum. The ABCC helped to increase productivity and lower construction costs around Australia. While the ABCC existed between 2005 and 2012, the performance of the construction sector improved. These benefits flowed through to our economy and on to all Australians. During its previous period of operation, the ABCC contributed positively to economic benefits for consumers, increased levels of productivity, fewer days lost to industrial action and an increased respect for the rule of law across the industry. This created flow-on effects to all law-abiding workers, employers and unions. Since its inception in 2005 the ABCC helped the industry to increase productivity by 10 per cent. It provided an annual economic welfare gain of $5.5 billion per year, reduced inflation by 1.2 per cent and increased GDP by 1.5 per cent. Put simply, the commission was doing its job. The number of working days lost annually per 1,000 employees in the construction industry fell from 224 in 2004 down to 24 in 2006. At the same time, building costs fell by 20 to 25 per cent and long project delays were dramatically reduced.

Before the abolishment of the commission in 2012, a submission made by the Housing Industry Association stated that the commission has been doing 'a sound and effective job of law enforcement, clamping down on unions and others for illegal industrial behaviour and right of entry breaches'. This was keeping the unions in check. It went on to say: 'However its work is far from finished. Aggressive and unlawful industrial action persists as an area of concern for the industry.' It is clear that work still needed to be done and, before it was abolished, the ABCC was doing the work independently and effectively. Unfortunately, the type of conduct that the royal commission identified back in 2002 cannot be easily reversed. It is the type of conduct that needs targeted resources to effect lasting cultural change. Whilst the ABCC succeeded in improving conduct, the culture of lawlessness identified by the royal commission had only been suppressed. Sadly, it still exists.

In its submission, HIA told us that it did not believe that Labor's legislation to abolish the ABCC would continue to deliver the strong, independent and robust enforcement body that the building industry required. It also said that 'a watering down' of the existing powers would result in a return to the industrial lawlessness identified by the royal commission. The writing was on the wall. While the ABCC existed, the economic and industrial performance of the building and construction industry significantly improved. A 2013 Independent Economics report on the state of the sector during this period found that building and construction industry productivity grew by more than nine per cent, consumers were better off by around $7.5 billion annually and fewer working days were lost through industrial action.

So why was a commission that was 'doing a sound and effective job' abolished? It was because the former Labor government came under sustained pressure from building and construction unions to abolish the Australian Building and Construction Commission and the Building Code that supported its work. And, once they were abolished, all hell broke loose. Just weeks after the ABCC was abolished, we saw violence on the streets of Melbourne, with militant union protestors intimidating the community and their supporters and attacking police
horses. Workers on the site purchased an advertisement in the Herald Sun with an open letter to their own union bosses asking for the blockades to stop. Images of these protests were seen on television screens around the world. What message does this send to national and international companies about investing in building and construction projects in Melbourne or Australia?

And it does not stop there. We also saw the CFMEU grossly bullying nonmembers by creating posters labelling them 'scabs' and advocating that they be run out of the industry, in open defiance of the Fair Work Act and Supreme Court orders to end the protests.

On 19 June 2015, the Federal Court fined the CFMEU and five of its officials $545,000 for unlawful conduct at the $40 million Australian-government-funded Common Ground housing project for the long-term homeless. In its penalty judgment, the Federal Court said the conduct 'was a deliberate stratagem on the part of the CFMEU'. The court went on to say that 'an industrial organisation, be it an employer organisation or an employee organisation, which persistently abuses the privilege by engaging in unlawful conduct cannot expect to remain registered.'

Since the abolition of the ABCC, we have also seen a violent dispute at a brewery site in Geelong where union picketers were accused in court documents of making throat-cutting gestures and threats to stomp heads in, of shoving and kicking and of punching motor vehicles. We saw union protestors threatening people with 'Columbian neckties' at City West Water in Werribee, where the dispute was so heated that workers had to be flown in by helicopter. This behaviour is disgraceful and it should not be tolerated.

But what baffles me most is that the previous Labor government was well aware of this type of behaviour in the industry. That is why they were understandably reluctant to abolish the Australian Building and Construction Commission, despite strong union pressure. They contracted Justice Murray Wilcox to review the industry to buy some time. Justice Wilcox recognised the benefit provided by the Australian Building and Construction Commission, stating in his report that 'the ABCC's work is not yet done' and that 'it would be unfortunate' if the ABCC's replacement body 'led to a reversal of the progress that has been made'.

We know this behaviour is still taking place across Australia today. The recent Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption report, prepared by Commissioner Dyson Heydon in December 2015, referred to 'widespread and deep-seated' misconduct by union officials. The commission publicly investigated 75 case studies and conducted 189 days of hearings in Sydney, Brisbane, Canberra, Perth and Melbourne, of which 155 were public hearings. More than 500 witnesses gave evidence in public hearings.

As a result of this report more than 40 individuals and organisations have been referred to authorities including police, directors of public prosecutions, the Australian Securities and Investments Commission and the Fair Work Commission. There was also a recommendation for an independent body with greater powers to investigate union records and finances. The report flags numerous examples of misconduct, including blackmail, bribery, death threats and misappropriation of funds. More than 79 recommendations were made, including tougher penalties for union officials, and special rules to 'combat the culture of disregard for the law' were recommended for the CFMEU, which included giving parliament the power to disqualify union officials they consider unfit.
Commissioner Heydon said the findings uncovered in the report were just the beginning. He wrote:

These aberrations cannot be regarded as isolated. They are not the work of a few rogue unions, or a few rogue officials. The misconduct exhibits great variety. It is widespread. It is deep-seated.

He went on to say:

It would be utterly naive to think that what has been uncovered is anything other than the small tip of an enormous iceberg.

We know that the building and construction industry has not been exempt from such behaviour. That is why the ABCC is crucial.

Unlike some opposite, the government knows how important this industry is to the future of the country. That is why we are committed to ensuring that the rule of law is maintained and that workers in the building and construction sector can go to work free of intimidation and harassment.

This bill provides effective means for investigating and enforcing the law. The Australian Building and Construction Commissioner will be able to exercise their power to obtain information quickly and effectively without being hindered by unnecessary bureaucratic red tape around the issue of examination notices. However, to ensure accountability and transparency, the use of these powers will continue to be reviewed and reported on by the Commonwealth Ombudsman. The commissioner will monitor, promote and enforce appropriate standards of conduct by building industry participants and refer matters to other relevant agencies and bodies as required. They will also be responsible for investigating suspected violations of the law by building industry participants. They will also intervene in proceedings in accordance with these laws and provide assistance and advice to building industry participants on their rights and obligations under designated building laws.

The commissioner will be supported by deputy commissioners, and will be the head of a statutory agency. The agency will be properly funded to ensure it can do its work. The funding taken away by the Labor government will be restored.

The bill also requires the Commonwealth Ombudsman to prepare and present to the parliament a report about witness examinations undertaken by the commissioner during the year. This will ensure public transparency and accountability and give the community confidence in the work of the ABCC.

The bill also aims to improve the bargaining framework to encourage genuine bargaining at the workplace level. Enterprise bargaining negotiations must be harmonious, sensible and productive and should be tailored to the particular workplace.

As part of this government's policy to improve the Fair Work laws, we are committed to re-establishing the Australian Building and Construction Commission to ensure the rule of law and productivity on commercial building sites and construction projects. We took this commitment to the 2010 and 2013 federal elections as a key policy and committed to re-establishing the Australian Building and Construction Commission within 100 days of the parliament first sitting. We were given a clear mandate by the Australian people to make this change, and that is why I stand here today.
We also promised that a re-established Australian Building and Construction Commission will administer a code that will govern industrial relations arrangements for government-funded projects. This step will ensure that taxpayers' dollars are used efficiently.

By abolishing the Australian Building and Construction Commission, Labor undermined confidence in the building and construction industry in this country. As a result, we have seen a return to lawlessness and an increase in the number of days where work is simply not being done in the industry. Workers in this industry deserve to be able to go to work each day without the fear of being harassed, intimidated or subjected to violence.

The people of Macarthur are depending on this industry and those who work in it. My electorate is experiencing an extreme amount of growth right now, which will continue over the next three decades. The building and construction industry employs thousands of residents in my electorate and south-west Sydney. It is imperative that the industry is stable and productive as we move forward into 2016 and beyond. (Time expired)

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House, Minister for Industry and Innovation and Science) (10:06): I move:

That the question be now put.

The House divided. [10:10]

(The Deputy Speaker—Mr Mitchell)

Ayes ...................... 84
Noes ...................... 52
Majority .................. 32

AYES

Abbott, AJ
Andrews, KL
Billson, BF
Briggs, JE
Broadbent, RE
Buchholz, S
Christensen, GR
Cobb, JK
Coultan, M (teller)
Fletcher, PW
Gambaro, T
Goodenough, IR
Hartsuyker, L
Hawke, AG
Hendy, PW
Howarth, LR
Hutchinson, ER
Jensen, DG
Keenan, M
Laming, A
Laundy, C
Macfarlane, IE
Markus, LE
McCormack, MF
McNamara, KJ
Nikolic, AA

Alexander, JG
Baldwin, RC
Bishop, JI
Broad, AJ
Brough, MT
Chester, D
Ciobo, SM
Coleman, DB
Dutton, PC
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Griggs, NL
Hastie, AW
Henderson, SM
Hogan, KJ
Hunt, GA
Irons, SJ
Jones, ET
Kelly, C
Landry, ML
Ley, SP
Marino, NB
Matheson, RG
McGowan, C
Morrison, SJ
O'Dowd, KD
Question agreed to.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Mitchell) (10:17): The question now is that the amendment moved by the honourable member for Melbourne be agreed to.

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

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

Question negatived, Mr Bandt and Mr Wilkie voting aye.

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

The House divided. [10:20]

(The Deputy Speaker—Mr Mitchell)

Ayes ...................... 86
Noes ...................... 53
Majority ................... 33

AYES

Abbott, AJ
Andrews, KL
Billson, BF
Briggs, JE
Broadbent, RE
Buchholz, S
Christensen, GR
Cobb, JK
Coulton, M (teller)
Fletcher, PW
Gambbaro, T
Goodenough, IR
Hartseyker, L
Hawke, AG
Hendy, PW
Howarth, LR
Hutchinson, ER
Jensen, DG
Joyce, BT
Kelly, C
Landry, ML
Ley, SP
Marino, NB
Matheson, RG
McGowan, C
Morrison, SJ
O'Dowd, KD
Pasin, A
Porter, CC
Price, ML
Ramsey, RE
Roy, WB
Scott, BC
Simpkins, LXL
Stone, SN
Sukkar, MS
Tehan, DT
Tudge, AE
Van Manen, AJ

Alexander, JG
Baldwin, RC
Bishop, JI
Broad, AJ
Brough, MT
Chester, D
Ciobo, SM
Coleman, DB
Dutton, PC
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Griggs, NL
Hastie, AW
Henderson, SM
Hogan, KJ
Hunter, GA
Irons, SJ
Jones, ET
Keenan, M
Laming, A
Laundy, C
Macfarlane, IE
Markus, LE
McCormack, MF
McNamara, KJ
Nikolic, AA
O’Dwyer, KM
Pitt, KJ
Prentice, J
Pyne, CM
Robert, SR
Ruddock, PM
Scott, FM
Southcott, AJ
Sudmalis, AE
Taylor, AJ
Truss, WE
Turnbull, MB
Varvaris, N
AYES
Vasta, RX  Whiteley, BD (teller)
Wicks, LE  Williams, MP
Wilson, RJ  Wood, JP
Wyatt, KG  Zimmerman, T

NOES
Albanese, AN  Bandt, AP
Bird, SL  Bowen, CE
Burke, AE  Burke, AS
Butler, MC  Butler, TM
Chalmers, JE  Champion, ND
Chesters, LM  Clare, JD
Claydon, SC  Collins, JM
Conroy, PM  Danby, M
Dreyfus, MA  Elliot, MJ
Feeney, D  Ferguson, LDT
Fitzgibbon, JA  Giles, AJ
Gray, G  Griffin, AP
Hall, JG (teller)  Hayes, CP
Husic, EN  Jones, SP
Katter, RC  King, CF
Leigh, AK  Macklin, JL
MacTiernan, AJGC  Marles, RD
Neumann, SK  O’Connor, BPJ
O’Neil, CE  Owens, J
Parke, M  Perrett, GD
Plibersek, TJ  Ripoll, BF
Rishworth, AL  Rowland, MA
Ryan, JC (teller)  Snowdon, WE
Swan, WM  Thistlethwaite, MJ
Thomson, KJ  Vamvakinou, M
Watts, TG  Wilkie, AD
Zappia, A

Question agreed to.
Bill read a second time.

Message from the Governor-General recommending appropriation announced.

Third Reading

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House, Minister for Industry and Innovation and Science)  
(10:24): I seek leave of the House to move the third reading immediately.

Leave not granted.

Mr PYNE: I move:

That so much of the standing and sessional orders be suspended as would prevent the remaining stages being passed without delay.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Manager of Opposition Business in relation to the motion.
Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (10:24): There are only four speakers left on the list for parliament to be able to have a sensible debate on this issue. At the beginning of this week, when the Leader of the House introduced this bill, he made it clear that he was surprised that we gave leave. We decided to be cooperative so that we could have a substantive debate on the issue, but, like everything that is characterised by this legislation, what they are about is silencing dissent. What they are about is making sure that the additional speakers do not even get heard.

Next week, the Senate is not even on. The chance of this making a difference in the timing for the bill going through is nil. The only thing that the Leader of the House is doing is attempting to make sure that Labor members of parliament are not heard in the debate. That is what this is about. I have a full speaking time of 10 minutes there; my suggestion is that I sit down now—but, Leader of the House, do not silence the third reading. Let the Labor members in the third reading speak for as long as they need to make their case on this substantive issue. It is a reasonable position from us. All we ask is that we have a government that has the courage to not see debate as something purely to be shut down.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Mitchell) (10:26): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

The House divided. [10:30]

(The Deputy Speaker—Mr Mitchell)

Ayes ......................84
Noes ......................54
Majority ..............30

AYES

Abbott, AJ
Andrews, KL
Billson, BF
Briggs, JE
Broadbent, RE
Buchholz, S
Christensen, GR
Cobb, JK
Coulton, M (teller)
Fletcher, PW
Gamban, T
Goodenough, IR
Hartsuyker, L
Hawke, AG
Hendy, PW
Howarth, LR
Hutchinson, ER
Jensen, DG
Joyce, BT
Kelly, C
Landry, ML
Ley, SP
Marino, NB
Matheson, RG
McNamara, KJ
Nikolic, AA

Alexander, JG
Baldwin, RC
Bishop, BK
Broad, AJ
Brough, MT
Chester, D
Ciobo, SM
Coleman, DB
Dutton, PC
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Griggs, NL
Hastie, AW
Henderson, SM
Hogan, KJ
Hunt, GA
Irons, SJ
Jones, ET
Keenan, M
Laming, A
Laundy, C
Macfarlane, IE
Markus, LE
McCormack, MF
Morrison, SJ
O'Dowd, KD
Question agreed to.

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House, Minister for Industry and Innovation and Science) (10:35): I move:

That the bill be now read a third time.
Ms O’NEIL (Hotham) (10:35): Could I just start by expressing my absolute disgust at those on the other side trying to gag my contribution to this bill. Deputy Speaker, I represent 100,000 people in this chamber.

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House, Minister for Industry and Innovation and Science) (10:35): I move:

That the question be put.

The House divided. [10:37]

(The Deputy Speaker—Mr Mitchell)

Ayes ......................83
Noes ......................54
Majority ...............29

AYES
Abbott, AJ
Andrews, KL
Billson, BF
Briggs, JE
Broadbent, RE
Buchholz, S
Christensen, GR
Cobb, JK
Coulton, M (teller)
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Markus, LE
McCormack, MF
Morrison, SJ
O’Dowd, KD
Pasin, A
Porter, CC
Price, ML
Ramsey, RE
Roy, WB
Scott, BC
Simpkins, LXL
Stone, SN
Sukkar, MS
Tudge, AE
Varvaris, N
Whiteley, BD (teller)

Alexander, JG
Baldwin, RC
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Joyce, BT
Kelly, C
Landry, ML
Ley, SP
Marino, NB
Matheson, RG
McNamara, KJ
Nikolic, AA
O’Dwyer, KM
Pitt, KJ
Prentice, J
Pyne, CM
Robert, SR
Ruddock, PM
Scott, FM
Southcott, AJ
Sudmalis, AE
Taylor, AJ
Truss, WE
Van Manen, AJ
Vasta, RX
Wicks, LE
Question agreed to.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Mitchell) (10:39): The question now is that the bill be read a third time.

The House divided. [10:39]

(The Deputy Speaker—Mr Mitchell)

Ayes .................84
Noes ..................53
Majority .............31

AYES

Abbott, AJ
Andrews, KL
Billson, BF
Briggs, JE
Broadbent, RE
Buchholz, S

Alexander, JG
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Question agreed to.
Bill read a third time.

Building and Construction Industry (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2013 [No. 2]
Second Reading
Debate resumed on the motion:
That this bill be now read a second time.
Question agreed to.
Bill read a second time.

Third Reading
Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House, Minister for Industry and Innovation and Science) (10:43): by leave—I move:
That this bill be now read a third time.
Question agreed to.
Bill read a third time.

Tax and Superannuation Laws Amendment (2015 Measures No. 6) Bill 2015
Second Reading
Debate resumed on the motion:
That this bill be now read a second time.

Dr LEIGH (Fraser) (10:43): Labor's position is to support this bill, which enacts two tax changes announced by the former Labor government. Schedule 1 amends the treatment of earn-out rights associated with the sale of a business to allow the holder to defer their capital gains tax liability until the accurate financial value of those rights is known. This measure was first announced in the 2010-11 budget.

Schedule 2 introduces a new withholding tax requirement for those purchasing Australian property from foreign residents. Purchasers would be required to withhold 10 per cent of the purchase price and pay this to the Commissioner of Taxation to assist in meeting the foreign
residents' capital gains tax obligation. While the first schedule was announced by the former Labor government, the second schedule was first announced in the 2013-14 budget.

Labor will always support sensible revenue measures which improve the budget bottom line without harming vulnerable Australians. The Labor Party has a strong and ongoing commitment to bringing the budget back into balance by sensible measures, including sound revenue measures such as these. 'Treasurer 2.0', Scott Morrison, is on record saying Australia has a spending problem, not a revenue problem. Yet he is now canvassing a 50 per cent hike in the GST rate. Claiming spending is the problem and then proposing GST tax changes that hit hardworking families is dangerously out of touch with economic reality.

A suggestion to the Treasurer from this side of the House could be that he might get around to releasing the tax white paper promised to the Australian people within the first two years of the government. Instead the government launched its 'Re:think' discussion paper, and then after business and community groups had spent thousands of hours and millions of dollars putting together their submissions to the 'Re:think' discussion paper the entire process has been junked. Now who knows when we are going to get the tax white paper. Indeed a timetable for the green paper, which would normally precede a white paper, is still up in the air. The government is at sea on tax reform. Good tax reform is hard. It requires more than smoke signals and thought bubbles about jacking up the GST. The impact on business and consumers needs to be fully fleshed out.

Returning to the specifics of the bill, former Assistant Treasurer Nick Sherry said when proposing the changes in schedule 1 that the measure will make it easier to buy and sell businesses. Capital gains taxation on earn-out requirements should not add inefficiency to the marketing of business assets. Earn-out requirements are an efficient and regularly used way of structuring business or business asset sales. Such requirements are commonly entered into when the buyer and seller are not able to agree on a fixed price for the transaction because of uncertainty as to the value of assets such as goodwill. Say, for example, that I were to purchase a small business from the honourable member for Cook for $1 million. He has a cost base of $600,000 and thus makes a capital gain of $400,000. However, as goodwill is an intangible asset—and he would know that more than most—I agree to give him an extra $100,000 a year if sales exceed an agreed upon threshold. The total capital gain would then be calculated using this earn-out pay-out, backdated to the point of the original sale. A reverse earn-out agreement follows a similar logic. The honourable member for Cook would repay amounts to me if an agreed performance threshold is not met within an agreed time frame—an arrangement which the Australian people might well be interested in engaging in with the member for Cook if his performance targets continue to be as they have been over the last few months!

The compliance measure in schedule 2 of this bill would impose capital gains tax withholding obligations on the purchasers of certain Australian assets. Although foreign residents have been subject to taxation on capital gains made when disposing of a taxable Australian property, voluntary requirements meant compliance was low. Given the non-resident status of the sellers, this made compliance a particularly difficult task for the Australian Taxation Office.

Talking about the resources available to the tax office, I should note that Labor favours a stronger compliance regime, better transparency and an appropriately staffed tax office. We
welcome the changes in schedule 2 but they are overshadowed by the slashing of 4,700 jobs in the tax office. It beggars belief that the government can usher in compliance changes announced by the former Labor government yet completely undermine the ability of the tax office to make sure this regime is monitored effectively.

As housing prices continue to rise in Australia's largest cities, so too will the number of eligible properties. This measure applies to properties worth more than $2 million, and there will be an increasing number of properties in that range on the market. When buying from a foreign resident, the purchaser will be required to pay the Commissioner of Taxation 10 per cent of the purchase price to meet a portion of the foreign resident's capital gains tax obligation. The purchaser may then withhold an equivalent amount from the seller. The withholding can be claimed as a deduction by the seller when completing the required income tax return. If they fail to do so, Australians have the comfort of knowing that at least a portion of the capital gains tax obligation has been paid.

When we were in office, Labor pursued significant responsible changes to Australia's tax regime, recognising that, in a complex and fast-moving business environment, government needs to adapt what we do to make sure the revenue base is sustained. In 2013 the then Treasurer Wayne Swan and Assistant Treasurer David Bradbury announced a $4.3 billion multinational tax package. Labor's package changed the allowable debt-to-equity ratio for companies claiming a deduction. It tackled offshore marketing hubs and closed other loopholes that let companies shift their profits offshore.

One of the coalition's very first acts on coming to office was to trash $1.1 billion of those tax changes, effectively giving a $1.1 billion tax break back to some of the world's biggest firms. Like a fish out of water, the Abbott-Turnbull government has flip-flopped on small business measures. Labor introduced an instant asset write-off scheme, allowing small business to immediately deduct the cost of new assets and equipment. Treasurer Hockey scrapped it and then brought back a larger but temporary measure that is due to expire next year. I suspect many of those firms that supply assets to small businesses are wondering what is going to happen to the pipeline of demand for their capital goods when the instant asset write-off suddenly ends at midnight on 30 June 2017. That is what happens when you structure policies based on the political cycle rather than focusing on the economics first.

From opposition, the Labor Party has announced a range of measures that improve the budget bottom line, without a regressive GST hike. Indeed our policy changes, amounting to some $70 billion over the course of the next decade, constitute the most significant package of economic measures to be proposed and costed from opposition in over 20 years. Starting with superannuation, Labor's superannuation changes will yield $14.3 billion in the first decade of operation. Superannuation tax concessions overwhelmingly go to those Australians who are in the highest income brackets, and it is those concessions that we are seeking to scale back for a fairer retirement system.

The government's own Financial System Inquiry found that 10 per cent of Australians receive 38 per cent of our super tax concessions, with a majority of concessions accruing to the top 20 per cent of income earners. Indeed, the top one per cent get a larger share of superannuation tax concessions than the bottom 40 per cent. We have superannuation tax concessions, because two positive externalities result from people who put money in superannuation. One is that they are less likely to draw on the age pension. The other is that
there is a public benefit from a pool of national savings. But that second public benefit is considerably smaller than the first, and we should be careful about providing overgenerous tax breaks to people whose superannuation balances clearly indicate that they will never be in the range of applying for even a part pension.

Labor has proposed two significant ways of reining in superannuation tax concessions. The first is to reduce tax-free concessions for people with annual superannuation earnings of more than $75,000 during retirement. Earnings above the $75,000 threshold will attract the same concessional rate of 15 per cent that applies to earnings in the accumulation phase. So, it is still a good deal to have your money in super. Earnings above $75,000 in the retirement phase are simply treated the way all earnings are treated in the accumulation phase.

Our estimate is that about 60,000 superannuation accounts with balances of over $1.5 million will be affected. Capital gains will be grandfathered, and the policy will have no impact on the basic income test to the age pension. We will also remove the 10 per cent tax offset for the defined benefit superannuation scheme incomes above $75,000.

Secondly, we will reduce the higher income superannuation charge threshold. When in government, Labor introduced the higher income superannuation charge, which lowered the tax concession available to incomes above $300,000. Lowering the concessional rate to higher income earners better aligns concessions with those available to lower and middle incomes. We propose to lower the threshold from $300,000 to $250,000.

I note in passing that it is a key priority of Labor to see greater gender equity in the superannuation system. We noted with great disappointment an early decision of the coalition government to scrap the low-income super contribution, a measure that affects around three million Australians on low wages, two-thirds of whom are women. Anyone who is serious about gender equity in superannuation should have shaken their heads at this government's ill-conceived decision to scrap the low-income super contribution.

In the area of multinational tax avoidance, Labor has a fully costed $7.2 billion multinational tax package that contains a range of measures that are carefully calibrated to raise revenue without hurting growth. We propose to amend the current debt deduction rules. We will scrap the two rules that lack strong economic intuition and will keep the one that does. Under Labor's proposal, the worldwide gearing ratio should be the sole debt deduction test. That essentially says to companies, 'Look, if you owe a lot of money to the banks then you should be able to deduct a significant amount of money from your Australian operations, but if you don't owe a cent to the banks then don't think you can profit shift through internal debt.' Internal debt has a place, but invariably one notices, looking at the borrowing patterns of multinationals, that they tend to follow a pattern whereby the borrowings are made in the higher-tax jurisdiction and from the lower-tax jurisdiction. Better aligning our debt deduction rules is in line with work that has been done by the OECD and represents a measure that still provides business with certainty. The measure that Labor proposes to allow companies to deduct debt under already exists in our tax laws; we simply propose to get rid of two out of three of the debt deduction rules.

Labor proposes to better align Australia's rules on hybrid entities and instruments with tax laws in other countries. Currently some companies can effectively 'double dip' by claiming tax exemptions in one country and tax deductions in another, because some countries treat hybrid instruments as equity and others treat them as debt. Companies are looking around the
world to see how different tax authorities behave, and it makes perfect sense that the Australian tax office itself should be allowed to look at how its counterpart organisations in other countries treat a hybrid instrument. The ATO should not be blind to the tax treatment of hybrid instruments in other countries.

Australia also needs a better resourced tax office. Stronger compliance measures proposed in Labor's package will ensure that we add significantly to the bottom line. By contrast to this government, which has cut 4,700 jobs from the tax office, severely hampering compliance efforts, Labor will make sure that the tax office has the resources it needs in order to crack down on multinational tax avoidance.

Disappointingly, the government has been dragging its feet on tax compliance initiatives. We welcome the government's introduction of the Common Reporting Standard for sharing tax information with other countries, but Australia is starting much later than the rest of the world. In the past two years Labor has repeatedly called on the Abbott-Turnbull government to join around 40 other advanced countries that will start exchanging information next year. By contrast, Australia, under the Abbott-Turnbull government, proposes not to begin exchanging information until late 2018 for the accounts of individuals and until 2019 for accounts of corporate entities, effectively putting off the exchange of information until the election after next. Labor believes that the exchange of information ought to happen as soon as possible—that Australia should be moving with the rest of the advanced world, not sitting up the back and dragging its feet. It is extraordinary to see the gulf between the government's rhetoric about tax reform and the reality of having produced only a tax discussion paper which now has been junked by the incoming Prime Minister and Treasurer.

Compare and contrast that to what Labor did in government. Labor gave every Australian a tax cut by raising the tax-free threshold from $6,000 to $18,200. It was a Labor policy that not only cut taxes but also reduced paperwork burden for around a million Australians. The government likes to talk about cutting red tape but what better red-tape reduction could there have been than tripling the tax free threshold and saying to a million Australians: you do not have to file a tax return. For a typical Australian it takes around eight hours to prepare their tax return. So, effectively, Labor's measure gave a million Australians an extra public holiday every year. Labor also delivered three rounds of income tax cuts to low- and middle-income Australians.

By supporting this bill, Labor are demonstrating that we are always willing to have a serious and constructive conversation about tax reform. The government are welcome to join us, but so far we have seen them failing to adopt Labor's proposals regarding multinational tax avoidance or rein in unfair and unsustainable superannuation tax concessions. We know that a majority of Australians oppose an increase to the GST. The majority of Australians recognise that a 50 per cent hike to the GST is not tax reform, that it is lazy—as a former Treasurer once said—'bang you over the head' tax reform. It is an attack on the household budget of low- and middle-income Australians and a measure which will not only worsen inequality but also hurt growth.

Australians will remember that when the GST was introduced in the year 2000 the economy almost slipped into recession. That is because household spending makes up about three-fifths of the Australian economy. Add to this the fact that we have got shipping consumer sentiment. We have had a 3½ per cent fall in the Westpac-Melbourne Institute
Index of Consumer Sentiment. We have got jitters on global stock markets, with some losing around a tenth of their value this year. Australians will recall Japan's experience in 2014 of raising their consumption tax from five per cent to eight per cent and sending a fragile economy back into recession, as a result of a two per cent drop in consumption.

What is extraordinary about Treasurer Morrison is that he says that he wants to 'protect consumption'. Raising the tax on consumption is a funny way of doing it. You would have to think that, if you are going to raise the tax on consumption, you are going to get less consumption. That was the experience of Australia when we introduced the GST. It was the experience of Japan when they hiked the GST. The government like to say that they believe in boosting growth. We heard the member for Wannon on radio this morning saying that the key to tax reform is boosting growth. He is a GST spruiker, who is arguing that if we were to raise the GST and cut income taxes that would deliver a growth dividend. I would urge the member for Wannon to have a look at his government's own Re:think discussion paper. It is a discussion paper which looks at the growth drag of the GST and income tax and which finds that the growth drag, which economists call the deadweight cost of both those taxes, is about one dollar in five. The best estimate from Treasury is that, if you raise $5 of revenue from the GST, the cost to economic activity is about $1. If you raise $5 of revenue from income tax, the cost to economic activity is about $1. So I would like to know how the member for Wannon thinks there is going to be a growth dividend from hiking the GST and cutting income taxes. In fact, their own modelling suggests that that would have no benefit to growth whatsoever, but it would certainly worsen inequality. We know the proportional impact of the GST is nearly twice as high for the poorest fifth as for the richest fifth, and that is because the poorest fifth are not saving. In fact, they are often net borrowers, whereas the richest fifth are saving about a quarter of their incomes. So the GST is a regressive tax that does not boost growth.

We also have the small matter of compensation. We have the Treasurer claiming that the government's plan is not to increase the tax share. Taken literally, it means that not a dollar of increased GST revenue could be returned in pension increases or family benefit increases. If you take just one dollar of additional GST revenue and put it back through higher household payments, you have raised the tax share. So, if Treasurer Morrison is to be believed, the impact of a GST hike would be devastating for Australian pensioners, who would see the cost of many of the things they buy go up by five per cent but who would get not a dollar of household compensation. If that is wrong, if in fact Treasurer Morrison does not know what he is talking about and there are plans to compensate people on fixed incomes, then in that case do not go around the country telling us you are not planning to raise the tax share, because you clearly would. Either this government's GST rise will not compensate people on fixed incomes or it will increase the tax share. You cannot have both.

Jacking up the GST is not real tax reform. Hitting household budgets while refusing to make big companies pay their fair share is not real tax reform. It is simply going soft on the strong so you can go hard on the weak. The measures in this bill are measures that Labor can support, because in at least one case they are measures that originated under Labor. If only we had a government that was willing to apply this approach more broadly, engage with Labor over our fair and sustainable revenue and tax measures and recognise that we can make sensible and targeted cuts to the slush fund for polluters through not instituting the baby
bonus, through cigarette excise, through multinational taxation and through changes to our unfair and unsustainable superannuation tax concession system. If we do that, we would be able to reduce inequality and raise growth—unlike increasing the GST, which would hit growth and worsen inequality.

In closing, I move the second reading amendment that has been circulated in my name:

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

"while not declining to give the bill a second reading, the House condemns this Government's failure to pursue real tax reform and instead hit families with a higher GST."

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Henderson) (11:07): Is the amendment seconded?

Mr Gray: I second the amendment.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The original question was that this bill be now read a second time. To this the honourable member for Fraser has moved as an amendment that all words after 'That' be omitted with a view to substituting other words. If it suits the House I will state the question in the form that the amendment be agreed to. The question now is that the amendment be agreed to.

Mr VAN MANEN (Forde) (11:07): It is always a pleasure to follow the member for Fraser and to listen to him wax lyrical about Labor's record in government and their plans for this utopian future in which increasing taxes across the board will solve all of the ills in our economy. What we did not hear the member for Fraser say in his contribution is that they are actually going to reduce the tax burden on the Australian economy. All he talk is about was increasing taxes. It would be worthwhile for the member for Fraser to remember—he was in this House when this occurred as he came in in 2010 when I did—that the increase in the tax-free threshold to $18,200, just to refresh your memory, Member for Fraser, was because of the introduction of the carbon tax. So it was no magnanimous gesture on the part of Labor when they were in government that they would increase the tax-free threshold to $18,200; it was because of the compensation for the carbon tax. It was this government—

Dr Leigh: It was textbook tax reform.

Mr VAN MANEN: It was not tax reform. When we came into government, we abolished the carbon tax and left the tax-free threshold at $18,200. That is genuine tax reform and compensation for the Australian people. The other interesting comment the member for Fraser made was when he touched on the fact that the top 10 per cent of income earners receive approximately 38 per cent of superannuation concessions. What he failed to mention in that contribution, which is much more relevant because it is a much higher figure, is that the top 10 per cent of income earners in this country pay approximately 50 per cent of all income tax. So the notion of equity that he talks about when he only focuses on part of the equation is disingenuous in the extreme.

I will now return to the substance of the Tax and Superannuation Laws Amendment (2015 Measures No. 6) Bill 2015. I rise to speak in support of bill, because it introduces amendments to our taxation laws to improve the operation of our capital gains tax regime. One of the focuses of this government has been looking for opportunities that simplify our tax system and make it easier for compliance to be achieved.

I readily acknowledge that the measures in this bill were two unenacted measures left by the previous government. If they were such good measures, as the member for Fraser has told
us in his contribution today, the question becomes, 'Why didn't the previous government enact them?' But, just like many things of the previous government, they were left half done or not done at all.

If there is one thing Australian small businesses deserve, it is certainty and clarity. In my electorate of Forde, where we have more than 11,000 small businesses, it is important we provide legislation that helps our businesses invest, grow and create more jobs. We can best achieve this by reducing red tape and compliance costs that our small business sector frequently struggles with. We want small business to be able to be confident in making their investment decisions.

Schedule 1 of this bill clarifies the treatment of earn-out arrangements by making any financial benefits payable under such rights part of the original value of the business or business asset for capital gains tax purposes. This makes enormous sense, because you never know at the original settlement time of the sale of the business, if there are earn-out rights attached, what the ultimate value of those earn-out rights are going to be.

Earn-out rights involve the sale and purchase of a business or business assets where the value of the underlying asset is uncertain. Earn-out rights can create flexibility and address uncertainty for purchasers and sellers of business assets and are a legitimate and efficient way of structuring the sale of a business to deal with the uncertainty about its value.

A draft ruling by the ATO specified that an earn-out right is a separate and distinct asset from the underlying business and must have its market value estimated for capital gains tax purposes. However, as I have touched on just before, the market value of an earn-out right is very difficult to quantify as there is no liquid market available to price the right, and it is dependent on the unknown future performance of the underlying business. In addition, a seller may not be able to assess certain capital gains tax concessions that are relevant.

Treating the earn-out right as a separate and distinct asset from the business itself resulted in significant complexity and additional compliance costs for businesses that use earn-outs. The complexity of the current operation affects the ability of businesses to efficiently price their business assets and, following concerns expressed by stakeholders with this treatment of earn-out arrangements, the previous government, to their credit, announced capital gains tax look-through treatment for these earn-out arrangements.

Providing capital gains tax look-through treatment for earn-out arrangements will allow taxpayers to disregard the earn-out right itself, while making any earn-out payments part of the original value of the business or business asset for capital gains tax purposes. This will result in payments made under the earn-out right being added to the capital proceeds or the cost base of the original sale through amendments to the taxpayer's tax return for that period. By providing the look-through treatment to earn-out arrangements, the government will help provide certainty and clarity for businesses entering into earn-out arrangements as well as protect any entitlements they have to small business capital gains tax concessions.

Australian businesses are expected to have a net reduction in compliance costs from the measures in this schedule as it simplifies the system and the market value of the earn-out right no longer needs to be estimated at the time of sale. This is another example of our government's commitment to improving legislation for business, reducing the costs of compliance and uncomplicating tax measures. The amendments made by this schedule will
apply to all earn-out arrangements entered into after 23 April 2015. Importantly, to protect taxpayers who have in good faith anticipated changes to the tax law in this area as a result of the announcement by the previous government in 2010, the measure also includes protections to preserve their current tax outcome.

Schedule 2 to this bill introduces a new collection mechanism to support the operation of Australia's foreign resident capital gains tax regime. Foreign residents who dispose of certain Australian assets—broadly, direct and indirect interests in real property—are liable to pay tax on capital gains. The Australian Taxation Office has indicated that foreign residents' voluntary compliance with our capital gains tax regime is poor. In addition, there are difficulties in the ATO undertaking effective compliance after a transaction takes place, given the funds would likely be offshore and the foreign resident may otherwise have little connection to Australia.

Australian property investors are required to pay capital gains tax on the profits from an investment property sale. Many of these investors are mums and dads on median incomes who are putting these investments towards their retirement. They are required to pay capital gains tax, and do so when completing a tax return. It is unfair that they should be held to account on paying this tax when foreign residents avoid their responsibility of complying with our capital gains tax regime.

The schedule seeks to address these difficulties associated with collecting tax from foreign resident taxpayers. Originally announced in the 2013-14 budget by the previous Labor government, the government announced it would go ahead with the measure on 6 November 2013. Our government is committed to ensuring that foreign residents investing in Australian real property comply with their Australian legal obligations, and this measure is consistent with that effort. It is also consistent with efforts by this government to ensure that multinational companies comply with their tax obligations. It is interesting to note that the member for Fraser in his contribution waxed lyrical about Labor's plan for multinational taxation, yet in the whole six years of government they did nothing and when we introduced our multinational tax package towards the end of last year they voted against it. They can wax lyrical about multinational tax and foreign tax but this was a policy of theirs yet they never did anything. They also talked about multinational tax but, as usual, did not do anything. It is this government that is putting the time and effort into making the changes to protect and increase the integrity of our taxation system.

The schedule in this bill also complements recent changes to Australia's foreign investment framework to increase scrutiny and transparency with respect to foreign investment in residential real estate. Under this measure, where the seller of certain Australian assets is a foreign resident the buyer will be required to withhold and pay to the ATO 10 per cent of the purchase price. Withholding regimes are a common part of Australia's and other countries' taxation systems. Countries such as the United States and Canada have similar withholding tax regimes in place to support their foreign resident capital gains tax requirements.

Broadly, this measure applies to transactions where a foreign resident disposes of direct or substantial indirect interests in Australian real property. Australian residents and foreign residents should be on a level playing field when it comes to meeting their tax obligations. The measure does not apply to direct real property transactions below $2 million, in order to
appropriately target those areas where revenue is at greatest risk and minimise the impact on other property transactions.

Foreign resident sellers will no longer have the full amount paid to them until they lodge their tax return under this new measure. It requires the buyer of such property to withhold and remit to the ATO the 10 per cent withholding amount. The government, through the Australian Taxation Office, will continue to work with industry to assist them in preparing for the commencement of this measure. Once effective, it will prevent foreign residents from avoiding paying their fair share of capital gains tax when selling real property in Australia. They will be on a level playing field with Australian residents, and the measure will ensure that our capital gains tax regime is fair and sellers from overseas meet their obligations. This is another bill in a long list of bills that demonstrate the government is ensuring the integrity of our taxation system for all concerned.

Mr ZAPPIA (Makin) (11:20): I support the second reading amendment moved by Labor’s shadow Assistant Treasurer, the member for Fraser, who spoke just a few minutes ago on the Tax and Superannuation Laws Amendment (2015 Measures No. 6) Bill. This legislation enacts two changes that were previously announced by the Labor government. The member for Forde asks why we did not enact these changes when we were in government. The Labor government enacted over 500 pieces of legislation, I believe nearly 600, in its term in office. It was almost a record amount of legislation. The parliament has only a certain capacity to deal with matters and there are always priorities. Nevertheless, these were matters raised by the previous Labor government.

There are two schedules to this bill. One effectively deals with capital gains tax liability and the other deals with capital gains tax obligations on foreign residents, where 10 per cent of the sale of a property will be withheld until the capital gains tax issues have been finalised. In my view, both of these measures are sensible. The first will cost the government and the budget bottom line some money but the second will save some money for the taxpayers of this country. I think that is fair and reasonable, given that it is obvious that there are foreign investors who are gaming the capital gains tax system in Australia at the moment.

The legislation is before us because the government has a budget problem: it simply cannot balance its books. The deficit is projected to blow out to $38 billion by the end of this financial year, and that is after the government has made substantial cuts to just about every policy area and every department of government: $80 billion of health and education cuts; $11 billion cut from the foreign aid budget; $1 billion or thereabouts from the research sector; industry assistance has been decimated—about $1 billion has also been cut from that; we saw over $1 billion cut from local government assistance grants; and then we had another $1.3 billion cut from pensioner concession payments made to the states. In addition to that, there have been cuts to the ABC of about half a billion dollars; social welfare pension disability reforms which effectively reduce the amount of money that is going into social payments around the country; and then, only in December, when we had the MYEFO statement handed down, we saw another $650 million of health cuts to pathology and diagnostic imaging services—cuts that will hit the lower income people of this country the hardest and will hit people who are already not only on low incomes but perhaps facing serious health problems. They are cruel cuts that any decent government would never implement.
It is no good—as the Prime Minister continues to do and as we saw him do in question time only this week—to continue to mask the government's incompetence by blaming the previous Labor government for the financial position we are in. This government has been in office now for 2½ years. In fact, this is an election year and we are almost at the end of this government's term in office. It is time that they took responsibility for their own actions, for their own policies and for their own mismanagement of the economy, rather than continuously try to blame it on the previous Labor government. It is not washing anymore with the Australian voters. It is wearing thin with them because they know that there comes a time when governments need to take responsibility for their own incompetence and their own actions.

The truth is that it is this government's own foolish policies that have contributed to and largely caused the financial mess it is in. Turning its back on industry, attacking Public Service jobs and other government institutions, creating job insecurity and taking away workers rights do nothing to raise confidence or strengthen the Australian economy. So the government then looks to more cuts.

Rather than cuts, the government should look to a more equitable tax system, a tax system that ensures that all taxpayers pay their fair share of tax—something that the Turnbull government dances around but does little about. Indeed, it is clear that it seeks to protect large corporate entities and other high-income earners from being scrutinised. Only last month we had a tax commissioner's report released. From that report we learn that, out of 1,539 of Australia's largest corporate entities, 38 per cent did not pay any tax in 2013-14. Of those 1,539 entities 985 are foreign owned, and those 1,539 entities had a combined turnover of $1.6 trillion—that is, $1,600 billion. They also made a significant profit—$169.9 billion—and they paid a combined amount of tax of just $39.9 billion. That is a tax rate of less than 25 per cent. Notably, the 579 local and foreign based companies that paid no tax had a combined turnover of $405.9 billion and a taxable income of $4 billion. That is, 579 companies pay no tax, yet they have a taxable income of $4 billion. It is no wonder that ordinary taxpayers and people around Australia are angry about the tax system which allows people earning that kind of money to not pay tax.

The figures are confirmed in several other reports that have identified the level of corporate tax being evaded or avoided here in Australia and around the world. The Tax Justice Network has been particularly focused on global tax avoidance or tax minimisation schemes and the additional burden that tax avoidance places on ordinary Australian taxpayers. A report put together jointly by Tax Justice Network Australia and United Voice found that, through the use of trusts, stapled securities and related party transactions that utilise thin capitalisation, transfer pricing and tax havens, billions of dollars in tax are avoided each and every year. The report also found that the overall tax rate of the Australian Stock Exchange 200 companies over the last decade is 23 per cent—that is, below the statutory rate of 30 per cent. If the ASX 200 companies had paid tax at the statutory rate it would have produced an additional $8.4 billion in annual income for the Australian government. Within the ASX 200 companies, nearly one third have an average effective tax rate of 10 per cent or less. I repeat: a third have an average effective tax rate of 10 per cent or less. Fifty-seven per cent disclose having subsidiaries in secrecy jurisdictions and 60 per cent report debt levels in excess of 75 per
cent—a matter that the member for Fraser alluded to in his comments when he spoke on this legislation. By having those excessive debt levels they artificially reduce their taxable profits.

Corporate tax is the second largest tax revenue base for the Australian economy, comprising 28 per cent of total income tax revenue in 2013-14 budget estimates. For that year, the government projected that they would collect $70.4 billion from company tax alone. By comparison, GST was projected to collect $52.7 billion. Australia's statutory 30 per cent corporate tax rate is also below the 2013 weighted average corporate tax rate for all OECD countries of 32.5 per cent. So, when members opposite claim that we need to reduce the corporate tax rate in Australia, the reality is that by comparison with other OECD countries we are not doing too badly.

Interestingly, mining corporations are huge beneficiaries of tax concessions. It has been estimated that the mining sector benefited from $4.5 billion in federal tax subsidies in 2013 and $3.2 billion from state and territory subsidies. Also I note from the tax commissioner's report that some of Australia's biggest earners that did not pay tax in 2013 were indeed some of the world's biggest and best-known mining and oil entities. So not only do they pay little or no tax but their Australian operations are being subsidised by the Australian taxpayers. It is little wonder that the government has a budget problem.

Yesterday there was also the report of how McDonald's Australia halved its Australian tax bill by paying McDonald's Asia Pacific, based in Singapore—which has a lower tax rate than Australia—an inflated service fee of $392.6 million. It appears to be nothing more than an internal company transfer of money from Australia to Singapore, under the guise of a service fee, for the purpose of minimising tax paid here in Australia because Singapore has a lower tax rate.

I suspect McDonald's would not be the only company doing this. Avoiding tax is a very clever way of boosting profits.

The budget deficit is blowing out under the Turnbull government, and the government needs to do something about it. We support this kind of legislation because it is sensible. However, if the government really wants to increase the bottom line of its budget—if the government really wants to increase total tax revenue in this country—the answer is not to do it by raising the GST or adding it to items such as food or health expenses. As the member for Fraser quite rightly pointed out, raising the GST just dampens economic growth in the country. It is actually a retrograde step. Indeed, the most effective way of raising income for the government is to boost productivity around the country.

But there is also another compelling argument as to why raising the GST is not a good idea. Anyone arguing for an increase in the GST must explain to the Australian people why they are being forced to pay more tax when hundreds of corporate entities turning over billions of dollars every year and making millions of dollars in profits are paying little or no tax. They also need to explain why they are supporting an unfair GST tax when there are much fairer options available to the government and which federal Labor has drawn attention to.

Those people supporting a GST increase should also explain to the Australian people why people at the lower end of income levels in this country—people often already doing it tough—should pay more of their meagre income in tax, because it is those people that the
GST hits the hardest. The fact is that nobody rejects that argument. We have raised many a time that the people at the lower end of income are the ones most affected by GST increases, and I have never heard anyone reject or rebut that argument. We already have inequality at a 75-year high in this country, and the GST will simply widen the gap between the rich and the poor.

I also note reports that there is a growing nervousness amongst government backbenchers as to increasing the GST. Perhaps they are waking up to the fact that the Australian people are not fools and that they understand unfairness when they see it—they understand the unfairness of raising the GST when other people in this country who are making huge profits are being allowed to get off scot-free with paying little or no tax.

In March last year Labor put forward a $7.2 billion multinational tax package. Labor also announced that we would scale back superannuation tax concessions, which overwhelmingly go to those with the highest income. Labor has made it clear that, if we want to increase income for the government in this country, we need to lift productivity levels. That is the way to fix the budget problem: to look at those areas where we are currently neglecting the ability to raise tax, rather than to hit the people on lower incomes.

This measure, whilst it goes some way towards achieving some of those objectives, is only a small drop in the bucket. There is much more that we can do, and, despite the Prime Minister's protestations that this government is acting in closing the loopholes and the schemes available to those who want to minimise their tax, the reality is that the government is not doing anywhere near enough, when the facts and the figures are clearly before it pointing out that the country could do much better and would have a much fairer system if those people and those entities making millions of dollars in tax every year paid their fair share of tax.

Mr HAWKE (Mitchell—Assistant Minister to the Treasurer) (11:35): Firstly, I would like to thank all those members who have made a contribution to this debate. The Tax and Superannuation Laws Amendment (2015 Measures No. 6) Bill 2015 makes two important changes to Australia's capital gains tax regime and implements two measures announced but unenacted by the previous government—and that is important for opposition members to note.

Schedule 1 to this bill amends the taxation treatment of earn-out arrangements in order to provide more clarity for sales or purchases of businesses involving earn-out rights, which are rights to future financial benefits linked to the performance of the asset after the sale. This bill will make any financial benefits received under the earn-out right part of the original value of the business or business asset for capital gains tax purposes. When payments under the earn-out right are made, these payments will be added to the capital proceeds or the cost base of the original sale, through amendments to the taxpayer's tax return at that time.

Earn-out rights involve the sale or purchase of business assets where the value of the underlying asset is uncertain, and can create flexibility for purchasers and sellers of these assets. Earn-out arrangements are a legitimate and efficient way of structuring the sale of a business, or business assets, to deal with uncertainty about its value.

However, there is significant complexity in the current treatment of earn-out arrangements, which may affect the ability of businesses to efficiently price their business assets. This
measure not only provides more clarity and certainty to businesses but also protects any entitlements they have to small business capital gains tax concessions.

This measure was initially announced by the previous government on 12 May 2010. The measure will apply to all earn-out arrangements entered into after 23 April 2015. In addition, to protect taxpayers who have reasonably and in good faith anticipated changes to the tax law as a result of the announcement by the previous government some five years ago, the bill also includes protections to preserve their current tax income.

Schedule 2 to this bill amends the taxation laws to introduce a withholding tax on the disposal of certain taxable Australian property by foreign residents. The measure puts Australian residents and foreign residents on a level playing field when it comes to meeting their tax obligations.

Together with the strengthened foreign investment rules introduced recently by the government, the implementation of this measure reflects the government's commitment to ensuring that foreign investors are following the rules. This measure seeks to address difficulties associated with collecting tax from foreign resident taxpayers. It will do this by requiring, from 1 July 2016, the buyer of certain assets held by a foreign resident to withhold and pay to the Australian Taxation Office 10 per cent of the purchase price. The amount collected is an estimate of the vendor's final income tax liability. The vendor is still required to lodge an income tax return and pay any outstanding debt. They may claim a credit for the amount of tax withheld in the income tax return at this time. In this way, the withholding measure also encourages participation and engagement by foreign residents with the Australian Taxation Office. The withholding obligation arises where a foreign resident disposes of certain land or land related assets. It will not, however, apply where the transaction involves real property valued at under $2 million. This ensures that the measure is appropriately targeted at those areas where revenue is at greatest risk and minimises the impact on other property transactions. The development of the measure has undergone extensive consultation with stakeholders. The government believes that the final design of the measure strikes an appropriate balance between maintaining the integrity of the tax system and minimising the impact on the majority of property transactions. This measure was initially announced by the previous government as part of the 2013-14 budget.

I commend the bill to the House.

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

Question negatived.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question now is that the bill be now read a second time. Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Message from the Governor-General recommending appropriation announced.

Third Reading

Mr HAWKE (Mitchell—Assistant Minister to the Treasurer) (11:40): by leave—I move:
That this bill be now read a third time.
Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Social Services Legislation Amendment (Budget Repair) Bill 2015
Second Reading

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

Ms MACKLIN (Jagajaga) (11:40): I am speaking today on the Social Service Legislation Amendment (Budget Repair) Bill 2015. Only the Liberal Party would have the audacity to come into this place and put forward a bill with the words 'Budget Repair' in the title, because for the last two years this Liberal government has done absolutely nothing to repair the budget. In fact, the deficit has doubled during their time in office. That is right: the budget deficit has doubled under this Liberal government's watch. Yet they come in here day after day and lecture the Australian people about fiscal responsibility.

It takes a special kind of audacity for the Minister for Social Services to come in here and talk about the need for fiscal restraint. The Minister for Social Services was of course the Treasurer of Western Australia between 2010 and 2012. Today, Western Australia has a budget deficit of $3.1 billion. That is the Minister for Social Services' legacy to the people of Western Australia: a $3.1 billion deficit. This is the man who as Treasurer of Western Australia mismanaged one of the greatest mineral booms in history and left the Western Australian people with a deficit of $3.1 billion. So, every time this Minister for Social Services preaches about the need to cut support to pensioners or people with disability or young people—because we have to be fiscally responsible—we will be reminding him every single time of his record of economic incompetence in Western Australia—a $3.1 billion deficit that the Minister for Social Services left behind in Perth. He has no credibility whatsoever when it comes to budget repair.

Labor understands how important it is to repair the budget, but you have to do it in a way that is fair and equitable. The Liberals' approach, whether it was under the member for Warringah, Tony Abbott, when he was the Prime Minister, or the latest Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, is to make unfair cuts affecting low-income and middle-income Australians. We know that the latest thing they want to do is increase the GST to 15 per cent—a regressive tax that will make the cost of everything go up and will hit low-income and middle-income earners the hardest.

On the other hand, Labor thinks we should make multinational companies pay their fair share of tax. We think that we should end the unfair and unsustainable superannuation tax concessions for the very wealthy. Labor will oppose this bill today. We will oppose each and every one of the measures contained in the bill, just as we have opposed them on previous occasions. I will go through the reasons why. People might remember that these cuts have their origins in the 2014 and 2015 budgets. The bill proves that it does not matter who the Liberal Prime Minister is. This Liberal government is intent on hurting low-income and middle-income Australians.

The first measure in the bill proposes changes to the proportional payment of pensions outside Australia. In other words, the Liberals want to make it harder for some pensioners to
continue to receive their full pension whilst they are overseas. Just remember that, all of you over there who have lots of pensioners who were born overseas in your electorates. This bill today is going to make it harder for those pensioners to receive their full pension whilst they are overseas. Currently, pensioners can stay overseas for 26 weeks and receive their full pension. Following that time, the pension is reduced to a rate that depends on the number of years a pensioner has worked in Australia. But, under the government's proposal that is in this bill today and that every single Liberal and National party member is about to vote for, from January 2017 that 26 weeks will be reduced to six weeks. If the government gets its way, after six weeks overseas, some pensioners will have their rate of pension reduced. Labor oppose this because we think it unfairly punishes pensioners who choose to spend a period of time overseas, possibly for visiting family.

As the Chairperson of the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia, Joe Caputo, has said, 'pensioners born overseas often need to travel overseas for extended periods to stay in touch with family or to care for a sick or dying relative'. In some cases, they had never been back to the country of their birth and were going on, as they describe it, 'the trip of a lifetime'. A Melbourne pensioner, Vic Guarino, who came to Australia from Italy in the early 1960s, described the government's changes to pension portability as 'like a threat'. Mr Guarino said:

You want to go [overseas] because you want to see someone in the family that's old … My wife had a sister in Italy, she wanted to spend time with her before it was too late.

They are many pensioners across Australia who feel like they are being targeted by this government.

Mr Whiteley: Tell the truth about what's in the bill!

Ms MACKLIN: The Liberal government are hell-bent on cutting support for pensioners and seniors. Obviously, there is a bit of sensitivity from the member opposite. I will be glad to see whether he tells all of the pensioners in his electorate who were born overseas that he is cutting their entitlements. If he does not do it, I will.

The Liberal government are hell-bent on cutting support to pensioners and seniors. This is just the latest effort. Their first instinct is to take money off pensioners. Let us have a look at each and every one of the measures that that member over there who is making all that noise and every single other Liberal and National party member have so far voted for. First of all, they voted for a cut to pension indexation—a move that would have seen an $80 a week cut to the pension over 10 years. That is what they all voted for. They also voted for cuts to 330,000 pensioners by changing the pension assets test. That will now start next year, and each and every pensioner who is on a part pension because of the assets test knows that the Liberal government will cut their pension. They made cuts to pensioner concessions—the Liberal government took $1 billion out of pensioner concessions. The government also want to increase the pension age to 70. If they get that through the parliament, it will mean Australia would have the oldest pension age in the developed world. In this bill are cuts to pensioners who spend time out of Australia. That is the Liberal-National government's record on pensions—absolutely shameful.

It is important to note that this new cut, the latest cut by this Liberal-National party government to pensioners, is widely opposed by seniors groups, migrant groups and the welfare sector. The Council on the Ageing describes the change as:
excessively punitive and inequitable in its impact on Australians not born in this country and who maintain cultural and familial ties to their place of birth.

Around 40 per cent of age pensioners were not born in Australia. The Council on the Ageing says the impact of the measure is likely to be:

... significant and unfairly borne by one segment of our community.

Their submission to the Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee inquiry goes on to say:

We know from our members and constituency that it is not unusual for older Australians born overseas to take 'the one big trip' to their country of birth when their working lives are over. They make the most of their time there, given the cost of travel, spending an extended period seeing family and friends before returning to Australia. COTA does not see this as unreasonable.

I think that best sums up the sentiment of so many people who have written to me on this issue. It is not unreasonable for pensioners to go for 'one big trip' in their retirement to visit their friends and family in the place of their birth.

The St Vincent de Paul Society said in their submission to the Senate inquiry into this bill:

It is unfair that a new Australian from a refugee background, who has had to return to their country of origin for a few months, should have their Pension cut significantly more than someone who has lived in Australia their whole life and then permanently emigrated overseas.

The Refugee Council of Australia also opposes this measure, noting that, due to the numerous problems with the family reunion program, refugee community members are often required to travel overseas for long periods of time to visit their relatives and community members. This is particularly important for those people who may have sick or dying relatives in secondary countries of asylum. So, clearly, the migrant and refugee communities are very much opposed to this change.

Of course, it does not end there. Also included in this bill are some other relics from this government's dark past. It includes the abolition of the pensioner education supplement. People opposite might like to forget the 2014 'lifters and leaners' budget. They have punted the previous Treasurer, Mr Hockey, out of the country, but what they have in this bill today is some of the remnants. The pensioner education supplement has, so far, outlasted the former Treasurer, Joe Hockey.

I will just remind people opposite what the pensioner education supplement is and who uses it. It is a payment of between $31.20 and $62.40 a fortnight, depending on levels of study, to help pensioners—largely, people on the disability support pension and the carer payment—who are studying. It provides a small but important payment to help with the costs of study. It can be used to purchase study aids, covering items like textbooks and other academic resources, and for printing, transport and internet connections. Once again, every Liberal and National Party member, having already tried to abolish this a number of times, is going to try again. This measure will see 47,000 pensioners lose their supplement. As the Women and Work Research Group at the University of Sydney has said:

For those in an already difficult financial position who are attempting to improve their education and consequently their employment prospects, these cuts will be significant.

The pensioner education supplement is a payment to people with disabilities, to people who are carers, to single parents and to young people who are studying. According to the Welfare
Rights Centre, around three in 10 people on this payment are aged under 25, indicating that
the payment offers beneficial support that helps young people to continue in education and
study. Seven per cent of those studying with the pensioner education supplement are
Indigenous. Around 40 per cent of people receiving the payment have a disability and so, in
fact, it is people with a disability who will be the biggest losers if this supplement is
abolished. It is a small allowance. It is nothing generous. It is nothing lavish—a maximum of
$62 a fortnight—and yet this government, under the previous Prime Minister, Mr Abbott, and
under this new Prime Minister, Mr Turnbull, have sought to cut it. They have sought to cut it
from people who are already in a difficult financial position, some of society's most
vulnerable people. That really is what this government's approach to budget repair is about.

This bill also seeks to abolish the education entry payment—once again, another small
payment that goes to recipients of Newstart, parenting payment and partner or widow
allowance. In 2013-14, around 87,000 people received the payment. This, too, is a payment
that is designed to help vulnerable people with study costs, and yet this government, under
Prime Minister Turnbull, and every member of the Liberal and National parties are trying to
rip it away.

The final measure in this bill reintroduces something that was contained in the 2014 budget
and later introduced in the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Youth Employment and
Other Measures) Bill 2015. These changes include freezing, for three years, the income-free
areas for all working-age allowances—other than student payments—and for parenting
payment single from a new start date of 1 July 2016. So, in a few months time, if the
government gets its way, it will try to freeze—that is, not increase, even to keep up with
inflation—all of those working-age allowances.

They also want to freeze, for three years, the income-free areas and other means-test
thresholds for student payments, including the student income bank, from 1 January. What we
see with this measure is the Liberal-National Party government's steadfast commitment to
make life harder for young Australians. By freezing these thresholds, more young Australians
will be ineligible to get assistance while they undertake study or training. The measure is
absolutely consistent with this government's—both Mr Abbott's and Mr Turnbull's—approach
of forcing young people to wait one month before they get access to any sort of income
support.

Of course, originally they wanted to make young jobseekers wait six months before
accessing any income support. Labor was able to stop that. Then the Liberal Party came back
under the current Prime Minister and wanted to make people wait a month before they get any
form of income support. So people are supposed to live on absolutely nothing for a month. I
am very pleased to say to the House that Labor, so far, has been able to stop the government
from pushing young people into poverty and hardship. I hope we can continue to do that.

In summary, this bill gives us further evidence that, no matter who is leader of the Liberal
Party, they will always seek to cut support to pensioners, to people with disability, to carers,
to women and to young people. It is a bill introduced by a minister whose biggest legacy as
the Treasurer of Western Australia was leaving behind a $3.1 billion deficit. It is a bill from a
Prime Minister who claims that he is committed to fairness but then tries to cut support to
pensioners, to people with disability, to their carers, to women and to young people—a Prime
Minister who we now know and see every single day says one thing and then does another.
He says he believes in fairness and then he tries to sneak through cuts to pensioners. Whether it is on fairness, climate change, marriage equality or the republic, this Prime Minister says one thing and does another. By contrast, Labor will always put people first. That is why we have fought against so many of this government's unfair cuts. Unlike this Prime Minister, who puts power before principle, Labor will put people first, and that is exactly what we are doing by opposing this bill.

Mr WHITELEY (Braddon—Government Whip) (11:59): I am pleased that I have this opportunity to speak on the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Budget Repair) Bill 2015. I am going to move away from the notes and the facts of this for a moment to address the cries that we have just heard from the other side—and what a tired voice that is. The shadow minister who took a brutal axe to single mother payments not that long ago now stands in here and tries to preach to those of us who have tried to clean up the mess of the previous Labor government that left our nation's finances in such a state that—and anyone who is not aware of this should be made aware—it is costing us $100 million every day just to pay the interest bill on the debt that was accrued through those six long, hard years of Labor. Let me repeat that: that is $100 million every day. When you wake up, folks, every morning when the alarm bell goes off—kerching!—the taxpayers of Australia have to borrow $100 million just to pay the debt that was accrued by that lot on the opposite side.

Let's put this in perspective. When that lot over there took the Treasury benches in 2007, the budgets going forward—that is not just the budget of the time but the projected budgets going forward—under Howard and Costello were in surplus. Whether you liked that government or not, whether you liked the initiatives of that government over a 13-year period or not, the fact of the matter is that this country was living within its means, as I would expect people to do in their households and as I would teach my children to do. But in a short, six-year period, a dark part of the country's history, we have gone to a situation where we have to borrow so much money to balance the books each and every year that every day when the alarm clock goes off—kerching!—$100 million has to be borrowed to pay just the interest on the loan.

People know how their house loan works. It is hard enough paying the interest, let alone slightly chewing the capital away, on the statement that they receive each and every month. These are the facts of the matter. Those opposite can cry crocodile tears all they like, but the reality is that somebody, some government, some day, somewhere has to stand up to the truth of the matter. We cannot continue to live the way we are living. We cannot continue to put the future of our children, our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren into jeopardy. That is what we are doing, and I am not going to be a part of it.

I am not going to stand here for one moment and say that the decisions that have to be made by the executive government of this country are not going to be hard. They are. It is no different to decisions in someone's household. When major changes come up in your finances, you need to make changes. You need to make a difference in the way you spend your money, the way you go and earn your money and the way in which you may in fact choose to borrow money.

The reality—newsflash, folks!—is that the government of Australia cannot do everything for everyone. If you think that can go on, you are living in cloud cuckoo land. It cannot happen. It is taxpayers' money. Out here in the bowels of parliament we do not have a printing
press that prints $50 and $100 notes every day. It does not happen. The money that this
government have at our disposal to spend is the Australian people's money. They elected us to
spend it on their behalf. It is their hard-earned money. They wake up every day and go and
earn it. They come home and try to pay the bills, to give a good life to their children and to
build a future for their families. It is their money that we are spending. The reality is that we
are spending a hell of a lot more than their money. We are borrowing $100 million every day
to clean up Labor's mess and pay down the debt that was accrued in just a very short period of
time.

That is the context in which this bill, the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Budget
Repair) Bill 2015, appears in this chamber. Those who were listening on radio, here in the
chamber today or in their offices, would have thought from the cries of the shadow minister
that we were going to cut the pensions of everybody the minute they stepped over the line out
of this country for more than six weeks. That is not true. It makes for a very good sound grab,
but let's get to the facts of this matter.

The reality for disabled support pensioners is that there is no real change. We are talking
about age pensioners in this context. We all know that you do not receive an age pension until
you are 65. In some cases now it is 66, 67 and 67½. Let's just think about this. The bill says
that if you have been working and living in this country for 35 years, whether you started
from overseas or not, this will not affect you. The six-week limit on being overseas does not
exist for those people. The example of the shadow minister was of a person who arrived here
in the early 1970s from, I think, Greece. I do not get it. What a terrible example to give. There
is no doubt that that person has been working in this country for more than 35 years. If he and
his wife want to go back and see family in Athens or wherever, this does not apply to them. It
does not apply. People should push the pause button on their recording and go back and listen
to what the shadow minister said. She tried to give the impression that we were going to cut
the pensions of those who want to leave the country to see a sick mama and papa. That is just
a wrong interpretation of this bill. If 65 is the pension age and you have been here 35 years,
even if you were born in some other country, even if you arrived at the ripe old age of 30 you
would still be eligible to go out of this country over and above six weeks and collect your
pension. Those are the facts for everybody to consider.

If you have not been here 35 years, there is a proportional reduction. That is a fact. If you
have been here only 30 years, your pension will not be taken away from you if you choose to
go and live with family overseas in Europe or America for two or three months. Your pension
may be reduced—that is true. But do not listen to this garbage that is coming from the other
side with crocodile tears that we are cutting away the pensions of everybody. These are pure
scare tactics. Those opposite are masters of them. They go to a special school for Labor
politicians in their early days to learn the scare-tactics strategy for being an opposition
member of parliament and a Labor member of parliament. These are the facts and they are
what should be put on the table.

Those opposite have done nothing but oppose every effort of this government to get the
budget back in the black. Are all the initiatives that have been placed on the table loved by the
people of Australia? Of course they are not. Governments are not here to be loved by
everyone. Governments have a mandate to do what they said they would do. We said to each
and every one of the Australian voters, 'We want to come in and clean up the mess.' What I
have come to determine is that, whilst they gave us that mandate and everyone cheered us on to do that, what some people actually meant was: 'Clean up the mess, do the difficult things, make the hard choices and make the changes, but just don't do them to me. Do them to my neighbour; do them to my footy mates, do them to my work mates, but do not do them to me.' It is a 'not in my backyard' sort of scenario. Well, it does not work that way. We are a nation. We are a family. We have to fix this problem together. We have to all take some of the burden, and we need to get the job done.

In this bill, there are a number of initiatives that will save hundreds of millions of dollars over the forward estimates. Whilst, to the average Joe Public, that sounds like a lot of money, the reality is that the savings in this bill alone—I have not done the sums; I am thinking off the top of my head—will probably save seven days of interest a year, if that. So there are still 358 days to go. Get it in context, folks. Here are the facts. Let us face the facts. Let us face the reality that we have a job to do.

The deficits of the Labor governments over those years totalled $191 billion. That is how much they spent, more than they earned, over six years. There was an extra $123 billion on top of that which they projected to spend more than they earned, and they gave us that as a beautiful inheritance on the day that we arrived here in September 2013. What a lovely inheritance to have! When that black briefcase was opened by the Treasury officials to give the dark news to Mr Hockey and Mr Abbott, I reckon that, as the little clips on it unlocked, it would have exploded in their faces. There was the truth: $191 billion more had been spent that we knew of, but 'Here, Mr Abbott; here, Mr Hockey, happy Christmas!' We had also inherited $123 billion in projected deficits. You think that we had a job ahead of us? Well, you got it right.

Every time we come into this place to bring about changes to the budget, to bring about a healthier response to the budget, they say no. They always say no. They are not interested in fixing up their mess. They are like the people that set fire to their rental property: they torched it, they trashed it and then they ran away, only to discover that the neighbours came to help save it. The fire brigade, the police and the emergency services turned up to get this thing under control, and they came back and shot everyone that was trying to put out the fire. That is pretty well what it is. That was not in my notes, but it had to be said, because the previous speaker just cried crocodile tears for 27 minutes and made no sense at all.

It is true that a couple of measures will no longer be part of government policy: the pensioner education supplement, which was introduced 30 years ago, with the aim of assisting the long-term unemployed to adapt their skills to rejoin the workforce; and the education entry payment, which is over 20 years old. Folks, we have lots of other programs in place that now provide that support. These payments are hangovers from 20 and 30 years ago, and there are savings in here across the forward estimates of $500 million that can go towards paying off the debt that I referred to earlier in my speech.

The job of government is not to please everyone; it is to do what the public would expect us to do—to live within our means. Imagine if every family in Australia continued, day in, day out—not giving a stuff—to spend and spend and spend, and borrow and borrow and borrow. I hear some of you saying, 'We are probably doing it too much anyway,' and there could be some truth in that, but imagine if everyone had that attitude. The government of the country should not have that attitude. It should have an attitude of far better stewardship than
that. I like to think that that is what this government is putting its attention and its priorities into. Whether you like it or not, the initiatives in this bill are part of the solution, the greater strategy, to get the budget back under control.

There are a number of funding mechanisms that are now available to people when it comes to their educational outcomes. They are often collectively known as HECS. Every year, the government provides $3.5 billion under HECS programs to assist people of any age to undertake further educational qualifications. So do not for one moment, those who are listening to this contribution, think that there will be nothing left for people as they strive to build on their educational qualifications.

One of the other initiatives in this bill, which I will wrap up on, is the portability of pensions. Whilst we are placing a new condition of just six weeks on people as they leave the country, I am concerned that there are some inconsistencies in relation to those that we are making this change for—in some cases, former prime ministers of the country. Let me put it straight. I have a little difficulty in accepting that we may have a bit of work to do here, but apparently it is all right, because former prime ministers are funded under a taxpayer pensioner scheme. But, as I read the paper at the moment, Mr Rudd, for example, has spent most of the last 12 months out of the country, on the speakers circuit, in advertising for Hillary Clinton, with Julia Gillard, who is now a so-called adjunct professor at some university. I would like to see some consistency—

Ms MacTiernan: God, you are mean-spirited. What about Malcolm Fraser? What about John Howard? You are absolutely unbelievable. What about Robert Menzies?

Mr Whiteley: I do not care whether they are Liberal, Labor, Callithumpian—I do not care. I do not care if they are one of us or one of you. At the end of the day, I have written to the minister, saying, 'You might want to have a look at this.' Why should pensions for prime ministers be allowed to continue on indefinitely, if in fact we are changing it for others? Why should Kevin Rudd be able to live in New York or wherever for 10 months and collect his pension? I think we should have a look at that. I think the public would expect us to. They would expect some consistency. They would expect us to have some integrity on this, and I will write to the minister asking that. I thank the House. (Time expired)

Ms Chester (Bendigo) (12:14): It is so classic for government MPs to stand up and say: 'We cannot be everything to everyone. We have to be honest. We're not here to be loved by everyone.' Then why are you going after only the lowest paid people in our community? Be honest with the Australian people. Don't just come in here and say, 'We've got to provide tough love; we've got to go after the pensioners; we've got to go after the young people and the unemployed.' Why aren't you going after the people who are really making a profit in this community? Why aren't you getting real about cracking down on multinationals who are not paying their fair share of tax? Why is this government so obsessed with going after pensioners and going after young people who are unemployed and not going after the people in our community who are getting a free ride—like big multinationals who are not paying their fair share of tax and wealthy superannuants who are getting generous tax breaks from this government? This government are not being real and genuine when they come in here and say, 'We've got to make the tough decisions.' The only tough decisions that these people are making are the tough decisions that hurt the people who can least afford it.
This is a government that is not committed to supporting those on the lowest incomes. This is a government that is here to prop up and support their mates in big business and support the people who actually have the means in our society. It is a government that is obsessed with attacking people on the lowest incomes, and this bill that is before us, the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Budget Repair) Bill 2015, is another example. All they are doing with these budget measures—they call it budget repair—is going after people on the lowest incomes. What have they got against people in our community on the lowest incomes? Where are the real tax reforms? Where is the real budget repair for the other end of town? They would have a little bit more credit with the Australian people if they would say, 'This is what we are doing across the board'. But no, instead—as we have now seen in two budgets—they are going after working families, they are going after Australian pensioners and they are going after our young people. The changes in this bill are another example of that.

They are changing the proportion of the pension payment to pensioners who are outside Australia. That is just a mean measure. It does not take into context the global community that we now live in, the relationships that we have with other countries. I have had a couple of people come and speak to me about how challenging it is for their mother, who receives a part pension from overseas, because she may have had her early years in another country and a pension here in Australia. They tell me that it is a nightmare to try to get the paperwork right—not just for Centrelink, not just for themselves but for the country overseas. There has got to be a better way to do this, and this government and these measures are just going to make that challenge more complicated.

This bill also introduces measures contained in the 2014 budget. These are changes that the government have not been able to legislate. These are the abolition of the pensioner education supplement and the education entry payment. How could you deny pensioners who want to gain further education a supplement to do so? It shows that this government and these MPs do not understand who the pensioners are in their community. They do not understand that there are people on a pension who want to do more, who want to seek an education.

It is very expensive to study these days in Australia—very expensive. And yet this government is saying to those who want to put their hand up to do extra study, to do extra coursework, 'We're not going to support you in that.' It demonstrates how out of touch this government is, because they do not understand how hard it is to survive on a pension in Australia today.

There are several types of people on retirement incomes in our country. I have mentioned the wealthy superannuants at one end; then we have people who are on super; then we have people who are on a mix of super and pension. They are the people who are surviving. Then you have people who are solely on a pension. The only way you can describe the circumstances of a lot of them is that they are living in poverty. If they have been fortunate enough to be able to pay off their home, if they have solar panels on their roof so they can knock out that one electricity bill, then those pensioners are making ends meet. But pensioners who might be renting, pensioners who do not have solar panels on their roof and pensioners who are on a single income are living in poverty, and they need more support from this government, not less—particularly women who find themselves in the situation where they want to do extra study, yet this government will not be supporting them if these measures go through.
This bill also introduces measures to freeze the income-free areas for all working-age allowances other than student payments and for parenting payments for singles, from a new start date of 1 July 2016. This bill also maintains the levels for three years for income-free areas and other means-tested thresholds for student payments, including student income bank limits, from 1 January 2016. This is a measure that is just mean. They are going to say to people who go out there and start earning a little bit of extra money, ‘We’re keeping the amount that you can earn at a set level.’ So to people who might be on a payment whilst they are studying and to people who might be on a payment whilst trying to find more work, this government is saying, ‘Your income bank is frozen.’

You can tell that many members of the government, when they were studying at university, did not try to survive on youth allowance. That is what it was back in my day. You are forcing people into poverty because they cannot earn a few extra dollars to subsidise their youth allowance. The cost of living goes up every single year: the cost of the basics, the cost of rent, the cost of books and the cost of study go up. So, if people want to pick up that extra shift at work, they now cannot, because they will lose part of their youth allowance. What this government has not realised—because they are so out of touch with people in the lowest income bracket—is that they are forcing people into poverty. If they take the extra shift, they are no better off, because they lose part of the income that they receive through youth allowance and their other payments.

We need a system that is fair and that acknowledges people who are transitioning into work and that supports them and does not force them into poverty. Yet that is exactly what this government, in freezing the income-free areas, is doing. They did this when they were last in government. They do not genuinely believe in supporting people back into work. They prefer the tough love approach—taking out the big stick. That is exactly what they have done here. They do not understand how hard it is to survive on these small incomes. They are now saying to those who may pick up extra work, ‘You might have to give up that extra shift or lose a bit of the small income that you get from us, because we are freezing your income bank.’ It is one of the meanest measures that are being put forward by this government. The government are so focused on protecting the one per cent that they forgot to do what government should be doing, which is to support the 99 per cent, particularly those on small incomes.

My electorate of Bendigo is a classic example of most regional electorates. About 30 per cent of the electorate survives on less than $600 per week. That means 30 per cent of the electorate are single-income households. Most of them are on some form of payment, whether it be a pension, Newstart or a combination of part-payment part-work. There is simply not enough work available today. This government has done very little to help create jobs in regional areas like my area of Bendigo. A lot of people are complaining and do find it hard to get the extra work. I know from working with UnitingCare of Bendigo in my electorate over the break that they are seeing more and more working families presenting for emergency relief, both before Christmas and after Christmas with the return to school. Our community of Bendigo have been incredibly generous. They have donated money to help UnitingCare help these families. There are quite expensive schoolbook lists this year. In one of our schools the book list was $1,000. For a family with three children to find $1,000 for each child for their schoolbook list is expensive, particularly straight after Christmas.
So these families are already doing it tough, and the measures that are being put forward in this bill, if they are enacted, are just going to make it that bit harder. It is another demonstration of how this government does not really appreciate or prioritise supporting those who are on the lowest incomes. The rhetoric they will use when they stand up here is that it is about the debt left behind by Labor; that it was Labor's problem; that Labor spends, spends, spends. It is not true. This government's plan, and what they are prioritising, is not about helping the people who most need it. That is the real difference between Labor and Liberal. It is about how you prioritise your spending and how you prioritise where government dollars will go.

They have demonstrated that they are not going to prioritise our schools. They are not going to put the funding back into the Gonski reforms to fund schools. Let us put that into context. A small primary school in my area, Epsom Primary School, has its library in a hallway. Their budget for buying new books this year is less than $1,000. Yet we have an Attorney-General who spent $15,000 on moving his personal library at Parliament House and $13,000 on his personal book collection. It is another example of how this government is prioritising the one per cent and not the rest of the country. If this government were serious about being fair and measured it would see reform at the other end of the tax scale and income brackets. That is not what we have seen to date.

It does not matter who the Prime Minister is—whether it be Tony Abbott or Malcolm Turnbull—the Liberal government inherently do not want to support people in our communities on low to middle incomes. Time after time we see bills come before this House that go after the very people who most need the support of government. The cuts in these bills may have originated under the former Prime Minister and the former Treasurer but they have been continued by this Prime Minister and Treasurer. It is another example of how the government say one thing and do another. This is a government that, for all of their rhetoric about change, have not changed, because deep within their values they believe that those on the lowest incomes should just be able to pick themselves up. It does not work that way.

The people that you hurt the most by these cuts are our pensioners, who have worked hard their whole lives, or the young people in our community who are trying to get ahead. Currently pensioners who stay overseas for 26 weeks receive the full pension. Following that time the pension is reduced at a rate depending on how many years the pensioner has worked overseas. That is just an example of how this government does not understand working, whether people have worked, what is working and the relationships we have with other countries. People know that it was Labor that increased the pension and built those reforms in, starting to get the pension back to an income that people could survive on. That was voted down by the opposition, the present government, when it was first introduced, for very similar reasons—arguing that this country cannot afford it. We can afford it. We just need to get serious about how we are raising our revenue. We have a government that prioritises the most wealthy self-funded retirees over those who need the greatest support.

If this government were serious about our young people we would see a genuine job creation plan on the table, not these attacks on their income-free banks. Time and time again I have this raised with me in the electorate: 'I'm worried about my son or daughter—they just can't get a start.' Entry-level jobs today do not exist like they did a generation ago. It is something that people on the other side seem to ignore every time they come in here and
demonise young people, forcing them into poverty. If this government were serious about the next generation they would be out there partnering with industry to rebuild our apprenticeship program, rebuild our vocational education program and rebuild our entry-level jobs that just do not exist today. The measures in this bill go after the very people that this government or any government should be supporting. Instead, they choose to go after them again. I hope, as with previous attempts by this government, that the crossbenchers stand with Labor and vote against this bill.

Dr JENSEN (Tangney) (12:29): The Social Services Legislation Amendment (Budget Repair) Bill 2015 is timely and critical to the long-term economic health of our country. Maintaining our current high standard of living in the future depends on it. This bill is another brick—another protection—in the dam wall against the sea of red ink left by Labor. So why is this bill so important? Why is it so important to take action, and how bad is this mess? After six years in power, Labor left Australia with a broken budget, a damaged economy and a serious mess to clean up. Labor delivered deficits totalling $191 billion. Treasury projected that without policy change the budget would be $667 billion in deficit.

Honourable members interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Vasta): Order! The member for Tangney has the call.

Dr JENSEN: This would mean that we would have 16 unbroken years of deficits—the longest stretch of deficits since World War II. Labor's waste and mismanagement while in government included a cost blow-out of at least $29 billion with the National Broadband Network and the disastrous pink bats program, which cost $2.8 billion and, most tragically, four lives. Days lost to strikes more than doubled. Under Labor the number of unemployed increased by over 200,000, and the unemployment rate jumped from 4.4 to 5.7 per cent.

They broke a pre-election promise and introduced the world's largest carbon tax. In its first year the carbon tax was a $7.6 billion hit to the economy. When the $900 stimulus cheques were sent around, 27,000 Australians who were living overseas received them, including 21,000 deceased persons. Cheques to dead people: it really is indicative of pump prime economics! The only real stimulus occurring from stimulus economics is at the ballot box, and even that is not sustained or sustainable.

Labor's failed border protection policies resulted in 50,000 illegal arrivals on more than 800 boats, causing a cost blow-out of more than $11 billion. Tragically this also resulted in over 1,100 drownings at sea. Labor introduced more than 20,000 new or amended regulations, creating new red tape for business. I remember the proud boast about how much legislation they were putting through parliament. This place is supposed to be about putting quality legislation through and not just putting quantity through.

During the six years Labor held government household health costs increased by 35 per cent, education costs increased by 39 per cent, gas prices increased by 71 per cent, water and sewage prices increased by 79 per cent and electricity prices increased by 101 per cent. Investment in defence fell to 1.56 per cent of GDP in 2012-13. This was the lowest level of defence funding since 1938. The 10.5 per cent cut was also the biggest since the Korean conflict. Under Labor, hospital waiting times for elective surgery grew from 34 to 36 days. They promised 64 GP super clinics but delivered only 33.
When Labor came to office they inherited a surplus of $20 billion, with no net debt and $45 billion in the bank. In Labor's five budgets from 2008-09 to 2012-13 they delivered $191 billion of budget deficits. Their deficits have reversed Australia's strong position of having no net debt. Labor effectively chaired the fastest deterioration of the Australian government's debt position in modern Australian history. This was largely because of Labor's spending problem—not because of a revenue problem. Labor increased spending sharply over its six budgets, including increases of 16 per cent, or $44 billion, and almost seven per cent, or $21 billion, in its first two budgets alone. Over Labor's five budgets government spending increased by over 50 per cent, or $137 billion.

Since the coalition came to power, we have worked tirelessly to fix the problems inherited from Labor. We, the coalition, believe in being an agile and nimble government. This is clearly evident in what we have achieved and the work that we have done since entering government. We are actively repairing the mess left by Labor and returning the budget to a strong and sustainable position. However, the reality is that our social services bill represents almost a third of the Commonwealth budget, and it is increasing faster than any other area of government. Without further restraint our welfare bill is expected to grow from $149 billion in 2014-15 to $277 billion in 2025-26. It is evident from these figures that we need to restrain the growth in welfare and continue to fix the mess left by Labor.

Although significant savings in the Social Services portfolio have been secured, it is imperative that we continue with our efforts to spend our social services budget more effectively in order to reduce long-term pressures. This must be done so that we can better support those who need it most, ensuring also that Australia's social security safety net is sustainable for future generations. The government has proposed four measures in the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Budget Repair) Bill 2015 in order to achieve this.

The first measure, in schedule 1, will tighten proportionality requirements for pensioners from 1 January 2017. This measure will reduce the amount of time a full pension is paid to pensioners absent from Australia from 26 to six weeks. After this period, payment will be adjusted according to the length of the pensioner's working life residence. This measure will also treat all people who have spent less than 35 years of their working life in Australia the same, whether they were born in Australia or overseas. Those who have spent more than 35 years of their working life in Australia remain unaffected.

This measure does not impact on the length of the portability period. The age pension and a limited number of other pensions will continue to be payable overseas indefinitely. Only the amount they receive after a six-week absence will change. Those who have spent fewer than 35 years of their working life in Australia will see their pensions reduced once they spend more than six weeks outside Australia. The amount the payment is reduced by is based on the proportion of their working life spent in Australia. This measure will continue to reinforce and strengthen the residence based nature of Australia's social security system. After a six-week absence, payment will be adjusted according to the length of time a person has resided in Australia during their working life.

The coalition has made this change because we believe a person's retirement costs should be fairly distributed between the countries a person has spent most of their working life in. Our expectation is that a person will be eligible to receive a pension from the country in which they have spent a proportion of their working life in. Australia now has 30 international...
social security agreements around the world to support people living and working in more than one country. These agreements generally allow Australian residents to maximise their income by helping them claim payments from other countries where they have spent part of their working life.

Under measures 2 and 3, the government will also cease the pensioner education supplement and the education entry payment, saving Australian taxpayers around $300 million over the forward estimates. In spite of its name, the pensioner education supplement is not available to people receiving the age pension. It assists students with the ongoing costs of full-time or part-time study. The most common payment type for people receiving this is the parenting payment single, at 43 per cent, followed by the disability support pension, at 41 per cent, and the carer payment, at nine per cent. As at the end of September 2015, PES provided fortnightly payments to around 46,000 people. The education entry payment is a lump sum payment paid once a year to eligible recipients, removing financial barriers to education by providing financial assistance for study entry payment. In 2014-15, around 83,000 recipients received an EEP lump sum payment of $208.

Originally, these payments were introduced to assist long-term income support recipients who had been out of the workforce for a long period of time. The payments helped recipients improve or rebuild their skills to be more competitive in the labour market. However, since the introduction of these payments, several other policies have been introduced to reduce the length of time that income support recipients, including single parents who have the capacity to work, remain out of the workforce. These policy changes include varied eligibility and participation requirements for parenting payment, as we recognise that, as children age, their parents’ capacity to work increases. We have also made changes to the assessment and eligibility criteria for payments for people with a reduced capacity to work, requiring these people to work, or look for work, in line with their capacity. The coalition has created more appropriate channels for government funded study and training assistance for income support recipients. These include the Higher Education Loan Program and the FEE-HELP and VET FEE-HELP tuition loan programs through employment service providers.

Ceasing these two payments will help reduce the number of payment supplements and is consistent with the recommendations of the McClure review of welfare. McClure’s review highlighted 20 main payment types and 53 payment supplements that resulted in a complex income support system.

Measure 4 will reintroduce elements of the 2014 budget savings to maintain the income-free areas and means test thresholds for all working-age allowances. Parenting payment single and student payments, including student bank limits, will also be maintained and not indexed for three years. Pausing indexation will allow us to realise budget savings and help slow the growth in social security expenditure.

We, the government, believe that these are sensible measures that will help us back to a surplus. They will also allow us to continue to fix the budget mess we inherited from Labor. These changes will help achieve long-term sustainability of the payments system, while ensuring Australia has a targeted, means-tested income support system that provides financial assistance for those most in need, all the while encouraging self-provision.

After signing into law the social security amendments of 1961, John Kennedy said:
The Social Security program plays an important part in providing for families, children, and older persons in times of stress.

But he added this:

But it cannot remain static. Changes in our population, in our working habits, and in our standard of living require constant revision.

If we want to remain an agile and innovative government, we need to regularly assess the measures we take and evaluate their success. It is important that we continue to find a better way and the best way forward, learning from our predecessors’ mistakes, growing from our past attempts and, therefore, providing the Australian people with solutions and measures that achieve long-term sustainability.

It is important that we acknowledge changes that have occurred, not just in the Australian government or our coalition policies but also in our working habits, living standards and population. Our world continues to become more globalised and interdependent. It is important that our policies reflect this. This bill does that by updating pension measures, removing out-of-date education related payments and acknowledging that more appropriate channels of government funded study assistance are available. We are able to drive the government back into surplus and clean up the economic mess that we inherited from Labor.

Ms RYAN (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (12:44): I rise to join this debate on the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Budget Repair) Bill 2015 to stand up, as I always do, for my community and to oppose each of the measures contained in this bill. It is not surprising that this government needs a budget repair bill, but not as is claimed for anything that it can attach to the previous government—because this government, of course, has doubled the deficit and is struggling with that narrative. It is struggling to convince the Australian public that that is not the case, when every day in this place we see that it is the case.

Not unusually, in introducing this bill the government is once again attacking the most vulnerable Australians. We on this side of the chamber will stand and defend the most vulnerable Australians. This bill cuts support to Australians who have worked hard for their entire lives. It cuts support to people who have made contributions to their families, to their communities and, indeed, to the nation. It seeks to cut support for pensioners. Let us be clear, front and centre, what this legislation is about. It is about repairing the government's issues and repairing the government's doubling of the deficit by cutting support to the most vulnerable in our communities. That is what this bill is about. This bill targets seniors. It targets the most vulnerable.

Let us have a look at this government's record of the last 2½ years. This government's record on pensioners is appalling with cuts that they have tried to get through this parliament since 2013. Every time that they have come into this chamber to attack pensioners and to cut their living wage we on this side have stood up to defend those pensioners. We have had some success. They wanted to introduce cuts to pension indexation—cuts that would have seen an $80-a-week cut to the pension over 10 years. There were cuts to 330,000 pensioners through changes to the pension assets test. There were cuts to pensioner concessions through $1 billion worth of cuts. That was, if you remember, part of their shift of the blame and the cost to the states.

Probably the most venal thing was the government's wanting to increase the pension age to 70, making Australia the only country in the world with a pension age of 70. They were
expecting that people who had worked hard all their lives in manual labour could continue to do that until they were 70. It is an important point to note because it goes to the logic behind all of their cuts. As we go to the detail in this bill you will also see that they want to cut support to our seniors and cut support to pensioners who would like to continue their journey of lifelong learning. They want to cut the support that would allow an age pensioner to engage in education. So you would have to work until you were 70 and then, once you were 70, you would be discarded on the scrapheap. You could not go to university, you could not re-engage, you could not decide, with support, to continue your lifelong journey in education. These cuts go to the government's attitude to the senior members of our communities. It goes to the members of our communities that have given so much to those communities.

The first measure I will talk about is the cuts to support pensioners who spend time out of Australia. The government are now seeking to reintroduce a measure from the 2015 budget that changes the proportional payment of pensions outside Australia after six weeks—currently that change is made after 26 weeks. The crux of the first measure in this bill is that the Liberals want to make it harder for some pensioners to continue to receive their full pension whilst they are overseas. Currently they receive the full pension for 26 weeks, but the pension will be reduced to a rate that depends on the number of years a pensioner has worked in Australia. The government are proposing that from January 2017 that 26 weeks will be reduced to six weeks. This unfairly punishes pensioners across the country, but it particularly punishes pensioners in my community. It punishes those who choose to spend a period of time overseas visiting family. This has particular impact in multicultural communities, obviously. It is important to remember that 40 per cent of our pensioners were born overseas. In my community there is large number of pensioners who were born overseas.

As the member for Jagajaga mentioned, the Refugee Council of Australia has had something to say about this. It is opposing this measure noting that, due to numerous problems with family reunion programs, refugee community members are often required to travel overseas for long periods of time to visit their relatives. This is particularly important for those people who may have sick or dying relatives in secondary countries of asylum. The assumption that some people may be making that journey to return to their birth country is just not accurate. It could be that as someone who came to this country as a refugee and is now a citizen has a sibling, perhaps in New Zealand, that they want to care for. This legislation would be punitive to those wanted to do that.

Clearly the migrant and refugee communities are very much opposed to this change. If you think about retirement, you think about the one big trip. If you are taken away from caring for a relative, you can think about that one big trip. And, as the previous member said, if you think about the global nature of our modern lives and the amount of travelling Australians, whether they were born in this country or in others, then this bill seems out of whack with our cultural expectations and with the new, modern world. We are great travellers. We have many citizens who have family living in other countries. As pensioners they are not wealthy. This bill means they can visit relatives at no loss for six weeks, but to avoid that loss they must come home after that. This might be fine for the wealthy who can afford the next plane trip, but others may have spent their savings on airfares for their one big trip. Now that one big trip will have to be limited to six weeks before you incur a loss.
This government does not seem to grasp what Australians value. They value family. They value weddings. They travel for funerals. They may travel for an impending birth. They may be going overseas to support a family member who has had a child, to do some caring for that child. Now that will incur a loss, if it is for longer than six weeks. But, most critically, are those areas of caring responsibilities—where this will limit their ability, without loss, to go and care for a relative overseas. It comes down, as do most things in this chamber, to this government's priorities and to where fairness comes into those priorities. And fairness does not seem to be a priority for this government. They say they have a budget problem, and their answer to that is to place punitive measures on the most vulnerable in our community.

This government does not like to limit its attack on the vulnerable to just the elderly. The bill also includes the abolition of the pensioner education supplement, which I referenced earlier—a small payment of a maximum of $62 a fortnight that this government is hell-bent on cutting. It is hell-bent on cutting support for someone to engage in education—not just cuts in schools education, not just cuts in TAFE, not just slashing support for apprentices; the elderly cannot get educated in this country, either. It speaks volumes of their attitude to education and learning. The pensioner education supplement is a payment of between $31.20 and $62 a fortnight, depending on the levels of study, to help pensioners, disability support pensioners and carers who are studying. It provides a small but important payment to help with the costs of study and can be used to purchase study aids and items such as textbooks, academic resources, printing, transport and internet connections.

Again, the punitive measures come through here; the anti-education. There is nothing new here—it just reinforces the attitude this government has. It reinforces the message to our pensioners, to those people who have given so much in this community, that 'You are finished. You have nothing more to contribute.' This again sends them the message that they do not deserve the dignity of a decent retirement.

This measure will see around 47,000 recipients lose their supplement. It will hurt those who have decided, quite admirably, to improve their financial position, possibly to broaden their minds or to broaden their horizons through the power of education.

The third measure in this bill seeks to abolish the education entry payment, a payment that goes to recipients of Newstart, the parenting payment, partner or widow allowance. In 2013-14, about 87,000 people received this payment. This, too, is a payment designed to assist vulnerable people with study costs. This government's attitude to education and the most vulnerable in our community is extraordinary.

Finally, the bill also introduces a measure that was contained in the 2014 budget—you know, the 'lifters and leaners' budget; the one we all remember so well. A lot of the rhetoric from the other side of the chamber is about being agile. This certainly demonstrates agility, because we have seen this change in indexation trick before. It was also in the 2014 budget around pensions: let's just pause indexation without any reference to the loss that means to somebody's living allowance and their ability to have a decent retirement or a decent life.

This measure predominantly impacts students and some working parents on income support—again, people who are trying to make a difference in their own lives, trying to get an education, to step up, to go on to other things. Again it is that trick—and it shows agility, alright. We are going back to the 2014 budget.
This bill really goes to the heart of the way this government is operating. They have found themselves a new leader but, as Prime Minister Turnbull so eloquently put it yesterday, after 141 days nothing much has changed. This piece of legislation before us today confirms exactly that: the leader has changed, but the strategy has not. They are still going after the most vulnerable, they are still coming after Australia’s pensioners and they are still going to punish the most vulnerable to make up for their lack of vision and for their doubling of the deficit. They need to treat pensioners with respect. They need to treat the most vulnerable in this country with respect. I oppose this bill, as do all members on this side of the House.

Mr TUDGE (Aston—Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister) (12:59): I think almost everybody in Australia except for the Labor Party understands that we have a fiscal problem, that the expenditure of governments, despite all of the work that this government has already done, is still well in excess of the revenue which the government collects. Almost everybody in Australia knows this. They know that, after all the work we have done, our expenditure is still about 10 per cent higher than the revenue which is collected. They know you just cannot continue along the path of having expenditure exceed your revenue and, consequently, having budget deficits. In some respects, it is common sense that you cannot have budget deficits indefinitely into the future. Everybody in Australia, except, it seems, the Labor Party, understands that that is just not a sustainable position.

Of course, everybody in Australia also understands that it was the Rudd-Gillard government that put us in such a difficult position, that turned the budget position from being in a great surplus—with $20 billion worth of surpluses each year—to having very severe deficits. In their very short amount of time in office—too long for most Australians—they clocked up $191 billion worth of budget deficits and they locked in expenditure of 3.7 per cent going forward. In the forward outlooks, there was billions of dollars of deficit as far as the eye could see. It was not sustainable and it is not sustainable. As a nation, we simply cannot sustain having ongoing large budget deficits.

If the opposition do not want to listen to us in making this point, then hopefully they will listen to the Treasury Secretary, who just a week ago made this point very clear. He said that if we do not get on top of the fiscal repair job, particularly on the expenditure side, then future living standards will be at risk. He said that very clearly. I will quote what he said. He said:

Why should the living standards of future generations be compromised just because we were not willing to make sacrifices to the unsustainable growth of government expenditure?

He squarely pointed out, very clearly, that it is the future living standards of our children that are at stake when we talk about budget repair. That is what is at issue and that is the underlying context of these bills before us today.

There are a number of ways you can think about and address a fiscal problem. First, you can just put your head in the sand, as Labor seems to do. Second, you can constantly raise taxes to try and chase an ever-increasing expenditure. Third, you can get expenditure under control and concurrently grow the economy faster. Perhaps the greatest difference between the two parties at the moment is our differing approach to this problem and which options we pursue. It is quite clear that the Labor Party is pursuing accommodation of options 1 or 2—put your head in the sand in relation to the fact that we even have a problem or constantly propose new taxes to chase ever-increasing budget expenditure. We, on the other hand,
strongly favour option 3—that is, budgetary expenditure restraint combined with making the economy grow more rapidly.

Of all the contributions we have heard from the Labor Party today, almost none admitted that there was actually a budget problem to start with. I do not think any of them did. Despite the bill itself being called the 'budget repair bill', I do not think a single contributor from the other side said that we have a problem and that we need to deal with that problem. Yes, there are some who admit that there is perhaps a problem in terms of the sustainability of our fiscal finances. But their solution is of course just more taxes. We have already had from the Labor Party this year additional taxes for superannuation, despite their saying that there would be no changes; additional taxes for cigarettes; and additional taxes on companies. And, no doubt, there will be many more policy proposals for more taxes from the Labor Party between now and the election. That is their approach to the fiscal problem—either ignore it altogether and say it does not exist or constantly increase taxes to chase the tale of expenditure.

Our approach is not that. Our approach is expenditure restraint. When you look at the data it is actually the expenditure side of the equation which is the problem rather than the revenue side of the equation. On the revenue side our revenue as a percentage of GDP is roughly where the 10-year average is, whereas the expenditure side of the equation is still at GFC levels. It is still well above the long-term average at 25.9 per cent of GDP, whereas the longer term average is about 23 per cent of GDP. That is why we believe it is the expenditure side which must be restrained, and that is what we are doing. And we are not just doing that but also growing the economy more rapidly. We are putting in place policies that will do that, including of course our infrastructure plans, lowering some of our taxes and our innovation agenda. And, right now, we are going through a tax reform process to again try to stimulate the economy and get it to grow faster.

Of course, if you do those two things—if you have expenditure restraint, which we are putting in place, and you grow the economy faster—then over time you get control of the budget and get back into surplus. We are doing exactly that and we are doing it successfully. We have stopped expenditure growth. There was 3.5 per cent real growth under the Labor Party and it is now below two per cent ongoing. Meanwhile, we now have the fastest growing economy in the G7 at about 2½ per cent. It needs to be faster, but it is still about 2½ per cent. Consequently, if you are growing the economy faster than your expenditure growth, over time your expenditure as a percentage of GDP declines and you have the budget under control. That is our economic and fiscal strategy in relation to the budget. I think it is sensible. We are doing it carefully and we are managing it well.

The Social Services Legislation Amendment (Budget Repair) Bill 2015 is very much within that strategy. It proposes further measures for modest restraint to the largest section of the budget, which is the welfare section. As you probably know, Mr Deputy Speaker Vasta, the social services element of the budget is about a third of the entire budget and is growing more rapidly than any other elements of the budget. If we are not addressing that element and trying to restrain expenditure then we will have great difficulty getting on top of the expenditure problem overall. Again, we have already put through many measures in this area, and Christian Porter, the social services minister, is doing a terrific job going through the entire portfolio and finding more savings that can be made in a sensible, responsible way.
The measures in this bill in front of us today continue in that vein. Perhaps I could mention just a few of them that I think are sensible measures and that are done within that context of necessary budget restraint. For example, from 1 January 2017 the government will tighten proportionality requirements for pensioners. This measure reduces from 26 to six weeks the amount of time a full pension is paid to pensioners who are absent from Australia. This measure treats all people who have spent less than 35 years of their working lives in Australia the same, whether they were born in Australia or overseas. Those who have spent more than 35 years of their working lives in Australia remain unaffected. This measure does not impact on the length of the portability period. The age pension and a limited number of other pensions will continue to be payable overseas indefinitely. Only the amounts that may be received after a six-week absence will change.

This measure will reinforce and strengthen the residence based nature of Australia’s social security system. There are already about 30 international social security arrangements to support people who are living and working in more than one country. Generally these agreements allow Australian residents to maximise their income by helping them to claim payments from other countries where they have spent part of their working life. This is a further measure in that vein of expenditure restraint. It saves in the vicinity of $168.4 million over the forward estimates, and we think it is a reasonable proposal, given the stresses on the budget.

The additional measures include the cessation of the pensioner education supplement and the education entry payment, which would save Australian taxpayers around $300 million over the forward estimates. The pensioner education supplement was introduced in 1987 to assist single parents with the ongoing costs of education. Despite its name, the pensioner education supplement is not actually available to people receiving the age pension. Rather, it tends to be received by people who are on parenting payments, disability support pensions and carer payments. It is provided to about 46,000 people. When this payment was introduced, both of the payments aimed to assist long-term income support recipients who had been out of the workforce for a long period of time by helping them improve or rebuild their skills to be more competitive in the labour market. However, since the introduction of these payments several policies have been introduced to reduce the length of time that income support recipients, including single parents who have capacity to work, remain out of the workforce. Policy changes include varied eligibility and participation requirements for parenting payments, recognising that parents’ capacity to work increases as their children age.

I think these measures are reasonable savings measures in the context of our fiscal challenges. None of the savings measures that we put forward in this House are easy or straightforward. Expenditure restraint is never easy. It is much easier to spend money than it is to exercise expenditure restraint. But the fact of the matter is, as I outlined at the beginning of my remarks, that we have an obligation—a responsibility as members of parliament—to the Australian people to act in their long-term interests. And acting in their long-term interests means we must get control of the government's expenditure. I know the Labor Party does not accept this, and I wish they would listen more closely to people such as the Treasury secretary, who has made this very clear.

These bills go towards those ends. They are reasonable measures. They are not straightforward measures, but they are reasonable measures in that context. If we do not put in
place measures like this—which do get control of the budget, which do mean that our overall expenditure growth maintains at a reasonable level below economic growth—then we will have a very serious financial challenge on our hands in the future and the living standards of our children will be lower. That is what is at stake with the budget measures we are putting in place. I commend this bill to the House.

Mr HAYES (Fowler—Chief Opposition Whip) (13:12): The previous speaker on this bill, the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Budget Repair) Bill 2015, said that matters of budgetary consideration in relation to social services are difficult. I accept that they are difficult, because they directly impact on people who are least able to protect themselves. It will not come as a surprise to you, Mr Deputy Speaker Vasta, that, like other colleagues on my side of the House, we oppose these measures. This bill introduces measures from the 2015 budget that change the proportionality of payments for pensioners who travel outside Australia. It reintroduces measures contained in the 2014 budget that the government has been unable to legislate. Those measures deal principally with the pensioner education supplement and the abolition of the education entry payment. Further, the bill deals with other measures of the 2014 budget, particularly in relation to indexation.

I would like to concentrate on only a couple of these measures. I am happy that the member for Hughes is in the room here, because he will understand—and we have adjoining electorates. My electorate, in particular, is the most multicultural electorate in the whole of Australia. It is something that those who visit there—and I have noticed that the member for Hughes frequents there—

Mr Craig Kelly interjecting—

Mr HAYES: I understand he likes yum cha. That is why he goes there. He will understand when I say that the colour, the vibrancy and the diversity of my community is something to be very proud of. More than 60 per cent of the people in my community were born overseas. My community is also one of significant need. It is not a rich community. My community certainly has a significant proportion of residents who live with a disability. We have high unemployment and, regrettably, dreadfully high youth unemployment. These are things that we need to work, hopefully, in partnership with the government to do something about. My area is also one where the vast majority of refugees have come to this country. I will just take a couple of groups. Forty years ago was the fall of Saigon. We commemorated that last April. After the fall of Saigon, in 1975, the Fraser government opened the doors to the first wave of Vietnamese refugees to this country—some 50,000. I think we are all indebted to his foresight in doing that. Opening the doors to those 50,000 did not mean that that was it. Refugees flowed from Vietnam for years and years to come. As a matter of fact, some 200,000 have joined us and have made a marvellous contribution.

One of the things to note, when dealing with an immigrant and refugee based community, is not only the way that they adapt to their adopted country but also the way that they continue to support people at home. They take responsibility for the elderly. They take responsibility for those who could not escape. They take responsibility for them in a family capacity by looking after their welfare. In my office—and no doubt the member for Hughes experiences this as well—we are forever helping people bring relatives in for visitations and ensuring that people from Australia can visit overseas. Some of those visits overseas, whether they are for funeral arrangements, the welfare of families or are in relation to various matters of property
settlements, take many weeks—a lot more than six weeks. I know that the government has a view that after six weeks the proportionality test for those who are travelling overseas will reduce the age pension. As it stands at the moment, after 26 weeks the pension is reduced. The government want to reduce that to six weeks. I do not know what the experience is of other members here, but I know for a fact that for people in my community who have left the workforce and who travel overseas to undertake family and community responsibilities, to look after the interests or the welfare of family members et cetera, their visitation is normally longer than six weeks. We are going to say to those people: we are going to cut your pension; we are going reduce it by up to $61 a fortnight. That is pretty significant. We are talking about age pensioners. We are not talking about superannuants; we are talking about age pensioners. They are not going to be able to come back and say, 'I will make up that money with an extra shift or some more overtime.' These are people who lack the ability to make that up.

Surely the government is not trying to tell people that if you are an immigrant to this country and an age pension, if you are a refugee to this country, if you have worked and participated to the full and contributed to the Australian community, not only by paying taxes, you are not entitled to go away for six weeks, regardless of how long you have been here. That is a pretty harsh position being adopted by this government.

I think when members participate in this debate they should not try to say, 'Well, this was in the 2015 budget, so therefore we're trying to deliver budget repair' and all the other things that flow off the tongue. I think they have to start thinking of the people in their electorates—the people who are dependent on an age pension. I know that my electorate is not unique. I know that the member for Gellibrand also has many Vietnamese in his electorate. We need to think of the composition of our electorates and about the contribution that people have made. The fact is that we are now going to say to these people: unless you have been here for 35 years we are going to reduce your ability to travel, and we are going to ensure that by having a disincentive. If you are away for more than six weeks, we are going to cut your age pension. I just think that is unAustralian.

If the government is going to make changes to deal with the budget, if what those on that side of the House are trying to tell us is that debt is a problem, then I am sure—if I can use the words used long ago by Joe Hockey—'more debt is not the answer'. You only have to look at the increase in debt since the coalition took office to see that there is only one way that they have gone—and that been to increase the debt of the nation. But even with all that, the thing that they should not do is target those least able to afford it.

There is some reluctance by those on the other side to target international businesses, which, according to all the reports, have been very successful in minimising and sometimes totally avoiding paying tax in this country. I would have thought that that would have been a priority. I would have that having very, very generous provisions in superannuation, catering for the high-end earners would have been a priority. Again, I would have thought that those would have been the priority, not doing what they started to do in the budget of 2014 and target aged pensioners and people supported by disability payments and those who are on carer payments. That is not the message a government that cares about people should be putting out.

I say the government generally because we are all in this place as a parliament, and I think we are all here hopefully for the right reasons—that is, making a difference for the better in
our respective communities. If we are going to do that, the priority can never be to target those least able to afford it. This is a bill which is one of many that seems to do just that. And that is why we say that this is inappropriate and it should not proceed. If the government is as concerned as they say about the budgetary position, I am sure that they will find the support of the opposition in measures such as multinational corporations paying their fair share of tax. They will get support to address gross inequities in superannuation. There are many issues that we would work together on but, when the attack is on those who are most vulnerable in our society, you can always expect the Labor Party will stand up to protect them.

Mr CRAIG KELLY (Hughes) (13:23): I am pleased to rise to speak on the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Budget Repair) Bill 2015. ‘Budget repair’ are the key words of this bill, because we do have a budget that is in desperate need of repair. I should not have to remind the House that we are now coming into the ninth year in a row of budget deficits.

Starting off we note that the last budget the previous coalition government handed down, under the management of John Howard and Peter Costello, had a $20 billion surplus. And then, in 2008-09, the Labor Party took over and they started off with a $27 billion deficit. In 2009-10, the supposedly temporary budget deficit was $54 billion. In 2010-11, there was another $47 billion deficit, and they followed that in 2011-12 with another $43 billion deficit. In 2012-13, with a little bit of tricky financial accounting and shifting some expenditures to the year before or the year after and pulling revenue from the year before or the year after back in, they were able to get it down to $19 billion, but we saw the trickery of that. In 2014, there was a $48 billion deficit, and last financial year, 2014-15, there was $38 billion. This year we are projecting a $37 billion deficit, and the following year we are predicting $34 billion.

So, even if all these budget measures go through, in the next coming financial year, we will still be, as a nation, borrowing close to $100 million every day and we will have been doing that for almost the last 10 years. That means that every single day of the year governments have had to pay the expenses and accounts. They have had to borrow $100 million every single day, and that builds up a debt, a higher taxation obligation and a lesser ability to enjoy social services for our kids and our grandkids.

Already this year the interest payment on the debt we have is something like $14 billion. What that means is that we, as the government, have to collect $14 billion from the taxes of the hardworking people of Australia not to pay back the debt but just to service the interest alone. If you break that down, that works out at about $35 million every single day. My speaking time on this bill is 15 minutes, and in that 15 minutes this nation will have had to pay $300,000 in interest on that debt. This cannot continue, and thankfully there is a former Labor Prime Minister that I would hope all Labor members of parliament would listen to, one Paul Keating. I quote him from *The Australian* today:

The real point is the rest of the world has trimmed us down, commodity prices have fallen … and of course with (lower) wages growth, in the budget revenues are falling.

When commonwealth revenue has been so affected, the penny ought to drop that what we should be doing is cutting spending.

Sadly, on the other side of this chamber the penny has not dropped, because they are still out there telling the Australian public that governments can keep on spending, keep on borrowing and keep on putting more debt onto our children and our grandchildren, making a less
prosperous lifestyle for Australians, because they simply want to be electorally popular. Sometimes in this parliament hard decisions need to be made. Those decisions may not be popular, but they must be made for the betterment of our country. Paul Keating continued, saying:

The Treasurer has got to sit and go through, line by line, every item of social expenditure—indeed every item of expenditure …

We owe it to our kids to do so. Keating goes on:

(Then ministers) Peter Walsh, John Dawkins and myself sat in those expenditure review committees 10 weeks a year, 10 hours a day.

In the end I was sitting up at the desk with a tennis shade on and sunglasses because I couldn’t stand the light from the paper, sitting there for so long.

That was the former Labor government. Labor Prime Ministers Paul Keating and Bob Hawke knew that they could not continue on spending the way they were, and even then they were still unable to bring the budget back into balance. And yet we have had speaker after speaker from the Labor side completely ignoring the facts of the budget problem we have—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): Order! The debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 43. The member will have leave to continue his remarks when the debate is resumed.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Special Broadcasting Service: The Family Law

Mr WATTS (Gellibrand) (13:30): I rise to congratulate SBS on commissioning the recent television series The Family Law, written and developed by Benjamin Law. It is a cracker of a show—a laugh a minute—though you will have to take my word for it as I fear that the House’s standing orders would preclude my sharing much of the humour in the show with the chamber. I am not sure that quoting Jenny Law would be considered parliamentary.

While we are always pleased to see our broadcasters commissioning Australian content, telling Australian stories, it is especially pleasing that this is a comedy show that looks like modern Australia. This is a show about an Australian family—but the Laws happen to be Chinese-Australian. Importantly, the Laws’ ethnicity is not the point of the show. As Ben Law has said, it is no more a show about Chinese-Australians than Seinfeld is a show about white people. Like modern Australia, the show’s diversity is simply a reality rather than a premise. It is who we are, and we ought to see this reality reflected more on our television screens. We have come a long way since the Lim family made a brief appearance on Neighbours, only to be accused of eating one of the dogs of Ramsey Street! But we have a long way to go—we need to see more families like the Laws, and like my own family, on television.

It is equally pleasing that this on-screen diversity in The Family Law is mirrored off screen through Ben Law’s writing and by the Matchbox Pictures production team, including the amazing Tony Ayres and Debbie Lee. I recently attended the premiere of The Family Law in Melbourne and there was a palpable sense of excitement. So well done to Ben Law, Matchbox Pictures, Screen Australia and SBS for The Family Law—and more, please!
Economy

Ms SCOTT (Lindsay) (13:31): The Turnbull government is committed to boosting economic growth and lowering the unemployment rate. The outer Western Sydney and Blue Mountains regions are no exception in this regard. ABS data demonstrates that the latest unemployment rate is more than one percentage point lower in our region than under the previous Labor government, between December 2010 and September 2013. These figures point to a higher participation rate among our youth compared to both state and national averages. More precisely, youth employment participation rates for outer metropolitan Western Sydney regions were more than three percentage points higher than when Labor was in power.

The Turnbull government is acutely aware of the economic transition required to deliver more employment to the people of Western Sydney into the future through economic diversity and innovation. Business confidence in our region is strong and consumers are spending locally, which is always a good sign of a thriving economy, indicating future growth for our community. I am proud to be part of a government whose policies and economic credentials are delivering a positive economic outcome for the constituents of Lindsay. I look forward to more good news for the people of Lindsay as our infrastructure plan comes to light and we see more innovation and jobs coming to our region into the future.

Shakespeare, Mr Graeme

Ms ROWLAND (Greenway) (13:33): I rise to pay tribute to the life of a remarkable champion of the Greenway community, Graeme Shakespeare, who lost his battle with incurable cancer on Tuesday. He was a long-time resident of the Gateway Lifestyle Village in Stanhope Gardens and he was one of the organisers of their annual Pink Ribbon morning tea, which was always extremely well attended by everyone in the local area. Graeme had been recognised in the past by Cancer Council New South Wales as a star volunteer. As reported in the local media, Mr Shakespeare, who had incurable liver cancer, said he did not help out for any reward. He said:

This is a big honour for me as I do what I can to help those living with cancer.

The Cancer Council commented:

Graeme is easily recognised because he is always smiling. He is dedicated to raising awareness of cancer and is a strong advocate of the support programs provided by Cancer Council NSW.

He was a wonderful man and a great friend. One time when I held a Pink Ribbon barbecue my staff noted down that he wanted me to know that he attended a Pink Ribbon event for motorcyclists on that particular weekend, and $90,000 was raised for Westmead Hospital. He has a pair of pink Doc Martens. He was always a regular at the Blacktown Relay for Life. He will be very sadly missed and in typical style Graeme requested that in lieu of flowers a donation be made to the Garvan Institute and that everyone present at his funeral wear a touch of pink. My sincere condolences to Graeme’s family and friends on this very sad news.

Cowan Electorate: Roads

Mr SIMPKINS (Cowan) (13:34): I would like to talk about the major arterial route in the electorate of Cowan, that being Wanneroo Road. Wanneroo Road is a major artery in the northern suburbs of Perth, and there are a lot of problems with congestion on this road. This is not just Monday to Friday—this is also on the weekends, particularly at the intersection of
Wanneroo Road and Hepburn Avenue. There is a major sporting complex just nearby and that increases loads on the road.

I have raised the issue of congestion on Wanneroo Road on several occasions with state and federal ministers, and I have spoken about it on many occasions here. I am very pleased that the state Minister for Transport, the Hon. Dean Nalder, has listened to me and to the very hardworking state MLA for Kingsley, Andrea Mitchell, and has agreed that the upgrade of the Wanneroo Road and Hepburn Avenue intersection will take place. There will be an increase in the capacity of the intersection, and it will be a great step forward for local people. Again, it is not going to be of benefit just from Monday to Friday—increasing capacity to reduce congestion and waiting times in traffic—it will benefit those using the Kingsway sporting complex. They will see the benefits as well. I look forward to this happening; it is good news for Western Australia—despite the negativity on the opposition benches!

**Indi Electorate: Cafe Connect**

Ms McGOWAN (Indi) (13:36): It is with great delight that I tell colleagues about Cafe Connect in the beautiful town of Mansfield. I begin by congratulating the youth leadership team—Ariena, Shana, Taylah, Bradley, Grace, Jai, Peggy, Charlotte, Jordan and Ashley; the committee of management; John Collyer; Mansfield Shire and executive team; and the mayor, Paul Sladdin. Since being elected I have visited the cafe on several occasions and I have always received a very warm welcome. I have been met by a committed group of young people who had plenty of pride in showing me around their 'home' and passionately telling me about the benefits of their special place.

Cafe Connect opened in 2001 with the help of federal government funding. It has been involved in festivals and events, hosted popular Friday night barbecues, provided free internet access and games, and allowed young musicians to perform and record. By 2010 the cafe was attracting more than 800 visits every month, with young people flocking in to socialise and hang out. The decision was taken to move to a bigger venue and finally it has happened. The new space builds on the cafe's history. It now gives young people the opportunity to undertake training, have meetings, watch movies, cook up a feast, hold pool tournaments and even get into gardening. As the community gathers to open the new building, I send them my warm congratulations on the success of Cafe Connect. It really is a place where connections are made. Well done, and congratulations Mansfield.

**Defence Training**

Dr SOUTHCOTT (Boothby) (13:38): I have spoken previously about the federal government's continuous-build strategy for naval vessels and the need for my home state of South Australia to make sure our students are well positioned to take advantage of the job opportunities that this offers. As we head into a new year, I believe it is important to do so again. I would also like to thank Jordan McKay from the University of Adelaide, who recently wrote a report for me on the education pathways required, as part of his parliamentary internship in my office.

In a nutshell, if South Australia is to seize the jobs and economic impact associated with naval shipbuilding, we need to ensure that there are strong pathways for our young people to get the skills, education and training they need to move into the industry. In particular, while
local universities do have a number of degrees with a naval focus, these are decades-long projects. Our focus must be on secondary-school foundation skills to give us a strong pool to build and maintain this workforce over the long term.

There are currently a number of good initiatives within my state in this area. With the Maritime High School of South Australia at Le Fevre, as well as the Advanced Technology Schools Pathways Program, we have 20 high schools that incorporate a focus on high-level STEM skills and potential pathways into the Defence industry, including Aberfoyle Park High School in my electorate. But it is vital that we capitalise on these sorts of initiatives. The state government needs to take a serious look at the skilling of our Defence industry workforce. (Time expired)

**Shipping**

Mr **STEPHEN JONES** (Throsby) (13:39): There are some countries in the world where the citizens are not surprised to hear that in the middle of the night 30 security guards rush on board a ship, withdraw the workers who work on board the ship at one o'clock in the morning, send them down the gangway and then replace each and every one of those workers with a foreign worker working on a pittance. Australia should not be one of the countries where we are not surprised to hear about this happening.

That is exactly what happened in the case of the *MV Portland*. I know this because this morning I spoke to a constituent of mine, Zac Kinzett, who has been out of work because he was sacked when those security guards stormed on board that ship and put him on shore. What is worse is that he cannot look for another job, because as soon as he takes up alternative employment his employer will deem him to have forfeited his job. This is not Australian. I wish I could say it was an isolated incident but it is not. I have also spoken today to Joanne Kerin, who was sacked from her ship, the *Alexander Spirit*, where she worked as a caterer, in July last year. Thirty-six of her coworkers were also sacked in similar circumstances. As the first parliamentary week of the year draws to an end, it is not too late to end this madness and for the government to put Australian workers first. (Time expired)

**Carruthers, Mr Peter**

Mr **BROADBENT** (McMillan) (13:41): I was saddened recently at the death of a fine Australian in my electorate of McMillan. Peter Carruthers has been an active advocate for the Leongatha RSL and veteran community, not to mention a welcoming presence at every event I attended with him. I remember last year's Australia Day function at Leongatha with affection, with Peter a most worthy recipient of Leongatha and District's 2015 Australia Day Citizen of the Year award. As I wrote to Peter in the wake of that event, the Australia Day awards are an opportunity for the local community to pay tribute to you, a great Australian, whom we admire and whose selfless contribution makes a real difference to our local communities. Peter certainly fitted the bill.

Peter was never motivated by awards, but, rather, a selfless dedication to others. It was evident in everything he did. Aside from his unwavering commitment to the RSL and veterans, I know he was also a keen golfer and golfing administrator and gave his all to the sport. As a former president and vice-president at the Foster Golf Club, not to mention a long-time South Gippsland Men's secretary and president, he did a great deal to promote the game to young and old alike.
I know he will be missed by his wife Carol and his children Scott, Mark, Helen, Greg and Dale, their partners, and his 10 young grandchildren. The wider community will mourn his passing too. Peter was a man of integrity and a credit to his family and community. The legacy he leaves behind is a big one. He may have departed in body, but his spirit will always remain in South Gippsland.

**Indigenous Affairs**

**Mr THISTLETHWAITE** (Kingsford Smith) (13:42): I wish to condemn NIL Entertainment, the creators of an app game called *Survival Island 3* in which players are warned to beware of Aborigines and are encouraged to shoot and kill Aboriginal people depicted as hostile savages. This app was published by Apple, Google Play and Amazon. Thankfully, all subsequently withdrew the app and refused to publish it any longer. But they should never have published it in the first place. The app is clearly racist. It is extremely disrespectful of Aboriginal Australians and their connection to this land for tens of thousands of years. It encourages stereotypes that our nation must move beyond if we are going to have true reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

No race or group of people deserve to be depicted in these terms, particularly not a group of people who throughout history have been dispossessed of their lands, had their children removed from their care and continue to suffer discrimination, poor health and educational outcomes; and whose men are 15 times more likely to be incarcerated than non-Aboriginal strands. I wish to congratulate Gadigal woman Georgia Mantle, who started an online petition that garnered 60,000 signatures and lead to Apple and the like taking this game down. Thank you, Georgia, for standing up for Aboriginal people. But the fact is you should not have had to. This app should never have been published. *(Time expired)*

**Sport: Surfing**

**Mrs SUDMALIS** (Gilmore) (13:44): One thing surfers have in common in Gilmore is their love of the sea and their community. This was plain to us all in the national Australian Boardriders Battle held in Cronulla on the weekend of 9 and 10 January. It was broadcast on Fox Sports and our local surfers were often featured.

There are 200 boardriders clubs around Australia, and only 20 qualified for the battle. Two of these, I am proud to say, are from Gilmore: Culburra Beach and Ulladulla.

The Culburra Beach Boardriders Club is actively involved in promoting and supporting youth in our community. It is the youngest boardriding club in Australia—only two years old. It now has 200 members, The Culburra Beach Boardriders Club team ranked seventh on the day, winning $3,000. The team members were Jay Quinn, Tyler and Mikey Wright, Ben and Nick Buckpitt from Culburra Beach, Ty and Jordan Watson from Currarong, Karla Thompson from Woollamia and Phil McDonald from Sussex Inlet. Jason Moon was their team manager.

The Ulladulla boardriders team—Matt King, Kurt Nyholm, Elliott Marshall, Rubie Reents, Chad Elkins and Sam Wrench—ranked 13th and took home $2,000. The Ulladulla club is encouraging other riders to learn important lifesaving skills this month, by attending free classes, learning CPR and surfboard rescue techniques with our local surf-lifesaving club in Mollymook. Congratulations to both clubs for their outstanding achievement in promoting the youth of our area and a healthy, great sport, and for doing such a great job for their community.
Turnbull Government

Ms RYAN (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (13:45): I rise today to note that the chaos under the waterline of this government has come to the surface today. We woke this morning to find that there is a secret plan to take over VET—so Fairfax are reporting. This government has a track record of slashing funds to apprentices. They have an appalling track record in this space.

A New South Wales government minister has slammed this secret plan and said that this government's track record should mean that it is a place it will not go. As a Victorian, watching the Daniel Andrews Labor government trying to restore TAFE to its pre-Liberal status in our community—to rebuild TAFE—I tell my colleagues in New South Wales: beware of any conservative government that thinks it is going to step in and take over this space.

But the chaos is not just in that area; it is also in the area of science. Today we see—and I will just use the headline, because it is so effective: 'Climate science to be gutted as CSIRO swings jobs axe'. We have a prime minister who claims to believe in climate change. We have a prime minister pretending to be a moderate in these areas. Yet the chaos continues, and jobs will be cut in our very, very important institution of CSIRO. That will see Australia go from leading the world to trailing the world. The PM was right yesterday: nothing seems to have changed.

Hume Electorate: Fires

Mr TAYLOR (Hume) (13:47): I would like to echo the Prime Minister's comments in the House this week, extending sympathy to those impacted by natural disasters this summer and thanking volunteers who have helped. In Hume, several fires have destroyed stock and property. Thankfully, no-one has been injured.

At Gunning, in my electorate, a fast-moving fire burnt 700 hectares just a couple of weeks ago. A number of power poles were destroyed at the new water treatment plant, which meant residents had to go on temporary water restrictions. Hundreds of stock had to be put down.

There were 180 firefighters, most of them volunteers, who turned up to the Gunning fire, and, for a village of only 500 people, that response rate speaks volumes. Thank you to all who stopped the fire jumping the Hume, including the mayor of the Upper Lachlan Shire, John Shaw, who lives at Gunning and was out fighting the fire with many others.

Can I also pay tribute to the Toparis family of Goulburn and their resilience. Their wonderful cafe, the Greengrocer, a social hub in my town and at the heart of Goulburn cycling, was burnt to the ground in January. We wish the family the very best in their recovery efforts.

Workplace Relations: MV Portland

Mr ZAPPIA (Makin) (13:48): I join the member for Throsby in raising the MV Portland matter. This week Australian seafarers stood on the lawns of Parliament House drawing attention to the disgraceful act by Alcoa whereby five Australian crew members aboard the Alcoa-owned vessel the MV Portland were woken up in the middle of the night, at one o'clock, by up to 30 security guards and forced off the vessel. They were then replaced by a foreign crew.
The MV Portland was carting alumina within Australian waters between Western Australia and Victoria. The Turnbull government has now issued Alcoa a temporary licence, which enables Alcoa to circumvent the law and use a foreign-flagged vessel with a foreign crew to operate in Australia waters. The Turnbull government has facilitated Australian jobs being taken away from Australian crew members and given to foreign crews. Just as disgracefully, the Turnbull government has done that without any surety that those foreign crews are competent, are not being exploited and are working under safe conditions.

The Prime Minister likes to quote the golden rule, as he refers to it: 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.' I ask the Prime Minister: does the treatment of those five Australian crew members fit your golden rule? What do you say to the Australian crew members, and their families, who have had their jobs taken by foreign workers? Prime Minister, is this the way you would like to be treated or see any of your family members treated? Prime Minister, stop destroying the Australian shipping industry and selling out Australian jobs.

**Infrastructure: Bridges Renewal Program**

Mr TEHAN (Wannon) (13:50): This month, my electorate of Wannon had delivered much-needed funding to rebuild and repair vital bridges and road infrastructure. Roads and bridges, as many rural members are aware, are imperative to ensuring that local communities stay connected, business can grow and people can have access to services. Sadly, these vital pieces of infrastructure are often neglected by state governments.

This is why the coalition government has delivered a further $4.6 million in funding to Wannon as part of the Bridges Renewal Program. The Bridges Renewal Program is designed to bolster the productivity of Australia's local bridges and give councils the support they need to better service communities and drive greater efficiency in road freight and traffic movement.

In Wannon this will mean that bridges that have become dangerous or unusable will be refurbished. It will mean that the Castle Carey Road Bridge in Corangamite Shire, a one-lane timber bridge with a limited loading capacity, will be replaced with a two-lane concrete bridge with nearly double the loading capacity.

As the Corangamite Shire mayor has said, 'The federal government should be thanked for this contribution that will assist in ensuring the project can commence.' It is hoped that the state government will also see these benefits and fund it as well.

This is an excellent program, one that the federal government should be commended for supporting and one that we need the state governments to commend as well.

**Ethiopia**

Ms PARKE (Fremantle) (13:51): I wish to speak again of the serious human rights situation facing communities in Ethiopia. Since November last year it is believed that more than 140 people have been killed by security forces after a new wave of protests began in the Oromia region, following the government's announcement relating to the expansion of the municipal boundary of Addis Ababa. The community feared this decision would result in the forced displacement of farmers, without adequate compensation. The protests, which have for the most part been peaceful, were responded to with mass arrests, brutality and the use of live ammunition. This comes as the government continues to arbitrarily arrest and prosecute...
protestors, journalists and supporters of opposition political parties. Nine weeks after the protests began the government halted its plan, but there continues to be daily reports of killings and mass arrests, with at least 27 people reported to have been killed since this time.

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on 21 January 2016 condemning the situation, calling for an immediate end to violence, and urging the Ethiopian government to carry out a credible, transparent and impartial investigation into the alleged human rights breaches in relation to the protests. Last week in Perth people united on the steps of state parliament in an act of solidarity. I urge the Australian government show the same solidarity, especially at a time when we are seeking a seat on the UN Human Rights Council.

It is evident that unless we see a change to the Ethiopian government's approach to development, which must involve genuine community consultation, the unrest is likely to continue as local communities unite to protect their rights to freedom, justice and equality.

**Deakin Electorate: Community Awards**

*Mr SUKKAR (Deakin) (13:53):* Each year on Australia Day the Maroondah and Whitehorse City Councils in the Deakin electorate take the opportunity, at their Australia Day citizenship ceremonies, to recognise the efforts of so many hardworking and dedicated volunteers and organisations for the work they have done in our community over the past year. It is always a great honour for me to be at these ceremonies to pay tribute to the work these people do and to show our appreciation to their calibre and the dedication they have for our community.

In Maroondah, the Citizen of the Year award went to Ian Ware, whilst Ashley Cooke was named Young Citizen of the Year. Both were selected out of a very large and impressive field of nominees and make very worthy recipients. The award for the community event of the year went to the Rotary Club of Ringwood for their 2015 Maroondah Schools Anzac Service, which attracted more than 700 students from 40 schools around the electorate. At the City of Whitehorse, Anne Payne was named Citizen of the Year, whilst the Young Citizenship award went to Thanushi Peiris. And Dr Hugh Wirth AM, from the RSPCA, received an outstanding community leadership award. Further Community Achievement Awards went to Dilnaz Billimoria, Graeme Elder, Patricia Fincham, Anne Makhijani and Neville Moulden. I want to pay tribute to the outstanding work they do on behalf of our community.

**Science**

*Ms MacTIERNAN (Perth) (13:55):* The Prime Minister picks up his pom-poms, puts on his white boots and takes up the role as the cheerleader for Australia's exciting, innovative, science-based future. 'We have to be—and we will be—a country that invests in science and puts it right at the centre of our national agenda,' he tells us. And he goes on, forever saying, 'There has never been a more exciting time to be an Australian.'

But there has certainly never been a less exciting time to be an Australian scientist. Today we have learnt that 350 positions at the CSIRO will be made redundant, after about 1,400 jobs have been lost in the agency over the term of this government. We now are losing 110 jobs from the CSIRO's Land and Water Division and another 110 jobs from the Oceans and Atmosphere Division. Apparently, we already know all we need to know about climate change! Then we have another 130 jobs going from the manufacturing division and from Data61. Data61 is the data analysis team that the Prime Minister lauded just months ago in his
innovation statement—and the manufacturing division, which is working with Australian businesses to manage the transition from traditional heavy industry to advanced high-tech manufacturing. I can tell you that this is definitely not exciting. *(Time expired)*

**Forde Electorate: Beenleigh and Districts Senior Citizens Centre; Rowan, Ms Linda**

Mr VAN MANEN (Forde) (13:56): I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Beenleigh and Districts Senior Citizens Centre long-time servant Linda Rowan. I thank her for the many years she has contributed to the centre. After 40 astounding years of service, Linda has recently retired from her role as an administrator with the Beenleigh and Districts Senior Citizens Centre. It prides itself as one of the best facilities in Australia for over-50s, and Linda has contributed countless hours to making the Beenleigh and Districts Senior Citizens Centre the wonderful place that it is today.

The centre celebrates the diversity of our region's older people and promotes a positive image for ageing. It also helps seniors to continue contributing to community life and to retain their independence. While Linda may have officially retired, this local powerhouse will not be slowing down any time soon, with plans to stay on at the centre in a voluntary position.

Linda is just one of the many amazing people you will find in Logan who dedicate their time to helping others. I would like to congratulate all of the management, staff and volunteers at the Beenleigh and Districts Senior Citizens Centre for providing a valuable service to our region's seniors, and for creating a positive community environment where seniors are respected and appreciated, as they should be. Thank you for your 40 years of service, Linda. I look forward to continuing to work with you and the centre in the years to come.

**Science**

Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (13:57): In 2010 the Prime Minister said:
All of us are here accountable not just to our constituents but to the generations that will come after them and after us.

In 2011 the Prime Minister said:
We cannot afford to allow the science to become a partisan issue as it is in the United States.

In 2015 the Prime Minister said:
It is really important for leaders, for prime ministers, for ministers, for people in the media to talk about the importance of change, to talk about the importance of science, to talk about the importance of technology

And just two months ago the Prime Minister launched his innovation statement at the CSIRO.

But today we read that the Turnbull government has cut up to 110 positions in the Oceans and Atmosphere Division of the CSIRO, and more in the Land and Water Division. Total job cuts will be about 350 staff over two years. 'Climate will be all gone, basically,' according to one scientist.

This comes on top of this government already making the biggest job cuts in the CSIRO's history. The Abbott and Turnbull governments have cut $878 million from science and research agencies, including almost $115 million from the CSIRO. Nearly 900 scientists have already lost their jobs. At least 500 jobs will go at CSIRO, 96 at Geoscience Australia, 64 at
ANSTO and 58 at the Bureau of Meteorology. Despite all the Prime Minister's rhetoric, despite his grandstanding, the truth is clear: the government is bad for science, bad for innovation, bad for jobs and bad for our future. (Time expired)

The SPEAKER: It being very close to 2 pm, in accordance with standing order 43 the time for members' statements has concluded.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Education

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (13:59): My question is to the Prime Minister. Why is the Prime Minister planning a TAFE-destroying takeover of vocational education? Why is the Prime Minister still committed to $100,000 university degrees? And why is the Prime Minister opposing Labor's 'Your Child. Our Future' education plans, which will give every child in every school every opportunity?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:00): I thank the honourable member for his question and I am delighted that he has raised the issue of TAFE. As the honourable member knows, the government is cleaning up a very, very substantial mess that was left by the government in which he was a minister with vocational training—a very substantial mess.

We are undertaking substantial reforms which are restoring integrity to the vocational training sector.

Ms Owens interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Parramatta will cease interjecting.

Mr TURNBULL: It is a complex task. He should understand that. Regrettably, the Labor Party can get into large messes much faster than their successors in government can get the nation out of them—massive, massive mismanagement.

The Leader of the Opposition then went on to talk about schools education. I refer the honourable member and all honourable members to the answers I gave earlier this week. But let me just remind the honourable member who asked the question about the critical issue of teacher quality. The problem that we face is that we have been, on any view, spending more on schools but with worse outcomes in terms of student performance, both in absolute terms and relatively to other comparable countries. That is why high-quality teacher education has to be a feature of our school system, just as it is a feature of all of the top-performing education systems around the world. It is a key policy, a key pillar, of our Students First policy.

And that is why, under the leadership of this government, this coalition government, in September all state and territory education ministers agreed to several key elements in our response to this challenge of improving teacher quality: a national literacy and numeracy test for initial teacher education students—absolutely critical—guidelines for the selection of entrants to initial teacher education programs, and a commitment to strengthening the national approach to the accreditation of initial teacher education programs in 2016.

What we are seeking to do is ensure that the quality of the young men and women who are going in to study to be teachers is higher and higher as time goes on, because we know the critical determinant—

Mr Perrett interjecting—
The SPEAKER: The member for Moreton will cease interjecting.

Mr TURNBULL: of good educational outcomes is quality teachers. Quality education comes from quality teachers. We are backing the teachers. That is our commitment and that is what will deliver the outcomes our nation needs.

Ms Macklin interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Jagajaga is warned.

Women in the Workforce

Mrs WICKS (Robertson) (14:03): My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister update the House on the number of women in full-time work in Australia? How will the government's childcare policies encourage greater workforce participation and generate jobs and growth?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:04): I thank the honourable member for her question. Our government is directing every sinew of its efforts to set Australia up as an innovative, dynamic 21st century economy. That is our goal—every lever of policy is pulling in that direction. And there is nothing more important in that endeavour than harnessing the power of women; increasing their participation in the workforce is a critical part of this agenda.

Last year, 2015, the labour force participation rate increased by half of a per cent, 0.5, the most rapid calendar-year growth since 2006. A key driver of that growth was the increase in the female participation rate. There is a greater percentage of women working now than ever before—the largest increase since 2005 in one year: 0.9 of a per cent. Almost 60,000 more women than men entered the workforce in 2015.

It is absolutely critical, and it is obvious to all members, I am sure, that, if we are going to take advantage of our greatest resource, which is our human capital—the men and women of Australia—we have to take advantage of all of our population, men and women. So the more Australian women can contribute their talents to our workplaces, their ingenuity to our national enterprise—the more that that occurs—the stronger our economy will be, the better prospects our children and grandchildren will have in the years ahead.

Now, child care is a key driver of that participation for families, and that is why, through our Jobs for Families package, the government is delivering a simpler, more affordable, more flexible, accessible childcare system for families who rely on child care, in order to enable the parents to work. So we welcome today's independent report by PricewaterhouseCoopers. It projects the equivalent of 20,000 full-time workers will join the workforce as a result of the government's new childcare subsidy. I quote the Goodstart Early Learning CEO, Julia Davison, who commissioned the report. She said:

The Jobs for Families childcare package will deliver a significant economic gain for our nation by making returning to work more attractive for parents.

Our government is giving the leadership, it is giving the means, to ensure that all Australians participate in our 21st century economy and that, above all, women are able to do so as well.
DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER (14:07): It is my great pleasure to inform the House that we have present in the gallery this afternoon former Speaker and former member for Wakefield, the Hon. Neil Andrew.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Goods and Services Tax

Mr BOWEN (McMahon) (14:07): My question is to the Treasurer. On Neil Mitchell's program last year, the Treasurer described leadership rumblings as, 'a bit of political bed-wetting by some'. A source in today's Financial Review, on the front page, describes coalition MPs who oppose a rise in the GST as 'bed-wetters'. Treasurer, is this a coincidence? When will the Treasurer finally come clean with the Australian people and his own colleagues about his plan to increase the price of everything, with a 15 per cent GST?

The SPEAKER: Before I call the Treasurer, I do not believe the first part of the question is within the standing orders. The very last part of the question, relating to tax, is. The Treasurer can address the issue of tax.

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (14:08): I thank the member for the question. I thought the shadow Treasurer might want to ask me something about the economy, the transition that is taking place or the issues that are happening in global markets—something like that—but he wants to focus on trivia.

Mr Dreyfus interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Isaacs will cease interjecting!

Mr MORRISON: I will give him some advice. I will give him some advice in relation to the last part of the question. I will quote someone else who was on radio today. In fact, the former Prime Minister and Treasurer, Paul Keating, was talking to Alan Jones this morning. Here is a bit of advice: 'When Commonwealth revenue has been so affected'—this is what Paul Keating said to Alan Jones—'the penny ought to drop that what we should be doing is cutting spending.' That is what the former Treasurer, Paul Keating—he was referring to me—said and has said for some weeks now. On this point, he is actually right.

What we are doing on this side of the House is reducing government spending as a share of the economy from 25.9 per cent down to 25.3 per cent. If we had done nothing over the last several years, it would have hit 26.5 per cent of GDP under the high-spending, high-taxing policies of those who previously occupied these benches. On this side of the House, we are absolutely committed to getting the fiscal consolidation plans implemented, because, at times like this, when we know of the volatility that is occurring globally and we have Australians looking at what could be happening to their savings and their investments and all of these things, they will look at these things with some uncertainty. That is why the government has to focus on strengthening our financial position and not engage in the reckless tax-and-spend approach which left this government with the reckless fiscal position those opposite bequeathed to us. As a government, we are focused on the task of strengthening our budget and strengthening our finances, and the former Treasurer, Paul Keating, says we have that right.
Economy

Mr ZIMMERMAN (North Sydney) (14:10): My question is also to the Treasurer and it is actually about the economy. Will the Treasurer advise the House of the importance of microeconomic reform to our transitioning economy? How important is it to our national economy that we finally bring to an end lawlessness and criminality in our building and construction industry?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (14:10): I thank the member for his very serious question on the economy. It is good to have important questions on the economy from the member for North Sydney. Today, in response to the results in the National Australia Bank Quarterly Business Survey, Alan Oster, the chief economist there, said:

… the improvement in the non-mining economy remained well entrenched, while the outlook was generally positive as well.

…… …

It certainly seems like they—
that is, business—
are remaining quite upbeat about the outlook, which suggests good things for the labour market and future investment.

The transition in our economy is taking place. Australians and Australian businesses are making that happen every single day, but as a government we need to do the things that back them in to ensure that that transition continues. Microeconomic reform is critical to that task. That is why we brought down our response to the Harper review with the sorts of reforms that previously, under those types of policies, improved GDP by 2½ per cent on their predecessor reforms, following the Hilmer report.

In the building industry, we need to ensure that microeconomic reform is returned as well. Australia has high building costs—some four to five times higher than France, as the estimates are. The Business Council of Australia found that construction costs are now 40 per cent higher than those in the US, let alone what they are in Asia. Construction costs in the past decade grew twice as fast as inflation. There is one reason why we need to re-establish the Australian Building and Construction Commission and the associated Building Code: it assists to ensure that we have proper microeconomic reform and can remove the scourge of corrupt deals and other things that have been, sadly, part of the history of that industry. The reason we have to do it is that it is good for the economy. The reason we have to ensure that this commission and this code is back in place is that it supports jobs and growth in the economy.

The Building Code and the infrastructure that was built when it was in place ensured that, in Victoria for example, the Box Hill Hospital was delivered on time at no extra cost—in fact, it was delivered ahead of schedule. More importantly, prior to the creation of the ABCC, the average number of working days lost to industrial disputes in the construction industry was five times the rate in other industries. Once it was established, that rate fell to just twice—from five times down to just twice.

Ms Burke interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Chisholm will cease interjecting!
Mr MORRISON: It is no surprise, then, that, when it was removed by those opposite, it went up to four times the average days lost as result. It is no surprise, then, that, when the CFMEU wrote to the opposition leader and asked him only one question—‘Will you abolish the ABCC?’—it took him only three days to give them a yes. Gee, they must have been hanging out for that one, Bill!

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer will refer to members by their correct titles.

Ms Burke interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Chisholm will cease interjecting!

Goods and Services Tax

Mr BOWEN (McMahon) (14:14): My question is to the Treasurer. On 2 March last year, the Treasurer dismissed political dissenters in his own ranks by describing those who disagreed with him as ‘a few political bed-wetters carrying on’. Does the Treasurer believe that those who he dismisses in this manner are working to undermine his plan to increase the GST? And does the Treasurer agree that the Australian people have a right to know about his plans to make everything cost more?

Mr Brendan O’Connor interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The first part of the question, like the last one, is not within the standing orders. The Treasurer can address the next two questions that were contained within it on tax, and the member for Gorton will not interject.

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (14:15): Again, the shadow Treasurer wishes to focus on triviality, but I will go to the substance.

Ms Plibersek interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Sydney.

Mr MORRISON: The substance is this: the government is engaged in a genuine, real discussion broadly with the Australian community.

Ms Plibersek interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer will resume his seat. Yesterday I asked a number of members to cease interjecting a number of times, and I warned some on multiple occasions. I am giving fair warning now that those members do not come into question time today with a clean slate. The member for Sydney was asked to cease interjecting five times yesterday and was warned twice. I simply cannot allow members to ignore my repeated warnings to them. If those members—and they know who they are—who were warned yesterday and asked on multiple occasions to stop interjecting persist today there will be no warnings and they will be removed under 94(a). The Treasurer has the call.

Mr MORRISON: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The government are engaged in a genuine discussion with the Australian people and within our own ranks as a government as we work through the very real issues about how you can have a growth-friendly tax system that will support jobs and growth. Part of that process is to work through the issues and that is exactly what the government are doing, intentionally. They are working through those issues. I can make it very clear, as I know the Prime Minister knows and all cabinet knows, that the government have not made a decision on this matter. I have not made any final decision on this matter, nor has the Prime Minister or the cabinet or anyone else. There is an open and
obvious discussion taking place about what is the best way to support jobs and growth through our tax system.

On this side of the House we, of course, would very much like to ensure that the tax burden on Australians who are working and saving and investing is easy—of course we would like that. We would really like to see personal income taxes lower than they are today, but there are only three ways you can do that. First of all, you could fund it from a surplus that you inherited from the previous government. Well, we did not inherit a surplus from the previous government. What we inherited was an absolute mess, so you could not fund changes to personal income tax based on a strong budget position that was left to us by those opposite. Equally you could fund them by strong growth in nominal GDP into the future at the more than 11 per cent which occurred in the eighties, or the well over five per cent which was occurring under previous governments, or you could do it off soaring commodity prices which those opposite experienced while they were in government. But we know the reality of the global circumstances. We are wrestling with the very real issues of how to reduce the burden on Australians who are going to work every day and running small businesses every day, and try to ease the tax burden on them. It is not an easy task. Those opposite are not interested in that task. They just want to tax and spend.

Asylum Seekers: Children

Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (14:18): My question is to Prime Minister about yesterday's High Court decision. The government wants to send children to Nauru, Labor wants to send them to a third country, the Greens want to let them stay. Prime Minister, this is your first big moral test. Do you really believe that child abuse is somehow necessary to stop people dying at sea? Will you promise that no children, including the 37 babies born here and the kids currently in Australian schools, will be deported to Nauru?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:18): I thank the member for Melbourne for his question. The member for Melbourne's party, from time to time, tries to create the impression that it has a monopoly on empathy and a monopoly on morality. It does not. If the government were to follow the policies advocated by the Greens in this regard, the consequence would not simply be tens of thousands of unauthorised arrivals coming to Australia, it would be thousands of deaths at sea.

The policies that the honourable member's party was so supportive of under the previous Labor government resulted in precisely that, a complete collapse of security at the border, deaths at sea, well over 1,000 deaths at sea. They are the ones we know about. We do not know how many. So the honourable member can share his empathy with us, he can share all of that, but he has to recognise that the approach his party has advocated, which was in large part taken up by the previous Labor government, resulted in deaths at sea—women and children, young men, families. That is the consequence of abandoning responsibility at the border.

Let me say to the honourable member: one child in detention is one child too many. Every single one of us is anguished by the prospect, by the reality, of children in detention. The fact is that when our side, the coalition, lost office in 2007 and John Howard's prime ministership came to an end there was not one single child in detention. Within five years—
The SPEAKER: The Prime Minister will resume his seat. The member for Melbourne on a point of order.

Mr Bandt: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There are 46 seconds left and I ask the Prime Minister when the kids are going to be taken—

The SPEAKER: The Prime Minister is completely in order. The member for Melbourne will resume his seat.

Mr Turnbull: Within five years the number had reached 2,000. Since coming back into office the coalition government have stopped the boats and we have reduced the number of children in detention to fewer than 100. Our goal is to reduce that to zero. But the key element in doing so is to ensure that people do not get on people-smugglers' boats and put their lives at risk.

Mr Ewen Jones interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Herbert is warned.

Mr Turnbull: The honourable member has to recognise his responsibility to support our collective effort of the policy, which has broader support across the community, in keeping our borders secure and keeping women and children safe on the seas by ensuring they do not get on leaky boats and that they do not drown at sea. That is what we are achieving.

Taxation

Mr Coleman (Banks) (14:22): My question is to the Minister for Small Business and Assistant Treasurer. Will the minister update the House on what the government is doing to crack down on those who are not paying their fair share of tax?

Ms O'Dwyer (Higgins—Minister for Small Business and Assistant Treasurer) (14:22): I would like to thank the member for Banks for his question. The member for Banks, like so many fair-minded Australians, is rightly angry at the idea that he might have to pay more tax and his constituents might have to pay more tax as a result of someone not paying the tax that they are supposed to pay. It is a real question of fairness. That is why this government has acted to close the loopholes for multinational tax avoidance. That is why we have strengthened the powers of the Australian Taxation Office to enforce the law.

The SPEAKER: The member for Rankin is warned!

Ms O'Dwyer: That is why we have doubled the penalties for large companies, requiring them to pay the tax they have avoided and, on top of that, to pay the same amount again as a penalty. This change that we have made makes Australia one of the toughest countries in the world on multinational tax avoidance.

Opposition members interjecting—

Ms O'Dwyer: Well may they laugh, but it is no laughing matter. Over there on that side, those in Labor voted against the very legislation that allows the tax office to stop companies from artificially structuring themselves, from moving profits from businesses here to those offshore, to low- or no-tax jurisdictions. For all of their big talk on tax, they put their base political interest ahead of our national interest. They sided with those people who are ripping off the Australian taxpayer. They sided with those people who are hiding the money that should be going to Australian schools, to hospitals and to our Defence Force.
Not only have we changed the law to make sure that we have tougher laws in place; we have made sure that the Australian Taxation Office has the powers and the resources to enforce them. The Australian Taxation Office has expanded its international team. It is now larger than it was under Labor, and we are seeing the results. Already the Australian Taxation Office has raised over $400 million in liabilities and, following the introduction of our law—which they opposed—which came into effect on 1 January this year, the Australian Taxation Office has already identified 80 taxpayers as having arrangements in place within the general scope of the law, and a further 300 that they are profiling. The government's crackdown on these multinationals will raise revenue.

I want to emphasise that it is no magic solution to the budget problem that Labor left us with—with all of the debt that they left us with—nor is it a magic solution to Labor's terminal spending problem. We have acted. Those against us have opposed our action and they should hang their heads in shame.

Goods and Services Tax

Mr BOWEN (McMahon) (14:25): My question is to the Treasurer. A coalition MP is reported in The Sydney Morning Herald as saying about an increased GST, 'now is the time to do this'. At a time of global uncertainty, sluggish wages growth and slowing growth in China, is now really the time to hit the Australian economy with a 15 per cent GST; and what impact would rising prices have on demand in our economy?

Mr Nikolic interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Bass will cease interjecting.

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (14:26): As those opposite know, the government has put forward no preferred proposal on the issue of a consumption tax or any other matters. What we have been doing very clearly is engaging with—

Mr Thistlethwaite interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Kingsford Smith will cease interjecting. The member for Hotham is warned!

Mr MORRISON: the Australian people and setting out what some of the challenges are that we need to address. One of those challenges of course is how we can try and ease the burden of those who are working hard out there, being part of the transition of our economy to set up the jobs and the growth that is going to support us for the many years to come in these difficult circumstances. In those difficult circumstances, you have to make calibrated decisions about what are the right things to do with your tax mix.

The government has not come to any settled position on this issue, because we are working through the details of the many things you have to trade off in that process. But I can give you this assurance: when we do make a decision on this, we will make a decision about what is right for the Australian economy, what is the right thing for the country and what is the right thing for the national interest. Then we will pursue that policy to the next election and implement it beyond, if we are given the trust of the Australian people once more. We will do what is right for the Australian economy and we will work through these issues. But what is not right for the Australian economy is what the former Treasurer and the former Prime Minister were saying, which was the policy of those opposite—to tax and spend.
Let's not be unsure about the policy of those opposite to tax and spend. The member for Fraser was asked on Sky News: 'What is the mix of your spending and saving? Is it 80-20?' 'The bulk of it is higher taxes,' said Mr Speers. And the member for Fraser said, 'You're right. It's taxes. You're right to say that the majority comes from tax.' For all their blustering about their savings today, the member for Fraser could not even tell us what the budget and forward estimates savings—or the bigger item, which is taxes—was going to be over four years. He could not even nominate it, but what I can tell you is that it is all tax.

Dr Leigh interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Fraser will not be provoked.

Mr MORRISON: It is all tax, because they are a taxing, spending, borrowing alternative.

Immigration and Border Protection

Mr HOGAN (Page) (14:28): My question is to the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection. Will the minister inform the House why a strong and consistent approach to immigration and border protection is necessary?

Mr DUTTON (Dickson—Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) (14:28): I thank the honourable member for his question. Obviously, all Australians know that the High Court delivered a decision yesterday which sought to clarify the situation in relation to the legality and constitutionality of the offshore processing arrangements, and the government's position was provided with backing. My very strong message to the people smugglers is that we do not want them back in business; we do not want them offering to people in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Vietnam or anywhere else an opportunity to hop on a boat and come to our country.

I would say to all of those people who are vulnerable—and it totals millions of people across the region; as we are seeing in Europe at the moment, there are people who are vulnerable and desperate and would seek to come to a country like ours who are prepared to pay thousands of dollars to get a better economic outcome for their family, which you can completely understand—that the way to Australia by illegal boat is closed. We have been very consistent in that message. And, as the Prime Minister rightly pointed out before, it is very important that the people smugglers, the organised criminals who run these syndicates, hear a clear and consistent message from the government of the day.

When the Labor government headed by Paul Keating was overturned and John Howard came into power, there was a mess to clean up, because Labor was not able to preside over a consistent policy approach then. The Howard government cleaned the mess up. Yes, it is true: perhaps with even good intent, Labor was not able to stand by an honest and decent arrangement that stopped people coming to our country by boat.

I am proud of the fact that we have been able to allow a record number of refugees into our country. In addition to the 13,750 this year, which grows to 18,750 per year over the coming years, there are the 12,000 Syrians that we will seek to bring to this country. Providing that aid and support and a new way of life to those refugees is a dividend of the way in which we have been able to close down the people-smuggling trade.

I have sought from day one in this portfolio to make sure that we can reduce the number of children in detention down to zero, and I intend to get to that point. I can advise the House that the number of children in detention, which was some 8,000 when Labor was in power, is
now down to less than 80. In fact, as of today, that number is at 75. We will work with many people to make sure we can reduce that number down to zero. But now is a time for our country to be united and for the Labor Party to support the government to make sure the people smugglers can hear a consistent message, and that is that we are not going to allow people smugglers to get back into business.

Goods and Services Tax

Ms CHESTERS (Bendigo) (14:31): My question is to the Treasurer. Kay Ross is a disability pensioner from California Gully in my electorate. Kay buys her groceries from lots of different stores and she checks the prices by walking between them the day before her weekly shop. In a recent shop, Kay spent $11.20 on a litre of milk and three loaves of bread. Can the Treasurer tell Kay how much more she will have to pay for bread and milk if he broadens the GST on fresh food?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (14:32): I thank the member for her question. Again, the government has no proposal to do what the member is suggesting. There are many issues that are being canvassed and considered as part of the discussion on tax, and the government has no such proposal. Any issues that might be raised or determined by the government would certainly be put to the Australian people. We would ensure that they would have the opportunity to make a real comparison between those on this side of the House, when it comes to economic management and our plans for jobs and growth and our ability to deliver those plans, and those opposite.

Again, It is a strange occurrence but I agree with former Treasurer and Prime Minister Mr Keating. He is right when he says, 'The penny ought to drop on that side that what we should be doing is cutting spending and that is what the Treasurer has said for some weeks now and, on this point, he is actually right.' The plan of 'tax and spend' is not a plan for jobs and growth, and that is what they are proposing. Let's go over the budget and forward estimates again for the benefit of the member for Fraser. Labor's proposal to increase taxes is $7.6 billion.

Mr Perrett interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Moreton is warned.

Mr MORRISON: Their savings proposals on the 2015-16 budget is $1.25 billion. That is it. But there is $57 billion worth of savings that they will reverse, of new expenditure commitments and savings that we are seeking to move through this parliament. There is $1.2 billion in measures they put forward that they will not pass. There is $5.2 billion in savings and revenue measures that we as a government have put forward that they are now blocking. There is spending that Labor says we must restore from bank savings—that is, savings that have passed and that they wish to restore. That is some $30 billion in extra expenditure. There is $1.1 billion in other budget measures that they say they will not support and savings since the 2015-16 budget which we brought down—some $5.6 billion—that they will not support. And their promises on spending is $13.8 billion, and that is just since the budget. And the savings, which are a minuscule amount of the broader budget changes they are proposing because their revenue measures, their increased taxes, some $7.6 billion—even when you put their higher taxes together with their minuscule savings, they still do not even qualify to cover the promises they have made since just May. We saw them do this in government. They have
learnt absolutely nothing. The penny should drop on that side that 'tax and spend and borrow' does not generate jobs and growth.

Goods and Services Tax

Mr BROADBENT (McMillan) (14:35): My question is to the Prime Minister. Prime Minister, would you outline the importance of tax reform for growth and jobs?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:35): I thank the honourable member for his question. I think it may be helpful if I explain for honourable members some of the complexities in this tax debate. Compared with other countries, Australia has in its revenue mix a very large proportion of income tax levied on both individuals and companies; and, of course, average wage earners are moving into higher tax brackets. Those are issues that need to be addressed. Some economists and, indeed, politicians—including the Labor government, in its 2010 budget, and the shadow Treasurer last year—have argued that cutting company tax would boost investment and real wages and ultimately benefit workers. And there is merit in that contention. At the same time, we need to constrain government expenditure. As the Treasurer has just reminded us, there is around $20 billion of savings held up in the Senate by the Labor Party's refusal to assist in cleaning up the fiscal mess they left us.

The only realistic option for very significant income tax cuts is by changing the tax mix, and that is why a number of people have advocated increasing the GST for the purpose. Of course, there are people in the Labor Party—the South Australian Premier and the New South Wales opposition leader—who have argued that the GST should be increased in order to pay for additional government spending in terms of health and education. Indeed, Paul Keating advocated a 2½ per cent increase to do that. Raising the GST and reducing income taxes—

Mr Mitchell interjecting—

Mr TURNBULL: would mean of course that a person who receives an income tax cut and has more money in his or her pocket will also face a higher cost of living, and those people who are entirely dependent on welfare payments would need to be fully compensated, although their pensions would go up with the CPI. Many of Australians—part pensioners, self-funded retirees—have incomes that either are not taxed or are taxed at very low rates, and they would need to be compensated. But compensation is a complex issue, and honourable members opposite understand that; they addressed that with the compensation for the carbon tax.

Now, any changes to the tax system, from our perspective, have to achieve at least three things. Firstly, they have to drive growth and jobs—that is No. 1. Secondly, they have to be fair—that is absolutely critical. And, thirdly, the complexity associated with them has to be justified in terms of a productivity output. The position of the federal Labor Party, on the other hand, in refusing to participate in this debate, means that we are having a national debate in which the alternative government does not play a part. We are seeking to have a considered discussion on tax reform. It is a very big lever affecting the economy. We are determined to ensure that it works effectively.

Goods and Services Tax

Mr BOWEN (McMahon) (14:38): My question is to the Treasurer. The Sydney Morning Herald today reports that Liberal MPs are worried that the Treasurer has already made up his
mind to increase the GST to 15 per cent. Has the Treasurer made up his mind? When will we see the Treasurer's plan to increase the GST? Or will we never, ever see it—or at least never, ever until after the next election?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (14:39): I refer the member to my earlier answer, where I made it quite clear that the government has not determined its position on this matter; I have not determined my position on this matter. The Prime Minister and the members of the cabinet are yet to consider these matters, because we are working through the very detailed and complex issue that the Prime Minister has I think just set out very well. That is our process. And what I can assure you—

Ms O’Neil interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Hotham has been warned.

Mr MORRISON: is that, as we work through this process and as we move towards the next election—

Mr Dreyfus interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Isaacs is warned.

Mr MORRISON: we will put forward our plan for jobs and growth, to grow our economy, backing the Australian people as we transition from the mining investment boom to a more diversified economy—an innovative economy, an agile economy, an economy that can embrace the challenging future we face. On this side, as a team, that is something we have experience with and is something we have been able to demonstrate.

On the other side we are not seeing that. We are seeing an opposition that has not learned from the mistakes it made in government, such as abolishing the Australian Building and Construction Commission and seeing, as a result of that, productivity in that sector decline and seeing the average number of days lost as a result shoot up again. Now they continue to resist that very important change that will support growth and jobs in the economy. The only thing we can conclude is that those opposite have learned absolutely nothing from their failures in government.

Welfare Reform

Mrs SUDMALIS (Gilmore) (14:40): My question is to the Minister for Social Services. Will the minister update the House on reforms recently announced to achieve fairness and sustainability in Australia's welfare system? Is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Minister for Social Services) (14:41): I thank the member for Gilmore for her question and recognise her ongoing interest in the sustainability of the welfare system. The member for Gilmore recognises that making savings inside the welfare system is the way we pay for new expenditure on items like the NDIS and how we manage to work our way back to surplus. Perhaps a useful place to start in answering the member's question is to note a really quite remarkable fact that I am not certain most Australians would be aware of, and that is that as a government we inherited a situation in which there is, unhappily, a very substantial debt owed to the Commonwealth from inside the welfare system.
At the end of June 2015, there were over one million individual debts, with a collective value of $3.04 billion, owed to the taxpayers of Australia. And, I might say, that figure of in excess of $3 billion does not take into account debts that we have yet to identify. The Minister for Human Services is at the moment going through a very stringent process of identifying previously unknown debts that are owed to the taxpayer. Of course, that debt exists in the context of the fact that, as Mr Keating said recently, we cannot pretend that we can go on spending as though nothing has happened.

As part of the midyear economic review, we announced $2 billion worth of savings initiatives over four years that revolve around recouping this debt in a fair and reasonable way. As I noted, some of those sit within the responsibility of the Minister for Human Services, and they relate to data matching—the data that is given to Centrelink with the data about pay-as-you-go income that is provided to the ATO. Indeed, we are now going to extend that program to information given to the ATO about non-pay-as-you-go income. That will recoup very substantial savings for the taxpayer.

There is also a very important decision to apply to a general interest charge to ex-recipients of social security. These are individuals who were at one time inside the welfare system and have gone out and become employed but have taken with them a debt. At the moment, whilst we have compulsory mechanisms to claw back debt from people who are inside the social security system, these debts for ex-recipients have largely gone unpaid. They represent $870 million held by 270,000 ex-recipients. We are going to apply an interest charge, which will be applied only to those debtors, if they do not enter into time-to-pay arrangements. We anticipate that over four years that will recoup $461 million for the taxpayer. We think this is fair, because if you are inside the welfare system, there are compulsory mechanisms to exact payment; we think it is fair because you do not have to pay the interest if you enter into a time-to-pay arrangement; and we think it is fair because it is money that should not have been paid in the first place.

The catch is that it will require legislation. We have heard how the Labor Party voted against a bill that would recoup moneys owed by multinationals. The question is: will they vote in favour of a bill to recoup this money owed to the taxpayer? (Time expired)

Goods and Services Tax

Mr BOWEN (McMahon) (14:44): My question is to the Treasurer. I refer to reports today that there is 'a tidal wave of concern' amongst his own MPs about his plan to increase the GST.

Government members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for McMahon will resume his seat. Members on my right, particularly the minister for agriculture, will cease interjecting. I need to be able to hear the question. The member for McMahon can begin his question again.

Mr BOWEN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. My question is to the Treasurer. I refer to reports today that there is 'a tidal wave of concern' amongst his own MPs about his plan to increase the GST. Why are government members more concerned about their own jobs at the next election rather than the household budgets of ordinary Australians? Will the Treasurer finally rule out increasing the price of everything by increasing the GST to 15 per cent?
The SPEAKER: Just before I call the Treasurer: the Treasurer can answer the last part of the question. He cannot be expected to answer on behalf of other people with respect to the first part of the question.

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (14:45): Every single member on this side of the House is committed to ensuring that Australia's transition in the economy we experience is done successfully and supports jobs and growth. Every single member on this side of the House knows that we need to ensure that expenditure is under control and taxes are kept as low as possible. And every single member on this side of the House knows that the best way to keep taxes low is to keep expenditure low. That is what this side of the House believes.

What this side of the House believes and has shown season in, season out is that we are committed to the jobs that are in the economy and the growth of those jobs and the growth of our economy. Because when you have a growing economy, when people are going out there and they are working and they are saving and investing—when they are putting their back into it, when they are making the sacrifices and they are trying to improve their own circumstances—we on this side of the House know that we want to back them. We do not want to see them having to pay more and more and more tax on what they are earning, what they are going out there and seeking to earn every day. We need to try and find ways that we can address that.

As I said before, there are three ways you can do it. You can fund it from a surplus, which was not bequeathed to us as it was bequeathed to the previous government by the Howard and Costello government. You can do it that way. You can do it when there are high rates of nominal GDP growth. We know that because of the global circumstances that is not something that is available. Or you could do it by changing the tax mix—but that is not an easy thing to do and there are issues associated with that. So as a sensible, mature, responsible government, we are actively discussing those issues to find out the best way to support jobs and growth and to put it to the Australian people. While we do that, we will keep on with the job of cutting expenditure as a percentage of the economy so we can make room for the private sector businesses to go and innovate and to have the encouragement they have had from the leadership of the Prime Minister and the minister for innovation and the whole team. That is what is giving the Australian people confidence about the future of our economy, particularly at a time when there is such volatility, when there is such uncertainty. And those opposite? Their plan is just to go back to the same old failed way. They saw it fail over those six years, as they pushed the budget over a cliff and sank us into debt and deficit for a generation, it may be, in terms of debt. But we will get about the job as we have. Expenditure as a share of GDP is coming down, and we will continue to pursue that. If those opposite got their chance, they would tax as high as they could so they could spend as high as they could—and it would not even cover it, and so then they would just cover the rest with more and more debt.

Agriculture

Mr BROAD (Mallee) (14:48): My question is to the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources. Will the minister update the House on how strong agricultural export figures are contributing to growth and jobs, not just in rural and regional Australia but right across the nation?
Mr JOYCE (New England—Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources) (14:48): I thank the honourable member for his question. The honourable member has won a Nuffield Scholarship, so he clearly understands how agriculture works. He is also president of the VFF. He is a person who, in his own words, grows a few sheep and has a bit of cropping—he grows a few sheep just like the Prime Minister, who is very proud of the prices that he got just recently.

Mr Turnbull: Very good prices.

Mr JOYCE: But of course the purpose of the question is how agriculture is increasing the job prospects and growth in our nation—of course it is, because the agricultural industry is bringing in real export dollars and is expanding. In fact, we are having record soft commodity prices. The honourable member would be interested to know that in the year ending 30 June 2014 we had a nine per cent growth in rural goods exports and in the following year it was seven per cent growth. In 2014-15, it continued to grow by around seven per cent. In the first half of 2015-16, it was 12.7 per cent. So this is extraordinary growth. This is how we are bringing the money into our nation to assist people across our nation. This is the money that filters right through not just from the seat of Mallee but right down to Collins Street, right around our nation so that we can give that encouragement and show the world that we have the prospect of assisting in their food requirements. We can see it, even in the honourable member’s seat, with almonds. We had a record amount of almonds: $522 million worth of almonds. This is what ABARES predicted would be grown, and a lot of it has been grown by Select Harvests. We see that they are predicting that to go up to $600 million in the current year.

We can see that there is not only that, but we are standing behind the people of Mallee by also assisting with infrastructure. It was with great pleasure that I was down there just recently at John Argiro’s, a table grape grower—we are part of the Sunraysia Modernisation Project; money for it was started by the Prime Minister when he was the water minister—and we started by connecting his farm up to $120 million worth of water infrastructure. All this is part of a program. It shows that we are the government that has the vision. We are the government that has the capabilities. We are the government that is providing the results. And this is definitely the most exciting time to be in the agriculture industry.

Marriage

Ms BUTLER (Griffith) (14:51): My question is to the Prime Minister. Given it is clear that members of the Prime Minister’s own party will not respect the $160 million plebiscite on marriage equality, will the Prime Minister immediately allow the free vote that he used to argue for on the private member’s bill that is presently before the parliament?

Mr Van Manen interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Forde will cease interjecting. The Prime Minister has the call.

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:52): I thank the honourable member for her question. I am not sure what it is about the honourable member’s approach to democracy that she so despises the views of the people that sent her here—

Opposition members interjecting—
Mr TURNBULL: The coalition has resolved on an approach to dealing with the same-sex marriage issue which involves the Australian people being asked for their opinion. I can understand the honourable member complaining about the expense. She is entitled to that view but she cannot question the democracy. What we have here is a direct vote. Every single Australian will have a say. It is a new approach. It has not been a practice in the Australian political system other than in constitutional referendums. It is a new approach, and I grant the honourable member that. It is certainly not the approach that I favoured at the outset. I am a traditionalist. This was a case of democratic innovation. The innovator was out innovating, so there you go. Every Australian will have a say. The honourable member will have one vote. I will have one vote. And each of our respective constituents will have one vote, and we will be able to have our say. I will vote for the plebiscite. I will vote 'yes'. Some of us will vote 'no'.

Ms Rishworth interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Kingston is warned!

Mr TURNBULL: How the Australian people vote, time will tell. But what the honourable member should recognise is that this decision will be owned by the entire Australian people.

Ms Plibersek interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Prime Minister has concluded his answer. The member for Sydney will resume her seat. The member for Bass has the call.

Bass Electorate: Trade

Mr NIKOLIC (Bass) (14:54): My question is to the Prime Minister. During the Prime Minister's recent visit to Launceston we discussed the importance of free trade agreements and the government's $203 million investment in freight equalisation schemes and $60 million investment in Tranche Two irrigation schemes. In advance of the next Joint Commonwealth and Tasmanian Economic Council, can you update Tasmanians on the progress of these investments and Tasmania's trade performance?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:55): The honourable member demonstrates that there has never been a more exciting time to be a Tasmanian. I thank him for his question and I note that there are few more enthusiastic advocates of Tasmania than our three Tasmanian MPs on our side of the House. I was struck by their enthusiasm when I visited the state last October, the enthusiasm of Tasmanians right across the country, their confidence in the economy and their enthusiasm for the opportunities that the big three trade agreements are opening up, thanks to the hard work of the minister for trade.

The honourable member and I inspected some dredging work being done in the Tamar River and we heard about the huge benefits being delivered to the local seafood industry. We met a local fisherman, Karl Krause, who told us that crayfish prices, thanks to the demand from China, had doubled, from $60 to $120 per kilo. We heard how important shipping reform is for Tasmania and we confirmed we remain committed to the reforms that will stimulate coastal shipping and reduce the cost of transportation to the island state.

Tasmanians right across the board are describing their state as 'China's delicatessen', and the latest ABS international trade figures demonstrate that this confidence is well founded. The ABS estimates that the nominal value of overseas goods exports from Tasmania increased to $2.74 billion in 2015, up nearly five per cent. The value of exports to mainland
China from Tasmania increased by over 22 per cent from 2014-15, and 25½ per cent of Tasmania's goods exports go to China.

This is the reality on the ground of the achievements of this government—the free trade agreement with China delivering exports, jobs and growth in Tasmania. In fact, the member highlighted to me that seafood exports alone grew 78.6 per cent compared to the previous year; meat exports by 48.7 per cent; fruit and vegetable exports by 11 per cent; and wood and woodchips by 102.6 per cent—

And it is not just China: from Tasmania to the United States, goods exports grew by over 75 per cent on the previous year to around $212 million, mainly off the back of meat and metals, and goods exports to Taiwan increased by over 26 per cent to around $338 million. A competent, effective, innovative enterprising trade policy, a strong Liberal government and a federal government committed to Tasmania is delivering the results on the ground for all Tasmanians.

Broadband

Mr CLARE (Blaxland) (14:58): My question is to the Prime Minister. Two weeks ago a taped conversation between a journalist and management at the ABC surfaced. It revealed that an ABC article critical of the Prime Minister's second-rate NBN was blocked by management, because they did not want to upset 'the Turnbull camp'. Can the Prime Minister advise the House if he or any members of his current or former office have had any contact with ABC management in relation to stories critical of his second-rate NBN?

Mr Pyne: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This is a question wholly within the confines of the ABC. It has nothing whatsoever to do with the Prime Minister's responsibilities and therefore he cannot possibly answer—

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the House will resume his seat. The member for Watson will resume his seat. Everyone else can resume their seats too, including the member for Ryan. I will ask the Leader of the House to repeat his point of order. I could not hear it through the interjections. If there are interjections people will be leaving under 94(a). The Leader of the House.

Mr Pyne: The question is about internal management practices within the ABC that have been alleged by a former journalist at the ABC. It has nothing whatsoever to do with the responsibilities of the Prime Minister, and I think therefore it should be ruled out of order.

Government members interjecting—

Mr Danby interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members on my right will resume their seats. The member for Melbourne Ports will leave under 94(a).

The member for Melbourne Ports then left the chamber.

Mr Burke: On the point of order, Mr Speaker: the last part of the question goes specifically to the actions of the Prime Minister or his office—it goes quite specifically to that. That is what is being asked. If the question was only internal to another organisation it might be another thing. This is about the actions of the Prime Minister or his office in dealing with the management.
Mr Pyne: Mr Speaker—

Ms MacTiernan: Are you politically interfering with the management of the ABC?

The SPEAKER: The member for Perth will leave under 94(a).

*The member for Perth then left the chamber.*

Mr Pyne: Mr Speaker, further on the point of order, there has been absolutely no suggestion whatsoever that any actions have been taken by the Prime Minister either as Prime Minister or as Minister for Communications. Question time is not an expedition in fishing—it is not a fishing exercise. If the opposition has any evidence to put to the House, that is a different matter—but they cannot simply raise matters on the never-never and expect an answer. It is not within the standing orders.

Mr Burke: Again on the point of order, Mr Speaker: we are allowed quite specifically under standing orders to ask about public affairs. We are able under the standing orders quite specifically to ask about the actions of a minister or his office. This is squarely within the standing orders, and the actions of the Leader of the House in trying to suppress the question demonstrate exactly why it is in the public interest that it be asked.

The SPEAKER: I have listened to the Leader of the House and the member for Watson. The last part of the question I do not think is quite in order. I am going to allow the member for Blaxland to rephrase it.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Sure. My recollection of the question was that it did not ask whether there had been any action; it stated it.

Mr Snowdon interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Lingiari is warned. I will ask the member for Blaxland to read the final part of the question.

Mr CLARE: I am happy to, Mr Speaker. Can the Prime Minister advise the House if he or any member of his current or former office has had any contact with ABC management in relation to stories critical of his second-rate NBN?

The SPEAKER: I am going to allow the question.

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (15:02): I can assure the honourable member for Blaxland that I have on several occasions complained very publicly and openly about the ABC’s coverage of the NBN issue, in particular and most notably in the lead-up to the last election where I felt the ABC’s coverage of the issue was very poor and lacked balance. I said so publicly, and I have said nothing privately that I have not said publicly. My point very simply was this: as we know, in the lead-up to the last election there was a debate—a discussion, if you like—about competing technologies and the proposition that the Labor government presented was that the only acceptable solution was to have a universal fibre to the premises network, which was their plan.

Ms Rishworth interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Kingston.

Mr TURNBULL: We countered and said we can get the project built, the network built, faster and at less cost—
Ms Rishworth: By 2016? How is that going to happen? The ABC was right.

The SPEAKER: The member for Kingston has been warned. This is her final warning.

Mr TURNBULL: We would do that by using a mix of technologies, including using fibre to the node, as has been used in a number of other countries—the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland and others. The debate really focused in large part on these competing technologies. In my view—I was very public about this—the ABC failed in its coverage of the issue because it failed to use its rather extensive international resources to at least go and interview people at British Telecom or Deutsche Telekom or Swisscom and test whether the arguments I was putting as the shadow minister for communications were correct. They declined to do that and as a consequence I feel in that regard the national broadcaster, which I hold in high regard, as I am sure honourable members do, should have done a better job in putting more information about the competing alternatives before the public. As honourable members will recall, we went to some lengths to do that, to raise the level of information and debate on this important choice of technology.

The member's question asks whether I complained about this to the ABC. The answer is that yes I did complain, but I complained publicly. I was very public about it and made this point—

Mr Clare: And privately?

Mr TURNBULL: In any of my discussions with the chief executive I have said exactly the same things privately as I have said publicly—

Mr Brendan O'Connor: You bullied them. You're a bully.

The SPEAKER: The member for Gorton will leave under 94(a).

The member for Gorton then left the chamber.

Mr TURNBULL: In my view it is important that the national broadcaster, wherever it can, seeks to inform the public debate so to ensure that, right or wrong, the contending arguments are well exposed in light of the facts. (Time expired)

Veterans

Mrs PRENTICE (Ryan) (15:05): My question is to the Minister for Veterans Affairs. Minister, as you know, Ryan is home to many service men and women. What is the government doing to support ADF members and help veterans and their families cope with the impacts of PTSD, and, more specifically, will you advise the House what is being done to support the medical professionals who are treating those suffering from PTSD?

Mr ROBERT (Fadden—Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Minister for Human Services and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC) (15:05): I thank the member for Ryan for her question and for her calls for concern for our fighting men and women. The member for Ryan, of course, represents some 6,000 service men and women at Gallipoli Barracks, home of 7th Brigade, and there are some 2,900 veterans in her electorate. Importantly, and for the information of the House, the member for Ryan is also the mother of a veteran. In fact, the last time I caught up with her son I was with the member for Lingiari and we were in the Middle East together. I am led to believe that in four weeks her son will deploy again to the Middle East, so if I can take the liberty, Prime Minister, on behalf of the
House we wish him well. We thank him for his service and we thank the member for Ryan for being the mum of a veteran. It can be a hard road.

The member for Ryan asks an important question on PTSD. There has always been a bipartisan view on this in the House and it is something that respective veterans ministers have worked together on in the past. I thank the member for Lingiari for his work and service during this and the previous government. The government is pretty proud of what we do, especially in non-liability care. A veteran or a serving soldier, sailor, air man or woman who is struggling with issues of mental health can go and seek care and support regardless of causality. The government spends something like $180 million a year on that. The Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service has a superb electronic interface and provides over 80,000 counselling services to veterans, serving men and women and their families each year. You can also google the At Ease portal on the DVA website—just google ‘At Ease’—and up will come a range of online resources. There are four key apps for handheld devices, for both Android and Apple, notably PTSD Coach, High Res, The Right Mix and Operation Life.

You will also find there are a range of resources for doctors. We have just released a range of resources called the PTSD Psychological Interventions Program, which is an online training program that medical professionals can use and take to give them greater information about PTSD and the military experience. The department has developed this in consultation with Flinders University to ensure it is a great learning resource.

Likewise, on Mental Health Day last October we also released the 2015-16 Mental and Social Health Action Plan, which guides our measures for the end of the financial year, and of course the 2015 social health action plan which goes through the strategy for the next five years. But there is more research to be done. We have also funded the health and wellness study as we continue to look into the effects of PTSD and mental health, on not just our serving men and women but also their families. I encourage all members to appraise themselves of the resources available online so if questions are asked at their offices they know where they can push some of our fighting men and women and the veterans to look.

Broadband

Mr CLARE (Blaxland) (15:09): My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer to his previous answer. Given his admission that he complained privately to the ABC, given evidence that the story was dropped because of concerns by the Turnbull camp, and given concerns that the coalition has about bias at the ABC, will he conduct an independent inquiry into this, just like he did about Q&A?

Ms Henderson interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Corangamite will cease interjecting.

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (15:09): My understanding from reading about this in the media, as I am sure the honourable member has done also, is that there was an employment issue between a journalist at the ABC and a manager in which the employee had tape recorded a discussion with his manager. His contentions were rejected by the ABC management. The answer I gave a moment ago was not directed to any particular story of the journalist concerned. I do not recall the article that was apparently the subject of the taped discussion. I simply made the point that, in respect of the ABC’s coverage of the NBN issue—
and this was essentially in the lead-up to the last election, so this predates my being a minister—my view was, and I am entitled to have that view, as we are all entitled to have a view about news reporting, that they could have done a more comprehensive job and taken a more balanced approach in which they made a better effort of explaining the arguments about the competing technologies. That was, if you like, the factual context in the NBN broadband debate at the time: is fibre-to-the-node worthwhile; does it deliver adequate speeds; is fibre-to-the-premises the only way to go? In many respects, the debate has been resolved. The evidence is in. The multitechnology mix that the government is taking has been proven to be correct.

Mr Albanese: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The question did go to the Nick Ross article and his failure to publish, but it also went to Emma Alberici and the fact that her article was published after the election.

The SPEAKER: The member for Grayndler will resume his seat. The Prime Minister is in order.

Mr Turnbull: I am not about to run a commentary on particular articles on the ABC. All of us have had plenty to say about the ABC. I have had plenty to say about the ABC on the ABC, as the honourable member knows. So, yes, I certainly did complain and felt that their coverage could have been more comprehensive, as I described. I think it could have done a better job at informing the Australian people about the technology choices. But, as for the rights and wrongs of Nick Ross, who I think is the journalist the honourable member mentioned, or indeed, Emma Alberici, those are matters between the ABC management and the journalists in question. They are matters for them to resolve through the normal industrial processes. The honourable member should recognise that, in the free and open debate we have, all of us are entitled to express our views about the coverage of issues in the media and all of us should continue to do so. The honourable member's attempt to suggest that somehow there is something untoward in complaining about coverage on the ABC does him a disservice. We are having a free and open discussion here on these big matters and the ABC's coverage is entitled to be a subject of criticism, as are the people on whom it seeks to report.

Small Business

Mrs Wicks (Robertson) (15:13): My question is to the Minister for Small Business and Assistant Treasurer. The President of the Gosford, Erina and coastal chamber of commerce, Ali Vidler, has contacted me about the various compliance, legal, finance and insurance issues that small businesses face. Ali writes that things are never easy for a business owner, and she uses the example of the lack of consistency between state and federal laws. What support is the government providing to help small businesses thrive, innovate and grow?

Ms O’Dwyer (Higgins—Minister for Small Business and Assistant Treasurer) (15:13): I very much thank the member for Robertson for her question on behalf of the president of the chamber of commerce. The member for Robertson, of course, is well-known in this place for being an incredibly strong advocate for small business. In fact, she has some 10,000 small businesses in her electorate and we discuss matters around small business from time to time.

I can assure not only the member for Robertson but the president of the chamber of commerce that we are incredibly focused on creating the right environment for small business to thrive. Only this week we made the announcement—an election commitment—of the
appointment of Kate Carnell as the very first Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman. Kate Carnell is a former small business woman herself, and she will have significant resources and an office to ensure that she can be a concierge for dispute resolution in small business, that she can be an advocate for small business and she can ensure that the regulations and Commonwealth laws are designed to enhance small business.

Speaking of those laws, there is no bigger frustration for small business than red tape and regulation that gets in the way of them conducting their small business. We as a government have got rid of more than $4.5 billion worth of unnecessary red tape and regulation, and, again, only just this week, we introduced into the parliament legislation that will make it easier for those small businesses that want to change their structure to do that without triggering a tax liability. This will allow those small businesses to do, as the member for Robertson has suggested, what we want them to do, which is to innovate, be flexible and be nimble.

We want small business to continue to be the powerhouse in the Australian economy. Small business contributes more than $340 billion to our economy and employs more than 4.5 million Australians. That is why we are making sure we are doing our bit by cutting tax for small business—a 1.5 per cent company tax cut—and that is critical for small business. But we know that 70 per cent of those small businesses are in fact unincorporated entities, and we have for them a five per cent discount on the tax that they are paying. This means that they have more money in their pocket to invest in their small business, and when they invest in their small business they grow their small business, and when they grow their small business they create jobs, and, in creating jobs, we create a stronger economy.

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

DOCUMENTS

Presentation

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House, Minister for Industry and Innovation and Science) (15:16): Documents are tabled in accordance with the list circulated to honourable members earlier today. Full details of the documents will be recorded in the Votes and Proceedings.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Vocational Education and Training

The SPEAKER (15:17): I have received a letter from the honourable member for Cunningham proposing that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely:

The Government failing students in vocational education.

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

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

Ms BIRD (Cunningham) (15:17): It has been a very interesting 24 hours for the vocational education and training sector, and I anticipate a very interesting debate in the chamber today. We have seen in Fairfax media the release of a draft document about the potential for a federal takeover of the vocational education and training sector. This is, I would argue, a
critically important question for the future of Australia, directly relevant to issues that all of us in this chamber have on numerous occasions said we were engaged with—that is: jobs; innovation; growing new industries; transforming existing industries to make them sustainable into the future; making sure that Australians, as the world of work changes as it is disrupted by technology, are capable, with the skills and knowledge needed, to take up the opportunities that are offered. These are real, direct, economic and social questions that go to the heart of some of the major debates we are having in this country about what policies will actually deliver for the future.

Once again, today we have seen that, while the Prime Minister likes to talk about being innovative, he is certainly very agile in the way that he interprets that. There is absolutely no doubt from worldwide evidence over decades that, if you want to drive innovation, if you want to drive jobs growth and if you want to have sustainable transformation in your industries and your economy, the critical factor underpinning that is the quality and reach of your education sector at all levels.

This government has gone out of its way to fail at all levels. We have seen in particular the school sector being gravely disappointed by this government. The Prime Minister got up in question time today, faced with this particularly important question, and gave us another Turnbull lecture on teacher quality.

You do not have to tell us how important teacher quality is. In fact, I am an ex-teacher. I know very well what teacher quality is and how significant it is in the classroom. But I can also tell you: cutting to the bone the funding that you provide to our schools is going to have a pretty dramatic and devastating effect as well. And that is what this government has done: made $30 billion in cuts to schools and abandoned the final two years of Gonski funding, despite their promises before the election.

My colleagues the members for Adelaide and Kingston, in their portfolio areas, and each and every one of us in this room will continue to make the government face up to the fact that they need to deal with the funding issue in the education sector. I will say that, no matter what they do say, we will probably be pretty sceptical about it, given what they said before the last election and what they have actually delivered. But we will not absolve them from addressing the issue of funding in our schools.

What is happening in the post-secondary sector? Is there any good news there?

Ms Rishworth: No!

Ms BIRD: No, not at all. In the university sector, where we need to ensure that we are engaged with making university education accessible and affordable for Australians who are motivated and able to undertake that study, all we have seen is a program from this government that will push university education out of the reach of many ordinary Australians, the potential for $100,000 degrees and the gutting of funding to the university sector. Has this gone away?

Ms Rishworth: No!

Ms Macklin: No!

Ms BIRD: I think they hope it has. I think they hope that people will stop talking about it. The reality is: it is still squarely on the Prime Minister’s agenda. It is another one of those
things. As he said to us the other day, it is one hundred and however many days since he became Prime Minister—

**Ms Macklin:** One hundred and forty-two.

**Mr Hartsuyker:** One hundred and forty-two.

**Ms BIRD:** One hundred and forty-two days—thank you to my colleagues on both sides of the House, eager to make sure I know it is 142 days. And what did he say, 'Well, nothing has changed.' Too right nothing has changed. That university agenda is still on the table, and, again, we will pursue them right up to the election on what that means.

But there has been something new in the last 24 hours. We have now discovered that they want to take on the vocational sector as well. It does not exactly inspire much confidence on this side of the House. But let us be clear, given our assessment of their appalling track record in schools and universities, you would not be surprised if we were pretty critical of this proposition. I am sure the government minister sitting at the table talks quite regularly with his National Party colleagues in New South Wales.

**Ms Macklin:** What did the New South Wales minister say?

**Ms BIRD:** The member for Jagajaga asked me, 'What did the New South Wales Minister for Skills say?' Well, he was very interesting on this matter. Yesterday, before we found out, courtesy of Fairfax Media, that there was this draft proposal for a takeover wandering around through COAG processes, the Minister for Skills in New South Wales very helpfully came out and told us in the media that he thought his federal colleagues were hopeless at running the VET sector and had made an absolute dog's breakfast of getting the VET FEE-HELP issue under control.

The Prime Minister, who wanted to make much of this in his answer in question time today, just skipped a small period of time—two years. Actually, it is a bit over two years now, where we have seen, under their watch, VET FEE-HELP grow from around $700 million in 2013 to around $1.7 billion. We have had three ministers grappling with this issue over that time and failing to actually rein in the problem. This performance, if you like, across three ministers—and I think the whole government needs to take responsibility for it—is not marked down as a fail by us alone. It has also been marked down as a fail by their state colleagues. I cannot imagine anything clearer or more damning. Not only the Minister for Skills in New South Wales but also Tasmanian government basically said, 'Over our dead body. We are not going to let that lot get hold of our TAFE system.' So the reality for this federal conservative government is that they cannot find a friend anywhere for their own performance, let alone expanding that performance to a complete federal takeover of the sector.

Labor is absolutely determined that TAFE will have a strong future in this country. The Prime Minister, being asked directly by the Leader of the Opposition about TAFE and the implications for TAFE in their proposed takeover, did not mention the word 'TAFE' once. That is the track record of this government. They very rarely talk about TAFE as the public provider in the sector.

It is our view that a balanced VET sector is built on the back of a strong and dominant public provider, through TAFE. To deliver that you need to ensure that they are not treated just like any other training provider, because they are not. They have a far greater
responsibility in having a direct capacity to deliver government priorities and directions for ensuring that regional and rural Australia have access to quality, affordable vocational training and education. I think the minister at the table particularly, but also other members opposite, would well understand how important TAFE is in their communities. But they never talk about how they are going to make it sustainable into the future.

In fact, this proposition in this leaked document would be devastating for TAFE. I am not just saying that as an assessment or from an analytical approach. I would invite the minister to look at what happened in Victoria under the conservative government, which completely deregulated the system and took away the base community funding that TAFE used to ensure it could deliver in rural and regional Australia, and TAFE was decimated. The Andrews government is working hard to rebuild it. But I will tell you what: when you destroy it—and you can do that quickly—it takes a hell of a long time to build it up again. (Time expired)

Mr HARTSUYKER (Cowper—Minister for Vocational Education and Skills and Deputy Leader of the House) (15:27): I welcome the opportunity to speak on this matter of public importance on vocational education. At the outset I remind members opposite that it was the Labor Party that put in place a policy without the necessary safeguards to protect taxpayers and students.

I will give them a little bit of a history lesson. In 2009 Labor introduced the VET FEE-HELP program so that students undertaking a diploma or an advanced diploma could access a loan to help with their course fees. On the surface, that seems to be a reasonable proposition. But, unfortunately, when they did that Labor failed to put in place sufficient controls and safeguards to protect students and to protect taxpayers. In typical Labor fashion, when they set up the scheme they did not have an eye to the implementation risks, which is a very important fact.

In 2012 they again failed to think about the risks when they expanded access to the VET FEE-HELP program by removing the credit transfer arrangements between VET providers, and VET providers and universities. Unfortunately, the changes introduced by the former Labor government have undermined confidence in VET and created a situation whereby unscrupulous VET FEE-HELP providers have flourished at the expense of students and taxpayers. As a result of Labor's failure to think ahead, there was a huge surge in enrolments arranged by unscrupulous VET FEE-HELP providers, from 2012 onwards. They preyed on vulnerable people, putting them into courses of dubious quality that they had little prospect of completing. They lured people into courses with offers of laptops, cash payments and shopping vouchers, and tried to claim that the courses were free, or government funded, when we all know that they are not. Labor had the opportunity to fix this mess when complaints started coming into the Australian Skills Quality Authority, but they failed to do so.

Labor have acknowledged it was their failure. Let me remind the House of the mea culpa statement by the shadow minister for higher education, research, innovation and industry from September last year. Senator Carr is quoted in The Age of 18 September. The article states:

Labor Senator Kim Carr said Labor introduced VET FEE-HELP with good intentions but the scheme contains 'fundamental weaknesses' that need to be fixed.

He went on to say that the regulators 'were not given enough power to crack down on rogue operators'—well, that was right. The article continued:
Senator Carr said the Gillard government's removal of a requirement for providers to have credit transfer arrangements in place with higher education providers was a mistake.

In typical Labor fashion, Senator Carr then washed his hands of the problem and is reported as saying:

Although Labor introduced VET FEE-HELP, it is the government's responsibility to restore confidence in the scheme.

We are all too used to cleaning up Labor's mess, and we are doing it.

For the education of those members opposite, I want to run through some of the 23 measures the coalition has put in place to clean up Labor's failures from 2012. Firstly, we acted to enhance consumer protections to lift the standard of behaviour of providers by banning inducements. No longer can providers or their agents offer laptops, gift vouchers, phones and other sweeteners to sign students up to loans. We acted to tighten up the rules around marketing so that students could not be told that the courses they were signing up for were free or government funded. We strengthened the rules around enrolment so that providers have to give students accurate information about the course and their rights and obligations. We banned withdrawal fees so that students could withdraw from a course without being compelled to continue a course of poor quality and without being charged a fee.

We introduced tougher rules around the use of agents and brokers so that training providers are accountable for the actions of their agents. Providers must have a written agreement with any agent they use to market VET courses where VET FEE-HELP is available. We banned providers from being able to use VET FEE-HELP as a hook to get people's attention when cold-calling. Providers must require their agents to identify the VET FEE-HELP provider that a prospective student will be referred to, and the name of the course, and disclose that the agent will receive a commission if the person enrols in the course.

The government acted swiftly to stamp out the behaviours that flourished because of Labor's failure in 2012. Unlike Labor, we do not want people being hassled in shopping centres, outside Centrelink or in the privacy of their homes by unscrupulous providers and their agents. We made providers more accountable for ensuring that students have the capacity to undertake a particular course. We do not want to see people signed up for courses that they have no capacity to complete and then be left with a massive debt. We changed the rules around invoicing so that providers must issue a student with a VET FEE-HELP invoice notice at least 14 days before each census date for a unit of VET study. The census date is the date upon which their debt becomes payable. We put rules in place to ensure students cannot be hit with the entire cost of a course up-front. A provider must determine at least three fee periods for charging purposes for each course to ensure that the student's debt is incurred as they progress through the course. We have included strengthened protections for young people so that a person under the age of 18 must have the documentation signed by a parent or guardian. For all students, we have put in place rules so that a provider must not accept a request for a VET FEE-HELP loan from a student until two days has elapsed since their enrolment. Should a provider not abide by these rules, then a person may apply to the department for the remission of their VET FEE-HELP debt, and, from 1 January 2016, any person who was subject to unacceptable behaviour by a provider will be able to have their loan cancelled. We have sought to address the unsustainable growth in the scheme that was the result of aggressive strategies that were put in place, particularly by agents but by
unscrupulous providers in general. Senator Carr himself has acknowledged the rapid growth in the scheme. In addition to these reforms, we have frozen the scheme at 2015 levels, awaiting a fundamental redesign of VET FEE-HELP, and we will put in place a new system in 2017.

And there is more, I say to the member for Cunningham. We have put in place changes to the legislation to allow payment in arrears on a quarterly basis for certain providers instead of payment in advance. Where there are concerns about the performance of certain providers, payments may be paused for new enrolments. We have also introduced infringement notices and civil penalties for provider breaches of certain requirements. We have introduced new financial and trading history requirements so that only established providers with a genuine track record can enter the scheme.

These are huge changes that we have put in place to address the failures of Labor. They were the ones who failed to put in place the safeguards, but we are fixing this. The coalition is committed to a strong VET sector and to deliver quality training for Australian students that meets the needs of employers. We are investing $6 billion a year—including $1.8 billion through payments to the states and $1.4 billion for our own direct programs—to assist with vocational training. The Commonwealth is investing $831 million to support apprentices though the Australian Apprenticeship Support Network. We are providing incentives to assist people to get into apprenticeships.

We are about supporting the VET sector. We understand the importance of having a high-quality VET sector that meets the needs of students and prepares those students not only for the jobs of today but also for the jobs of tomorrow—a system that can meet the needs of older workers who are seeking to transition from one career into another or perhaps to update their skills so that they can stay in the workforce for longer.

Labor have no funded plans for VET. We heard their excuse for a policy on education this week. It is nothing more than a $37 billion unfunded thought bubble which was put in place to protect the Leader of the Opposition's hide. We are about supporting VET. We are about cleaning up Labor's mess. It is a shame Labor took so long to realise that their own policies were a total failure.

Ms OWENS (Parramatta) (15:37): The only explanation I can give for the minister's speech is that he slept through the last 2½ years. He has been in government for 2½ years. When they came to government, the figure for VET FEE-HELP for 2013, which was our last year—a partial year—of government, was around $700 million. The next year, in 2014, it was $1.6 billion. It grew from $800 million to $1.6 billion and they slept through it. It was estimated to reach $4 billion in 2015 and they still slept. They slept through those years, and now the minister gets up—2½ years into government; 2½ years after whatever it was that Labor caused. They let this grow and it is our fault somehow. It grew from $800 million to an estimated $4 billion on their 2½ year watch and they slept through it. That is the only explanation I can give for that.

Now they are about to drag TAFE, one of our finest institutions, into the mess that they have presided over in the last 2½ years. They have presided over the growth of an extraordinarily shonky system in VET education and now they are going to drag TAFE into it as well. If there is anything you can say about today it is that we have seen proof, yet again, of the ocean of difference between Labor in education and the Liberal Party in education. We
have seen the Liberal Party, when they were elected, walk away from their commitment to schools and cut $30 billion from our children's future. They reconfirmed over Christmas that that remains. Then there were the $100,000 degrees—they are still on the table. Now we learn that the one remaining element, TAFE, one of our great institutions—even though it has come under extraordinary pressure in the last few years, because of Liberal cuts—is coming under attack again. It is the envy of our neighbours to the north; they look to TAFE as an example of how to train for vocational education.

We have a Prime Minister who talks about jobs. He talks a lot about jobs, yet he decimates the very infrastructure that this country needs to make it possible for our people to participate in the modern workforce. He rips away at our schools. He rips away at our universities. He rips away at the capacity of people to participate in the workforce by engaging in the development of their skills. What are they actually going to do? According to the secret plans that were leaked this morning—there are a lot of secrets out of there after 2½ years, and we are finally hearing of some of their plans—their plan is to move TAFE out of the states and into the federal system, and then open it up to the same kind of competitive process that we see in the VET system. We are seeing absolute disregard for one of our great institutions. Having watched this government preside over the extraordinary rise in appalling behaviour in the VET scheme, this is not a government that you would trust with something as extraordinary as our TAFE. This is a Prime Minister who says one thing when it comes to jobs, but, when it comes to the reality of improving people's capacity to get jobs, he does something completely different.

They have been in government for 2½ years, and in that time I have seen some extraordinarily appalling examples of exploitation of the VET system in Parramatta. We have a company in Parramatta known as Unique International College—it is a couple of rooms upstairs of the Silly Willys $2 Man shop in Granville—which finally came under scrutiny late last year. Their registration was cancelled in October after they received $42 million in Commonwealth funding, despite only 2.4 per cent of its 800 students actually graduating. This was another of those colleges on this government's watch, while they slept through the whole VET debacle, that went out into the streets and enrolled people who could not speak English, went to places where people who could not speak English gathered—people who could not even fill in the forms and did not know what they were signing up for—and signed them up to $20,000 diplomas which did not exist. This is what we have had in this VET system. This is why we have had VET FEE-HELP ballooning from $800 million under us to somewhere between $1.8 billion and $4 billion over the last year. This is extraordinary incompetence. You would not let this lot near TAFE in a fit.

Mr WHITELEY (Braddon—Government Whip) (15:42): What an afternoon it is going to be. A conga line of tired voices, a bucketful of crocodile tears—here we go again. A long line-up of people who step up to the plate with no idea of the condition that they have left this country in. They have just wiped it from their memories like some sort of formatting of a disk. They have formatted the disk and there is nothing left. Well, in the words of Labor senator, Kim Carr, ‘Labor introduced VET FEE-HELP with good intentions, but the scheme contains fundamental weaknesses.’ He says they need to be fixed. He says they had good intentions, but that it needs to be fixed—and that is what we are doing, because it is an absolute mess.

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CHAMBER
The reality here is that this government is about outcomes. Outcomes are important to us, and, to get the best outcomes, all options to deliver those outcomes must be on the table for discussion. As the minister has said, that is what he is doing. We have identified the problem. We have identified that the Labor government set up a system that left the door open to dodgy dealers, to easy money and to operators who are freeloaders sponging off the taxes of hardworking Australians, and we are about fixing it. The minister is about consultation. He is out and about consulting. As far as anyone being asleep over the last 2½ years, can I just say that it is fairly difficult to stay asleep when you are living through a nightmare. That is what we inherited from the Labor government.

There are lots of issues in amongst the problems of the VET sector. It will take time to fix them, but we have gone about that already. We have tightened the rules around marketing and enrolment practices that the previous speaker mentioned. They are the very enrolment and marketing practices that were put in and permitted through legislation initiated by the previous Labor government. We have made providers more accountable for the actions of their agents and put limits on cold canvassing, which has been spoken of, so that people cannot be hassled in their home, at shopping centres, or outside Centrelink.

The Labor Party come to the microphone, or the podium, very regularly with the whole—what shall I say—premise of their debate that this is all of our doing. It is not. The cleaning up of the mess will be of our doing, but this started through legislation that was put in place by the Labor government. We are funding over $6 billion in the VET sector, that is $6,000 million every year. That is a lot of money. It is a lot of taxpayers’ money going to a good cause, but the government does not have an infinite bucket of money. There are changes going on around this sector, there is no question about that. We are investing more than $6 billion in it.

I cannot leave this debate without taking up some of the other matters that were raised by the previous two speakers from the opposition. They took this debate outside the VET sector and talked about university cuts. Let’s just, for everybody, again put the record straight. As we entered office in 2013 we had to pick up the mess from the Labor government’s cut of billions of dollars from higher education funding. We had to fix school funding for the states because at least three states had been gutted by the last-minute cosy deal that the Labor Party tried to get across the line.

Mr Husic interjecting—

Mr WHITELEY: Yes, that is true, and we had to clean up that mess. You go and ask the education ministers in those three states. The fact of the matter is, there are no cuts, there are only increases from this government when it comes to the public funding of schools. You cannot cut funding that was never there. You continue to deceive the Australian people.

Mr THISTLETHWAITE (Kingsford Smith) (15:47): The abysmal approach of the Abbott-Turnbull governments to vocational education and training is summed up by two statistics. Last year, in September, the National Centre for Vocational Education Research published their annual report on the number of people commencing apprenticeships and completing training in Australia. The report demonstrates that, compared with the previous 12-month period, apprenticeship and traineeship commencements between March 2014 and March 2015 decreased by 19.8 per cent in Australia. That is almost a 20 per cent reduction in the number of people commencing apprenticeships in Australia on this government’s watch.
Over the same period apprenticeship and traineeship completions also dropped by an alarming 19.4 per cent. The most damaging aspect of this report is the fact that the National Centre for Vocational Education Research predict that this decline will go even further into the future because of this government's approach to vocational education and training.

This government is presiding over an economy that is in decline, with lower growth, worsening terms of trade and higher unemployment than when it came to office. High-skill jobs are diminishing, particularly in manufacturing, and we have skills shortages in a number of important sectors throughout the country. There is also a lack of domestic workers to fill important trades in our community. What is the response of this government to that crisis in our vocational education and training sector? Its approach is just to import foreign workers on 457 visas. Instead of investing in training our domestic workers the government will just import them all on 457 visas. It is hell-bent on deregulating the vocational education and training system in Australia to let the market determine who gets apprenticeships and traineeships and whether or not people can afford to complete them. It is hell-bent on removing vocational education and apprenticeship opportunities for kids by cancelling the Trade Training Centres program that was so successful in Australia.

I want to concentrate on that particular program because I think it perfectly sums up this government's approach to vocational education and training. The Trade Training Centres program was, of course, an initiative of the former Labor government. Through this initiative high school students got the opportunity to begin a trade whilst still at school. They could finish year 12, having completed the first year of their apprenticeship, on a pathway to completing their trade by the time they turned 19 or 20 years old. I am fortunate to have one of these Trade Training Centres in my electorate at Champagnat Catholic College. It offers students the opportunity to begin an automotive, a hospitality or a construction trade while they are still at school. Since the Trade Training Centre has been operating—guess what?—enrolments in the school have gone through the roof, to the point that the school is now knocking back applications. Parents want their kids to get a good opportunity, a decent vocational education and a decent job.

Investing in apprenticeships pays dividends. The Australian Jobs report of 2015 shows that 85½ per cent of apprenticeships and trainees are employed six months after they complete their apprenticeship. That compares with 77.6 per cent of VET graduates generally and 68.1 per cent of bachelor degree graduates. So by investing in apprenticeships you improve the skills base of the country, you improve productivity and you invest in growth in our economy. What is the approach of the government? They are going to remove those opportunities for kids to start an apprenticeship at school. Can you believe it? They have cancelled the Trade Training Centres program. There are no more Trade Training Centres at any schools throughout the country under this government because they do not want to invest in vocational education and provide those opportunities for our kids. They are also hell-bent on deregulating the system. This week we have seen the approach of the government in trying to take over vocational education and training and completely deregulate it. And this is what John Barilaro, the New South Wales Minister for Skills, had to say about that: 'I have little confidence that they could run a national vocational education and training sector that actually meets the needs of students and industries and delivers in a way that makes sure that it is driven on quality, not price.' I could not have said it better myself. This mob are about price,
deregulation and making students pay more; they are not about quality in vocational education at all. *(Time expired)*

**Mr WILLIAMS** (Hindmarsh) (15:52): It is interesting that the member for Kingsford Smith decided to pull out the stats book, because he did not turn the page and reflect on Labor’s six years and what happened to completion rates. He is welcome to come back to the chamber and show us some decent statistics that give the full picture, because we all know that completion rates have been a challenge and we are trying to address that.

Let’s have a look at what TAFE SA have achieved in South Australia as one example. I want to quote Tony Sutherland, who is the South Australian member of the National TAFE Council Executive, on completion rates. Before I do that, let’s remember that TAFE is controlled at a state level, and the member for Wakefield knows this. In South Australia, it is the Labor state government and, in Victoria, it is the Victorian Labor government that is in control of TAFE in that jurisdiction.

What they say about South Australia is that, in reality, it is not a success story. The dismal 37 per cent completion rate in South Australia and the last changes to their policy have seen a downturn in student enrolments that has led to TAFE SA undertaking major business reviews and a likely loss of another 50 FTE teaching staff. These are your colleagues, Member for Kingsford Smith, in South Australia and Victoria. You should not be coming into the chamber and lecturing us. Speak to your own people. Speak to your own ministers in those jurisdictions and get them—

*Mr Thistlethwaite interjecting*—

**Mr WILLIAMS:** Again, that is only half of the story. We do not read half the book, Member for Kingsford Smith. Read the whole book today! In terms of—

*Mr Champion interjecting*—

**Mr WILLIAMS:** I do take your advice, Member for Wakefield, but let’s try and talk about TAFE as a system. The member for Cunningham will recognise that TAFE is a valuable asset, because she was on an employment and education committee with me last year that reported on TAFE. Let me quote from that summary report, which said Australia’s TAFE system:

… is a unique Australian asset and one which should be protected.

We value TAFE and the important role it has in the community, and that is why we will continue to support TAFE in whatever way we can.

We also said in that report that we should address loopholes which allow unscrupulous business practices in the competitive training market. We have already heard from the assistant minister in this space about addressing the unscrupulous practices of private training providers who have been ripping off students and not delivering outcomes—not making sure that there are sufficient completion rates.

In terms of what the government is doing, I want to jump to the Industry Skills Fund, because this is a valuable initiative that assists companies in upgrading the skills of their employees. Again, the member for Wakefield will be most interested in what is happening in South Australia in particular. Let me go through a few examples: MIMP computer cable enrichment—$20,000; Torque Control Specialists in Edwardstown—$12,000; and Zonge Engineering and Normet, which both received substantial sums. These companies are
involved in the mining sector, they are suppliers and they are well positioned to take advantage of the ups and downs there may be in resources, but there is also going to be demand for the resources sector. With the training, which is supported by the government, they will be in a good place to go forward and take advantage of that opportunity in the future.

For future opportunities, we would all—or those who saw the media today—have seen the AFR's report on the results for education in terms of exports. Again the figures were impressive: a 13 per cent increase, making education a $20 billion export industry. We all know it has been improving and is our third-largest export provider. TAFE and the vocational education system are important parts of that. I know there are some great things being done by TAFE around Australia, whether it be at Box Hill or in Asia and at other TAFEs, and I think this is where the future lies for opportunities to sell our services to Asia in the best way possible.

On the role of industry, we know that in South Australia companies like Redcar or ASC have been very engaged with TAFE in getting some great results, so TAFE are on the right track. The government is supporting TAFE where they need to. We just wish our Labor colleagues in some jurisdictions could be more diligent and effective in what they do with running programs that produce better outcomes than what they are doing. But that is up to our local members, like the member for Wakefield, to take control of and get some outcomes for once in his life.

Mr CHAMPION (Wakefield) (15:57): Well, every word from the current member for Hindmarsh is precious, because he will not be here for long. He will not be long in this place—Steve Georganas is out there doorknocking as we speak, waiting to return to his rightful place in this chamber as the member for Hindmarsh. So every word we hear from the current member for Hindmarsh, however ill-informed, is precious.

Mr Ruddock: I have seen many come and go. Don't get too overconfident!

Mr CHAMPION: I am being warned by the Father of the House. As he says, many come and go. I am well aware of that, but I think this government of bed-wetters will see more go than most, with all due respect to the Father of the House—I wish him luck in his preselection; I have been reading about it in the paper. I hope Julian Lesser is listening to this. I am sure he is an avid listener to the goings on in this House and has been for many years, as I understand. He has had many years of waiting there in the Liberal Party branches. But I am not talking about education, which I should be. I do not really want to talk about the preselection or the election chances of those opposite.

If you cut $30 billion out of education and try and foist $100,000 degrees on people, if you cut $2 billion out of skills and if you cut a billion dollars out of apprenticeships, do you know what happens? People do not like it. What we have had in education is ignorance by Mr Abbott, ignorance by the member for—what is he the member for? I cannot remember. He is staying in parliament to improve the bus routes of Manly or something, apparently. We have had ignorance from Mr Abbott followed by neglect by Mr Turnbull, who has been in power for 142 days and has come out with one policy—one policy!

And we have got two of the plotters here, sitting with rather smug smiles on their faces. They are the winners out of all of this, of course. They were plotting out there in Queanbeyan
or somewhere. I cannot quite remember where. Some of them were promoted—not all of them. We have replaced a prime minister, a treasurer, a defence minister, an industry minister and a communications minister—the majority of the National Security Committee of cabinet—and we have had one policy! On everything else, we have had just inaction. There is nothing going on.

Mr Hawke: It must be very frustrating for you.

Mr Champion: The assistant minister says it must be very frustrating. It is frustrating for me but it is more frustrating for our teachers, students and apprentices.

Mr Williams: Did you get rid of Gail Gago? It was a good move!

Mr Champion: That is the strangest interjection yet, but I will take it. I am not responsible for the goings-on in the South Australian government. I would have thought I had made that clear. Those opposite talk about government policy and the VET sector. What has happened with debt in the VET sector? It started at $699 million, it has got to $1.7 billion and it is now projected to rise to $4 billion. Bizarrely, this government—

Government members interjecting—

Mr Champion: Well, student loans through debt. We know that there have been private providers out there treating this like it is a blank cheque for people to rack up huge debts to the Commonwealth. This is the greatest fraud on the Commonwealth in a very long time. And what are we seeing from those opposite? Inaction—because they are so obscenely interested in their own internal affairs. So rather than meeting out in Queanbeyan about VET education, rather than talking about any public policy matter out there in Queanbeyan, what they were talking about was themselves, their own arrangements. And we know now that their latest idea is to go after TAFE. So to deal with private providers they have, bizarrely, gone after the state TAFEs. It is bizarre. It is what we have come to expect from those opposite. When they were in opposition they lectured us about many things. But what we have had from them in government is ignorance under Abbott, followed by neglect under Turnbull. That is the reality. One should understand this: this government of bed wetters, of plotters, of inaction should not be trusted with public policy and should not be trusted with the treasury bench of this country.

Ms Marino (Forrest—Chief Government Whip) (16:02): That is a very interesting comment coming from the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd crew! Talk about plotters—you take the cake!

The provision of vocational education and training is a key issue in Western Australia as we transition from the mining construction boom to a more diversified economy over time. In fact, given the financial turnaround we have experienced in Western Australia, it is in my view probably more important in the west than anywhere else in the nation at this time. It is only by diversifying that Western Australia will once again flourish. That is not to suggest that mining does not and will not play an enormous and vital role. It does, and it will continue to do so. It is the bedrock of Western Australia. But we certainly need future growth that will deliver the jobs of tomorrow, and it will come from other sectors as well.

I heard an interesting comment this morning that in 2016 the value of agricultural exports was greater than the value of coal exports. That is why the coalition's National Science and Innovation Program is so vital—and the Prime Minister and the minister should be
congratulated. Delivering the jobs of tomorrow requires a vision for tomorrow, and it is a vision that the country is getting from the government today.

However, this vision has to be matched by fiscal responsibility. A responsible government cannot throw money away or send the country into multigenerational debt to buy election lollies. A responsible government would, as this government is doing, invest more than $6 billion every year in the VET sector through funding and concessional loans, including $1.8 billion in payments to the states and territories and $1.4 billion on programs to support apprentices, literacy, numeracy and the VET sector more broadly. And a responsible coalition government is doing exactly that.

In relation to TAFE administration in Western Australia, it is the Western Australian government that manages TAFE, not the Commonwealth. In Western Australia, the state government is currently reviewing TAFE administrative arrangements, as is right and proper. I will be very interested to see the outcome, particularly in relation to my good and high-performing South West Institute of Technology in Bunbury.

It is also essential to comment on the explosion of vocational education providers in Australia resulting from the changes introduced by Labor. We should not forget that the changes were introduced by Labor. Members will no doubt remember the explosion in the number of pink batt installers when Labor announced their ill-fated program. Well, Labor's redesign of VET FEE-HELP opened a similar floodgate and has experienced the same quality control disaster.

We the coalition government had to move to correct this. We have taken many steps to stop the dodgy behaviour allowed and facilitated by Labor's poor design of the VET FEE-HELP system. We have tightened the rules around marketing and enrolment practices so that providers cannot pass off VFH loans as 'free', when clearly they are not. We have made providers more accountable for the actions of their agents and put limits on cold canvassing so that people cannot be hassled in their home, at shopping centres or outside Centrelink. We toughened the rules around enrolments so that students cannot be pressured to sign up for course they cannot complete or actually do not want to do at all. And we made it easier for a person who has been subjected to unacceptable behaviour by a provider to have their student debt cancelled and to have the provider pay the cost. For students under 18 years of age it means that a provider can no longer accept a VFH loan request form unless a parent or guardian has co-signed the form. We have introduced new rules to deal with poor performance by providers, including moving providers to payment in arrears and/or pausing payments for new enrolments.

A healthy, vibrant VET sector is essential to the development of the state of Western Australia and the nation. It is far too important to allow the Labor Party to mess it up even further or turn it into just another of their political tools.

Ms CHESTERS (Bendigo) (16:07): Not one person opposite has dared to even address the issue that we have raised here on this side, and that is the leaked COAG document exposing the fact that this government wants to take over TAFE. They keep talking about the great things they think they have done, and we will get to that in a moment. But not one speaker has actually commented on the fact that one of their own mates from New South Wales, a Lib, has leaked and gone public with the fact that this government wants to take over TAFE. And why do they want to take over TAFE? They are trying to cover up the fact that
under their watch there has been an explosion in the shonky sharks and dodgy operators in TAFE. Under their watch, VET FEE-HELP has gone from having about $700 million in debt to having $1.7 billion in debt—in 12 months.

Rather than getting real on cleaning up the sector, this government has said: 'Fine; we'll take it over. That way we can bury what's actually going on. Because we have a track record in doing that, we won't have to confront the states and talk about TAFE. We won't have to talk about funding.' They are also not talking about the billions of dollars of cuts—$2 billion worth of cuts from the skills portfolio and $1 billion cut from apprenticeship support. That is one way to silence the states: take it completely off them. Well, the states are not buying it and the Australian people are not buying it, because if there is one thing the Australian people really do care about—and the Victorian Liberals learnt it the hard way—it is their TAFEs.

In Bendigo, in regional areas, when the former Liberal government in Victoria took the axe to TAFE and cut funding, they said, 'We're all going to be equal.' Vocational providers, whether public or private, were to be treated equally and funded equally. But what we saw was a collapse of the Victorian TAFE system, because the only providers that will deliver the skills needed in the regions are the public providers. But under the former, Liberal, government's model, you had to have X number of students and the course had to break even for the TAFE to be able to afford it. So, in Victoria we saw course fees going up, students dropping out, people being sacked and TAFEs closing. That is what happens under the private model that this government is proposing that the states adopt.

Learn from Victoria's mistake; learn from the Victorian Liberals: it does not work. We need a public education system in this country, a public TAFE system, to ensure that we have the skills we need today and in the future. When we are delivering TAFE in this country we are saying to young people, when we fund it properly, 'There will be an apprenticeship program for you, if you want to work in the trades; there will be a decent hairdressing apprenticeship for you, if you want to have a career in that field.' But currently our students do not know whether they are signing up for a course that is legit. This government has confused that by cutting so much funding from the sector. And rather than getting serious about restoring funding to the public sector, they are saying, 'We'll just take it over and leave it up to the market.' That is so classic of the Liberals: 'leave it up to the market'.

We know what happens when you leave it up to the market, because of what happened in Victoria when their mates were in charge there. Since the Labor government got elected they have stepped in and actually saved the Bendigo TAFE. They have handed them a lifeline. They advanced public funding to help save that public institution. There is a long way to go for the Bendigo TAFE. They were forced to merge with Kangan Batman to try to keep some of their campuses and courses open—$320 million in an advance payment to try to save Bendigo TAFE. And they are not the only one. TAFE after TAFE in Victoria has been saved, because the Victorian people said, 'We do not like the Liberals' plan when it comes to vocational education, when it comes to higher education.' The same will happen at the federal level.

This government, if it is serious about vocational education, will put the money back. They will not leave it up to the market. They will not continue to encourage private enterprise to get involved in TAFE. The fact is that people expect a strong, robust, vibrant TAFE sector that partners with industry. Our young people today deserve an opportunity to have a good career,
good skills and an education that can deliver them. The apprenticeship system today is not
even a shadow of what it used to be. Young people today do not have access to the
apprenticeship opportunities of the past. This government needs to drop this plan, come clean
and tell the truth about its agenda for vocational education.

Mr HASTIE (Canning) (16:12): As the Prime Minister said today during question time
and many times before, there has never been a more exciting time to be an Australian.
Conversely, there has never been a dullest time to be a member of the Australian Labor Party.
I had hoped that as you emerged from the Shorten wasteland of 2015, completely bereft of
ideas, you would front up with something other than what you have offered us today. What is
your policy?

Mr Conroy: We've announced the policy.

Mr HASTIE: Do you have one? I do not think so, and I am sure that if you did it would
not be worth reading for either pleasure or instruction. Instead, it seems that you guys are
trapped in your own version of *Groundhog Day*, except, unlike the film, in which Bill Murray
adapts and grows better each day, you guys seem to be travelling along the same plane of
mediocrity.

So, today, when this question was posed—how is the government failing in vocational
education?—I honestly thought you were being ironic, reflecting on the previous six years
under the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd governments. But I will reframe it for the purposes of this MPI,
and I will ask the question: how has the government been helping students in vocational
education? This question is quite important to me in Canning, as I have the second-
highest number of male tradesmen in the country. I also have the third-highest number of cert III and
IV holders in Australia. I have a lot of industry. I have agriculture. I have mining. I have fruit
growing, among other industries. So vocational training is an important part of Canning.

My predecessor Don Randall was very proud back in February 2014—I have the local
news article here, from Fairfax, in fact, the *Mandurah Mail*—when he talked about funding
for the Coodanup Community College. It has been built. It is situated in the heart of
Mandurah, which is in the heart of Canning. The centre caters for students from Coodanup,
Halls Head Community College, John Tonkin College, Mandurah Catholic College and
others. What we are seeing here is coalition policy. Back then $209 million in funding was
promised, and we have seen that come to fruition in the Coodanup Community College.

Those opposite asked about the government and what we are doing in vocational
education. The facts speak for themselves. The government has invested more than $6 billion
in the vocational education training sector through funding and concessional loans. This
includes $1.8 billion in payments to the states and territories and $1.4 billion that we spend on
programs to support apprentices, language, literacy and numeracy and the VET sector more
broadly. Importantly, we have the Australian Apprenticeship Support Network in which the
electorate of Canning has two associations. We have contributed $831 million to that
program. We have also given $433 million to help people build language and literacy through
AMEP and the SEE program and, more recently, the Industry Skills Fund, where we have
given $80 million to help industry with training, which is a very important part of our VET
program.
When you have sound policy the incentives embedded in those policies drive behaviour. So what we have seen is 3.9 million people participate in the VET sector in Australia last year. People are voting with their feet. People are enrolling in a broad range of VET courses at various stages of their lives. The project that this government has inherited has been one of reform, after the six years of waste that we experienced under the Labor government—and that really goes to the heart of the question. We saw a lot of bad policy over the Labor years—my colleague the member for Forrest mentioned the pink batts program. The VET FEE-HELP program is just one permutation of the pink batts program. It has the same DNA: bad spending, which encourages bad behaviour. So we have introduced a range of the reforms to stamp out unscrupulous behaviour and enhance protections for students and taxpayers. This year we are helping to put the VET FEE-HELP scheme onto a more sustainable footing for the future, with reasonable, sensible funding that will grow the economy, protect Australians and look after Australians into the future, without saddling them with a huge debt.

**BILLS**

**Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Amendment Bill 2015**

**Amending Acts 1990 to 1999 Repeal Bill 2015**

**Statute Law Revision Bill (No. 3) 2015**

Message received from the Senate returning the bills without amendment or request.

**COMMITTEES**

**Infrastructure, Transport and Cities Committee**

**Membership**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott) (16:18): Mr Speaker has received advice from the Chief Government Whip nominating changes to the membership of the Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport and Cities.

Dr HENDY (Eden-Monaro—Assistant Minister for Productivity) (16:18): by leave—I move:

That:

(1) Ms Marino be discharged from the Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport and Cities and that, in her place, Mr Hastie be appointed a member of the committee; and

(2) Ms Marino be appointed a supplementary member of the Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport and Cities for the purpose of the committee’s inquiry into the role of Smart ICT in the design and planning of infrastructure.

Question agreed to.

**BILLS**

**Social Services Legislation Amendment (Budget Repair) Bill 2015**

Second Reading

Debate resumed on the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.
Mr CRAIG KELLY (Hughes) (16:19): Mr Deputy Speaker Scott, I am pleased to speak in continuation and I thank you for taking the chair. The key words in the title of this legislation are ‘budget repair’. As I was saying before question time, we are in desperate need in this country to repair the budget. Since Labor took office back in 2007, we have seen this country continue to borrow $100 million, on average, every single day of the year. What that means is that we are borrowing to sustain government expenditure. We love to teach the concept of sustainability in schools, but borrowing $100 million per day is simply unsustainable. When I listen to contributions from the members of the Labor Party, I know they do not understand what this actually means and the damage that they are doing to this nation by continuing to block measures of budget repair.

What happens when the budget is in deficit is that we fund it by writing out an IOU. We simply sell government bonds, which is no different to writing on a piece of paper 'I owe you'. We sell those government bonds. That money then comes into the federal Treasury and that is what we use to pay our way. But those government bonds have an interest component that we must pay. This year it is close to $14 billion that we have to find from the taxpayers of this nation just to pay the interest. As I said before, that works out, in this 15-minute contribution, close to $300,000 that has to be taken from the hardworking Australians out there just to pay the interest on government debt. That goes on every 15 minutes of the day, every day of the week, every week of the month and every month of the year, until we start paying down that government debt. Yet we cannot even bring the budget back to surplus, even if, on the figures that I have quoted, we had some cooperation from the Labor Party and the Greens to get these modest cuts through and heading us back in a trajectory to get that budget back in balance.

The Treasurer, my good colleague, the member for Cook, noted during question time the comments of the former Treasurer, Paul Keating. It is very rare that I would come into this chamber and quote Keating, and say that the members of the opposition should listen to him, but I hope today they have. I quote him from this morning's radio on 2GB. He talked about how we cannot continue to borrow money we do not have. He said:

The Treasurer—
referring to the member for Cook—
has got to sit down and go through, line by line, every item of social expenditure—indeed every item of expenditure …

That is what we are doing in this bill.

Keating also said:
When Commonwealth revenue has been so affected, the penny ought to drop that what we should be doing is cutting spending.

I would hope that some time very soon the penny drops for those members of the opposition and they realise that they cannot come in here and whine, whine and moan about this government trying to do the right thing for this nation by cutting expenditure. It is not an easy task to take something away. To cut expenditure is a hard job. It is unpopular but it is a job that must be done for the future of our nation. And it does this opposition no credit—in fact, it is disgraceful—that they come in and whine, carp and whine about every cent of revenue that we try to save so that we can avoid borrowing that money from overseas.
That is what we are doing. Most of the money we are borrowing to finance our ongoing expenditure comes from sources overseas. Those who like to talk up the republic think Australia should have more control of its nation, yet at the same time they are getting us deeper into debt to foreigners. We cannot continue this way, and that is why the very modest measures in this bill should be supported.

My other close neighbour, the member for Fowler, talked about the Vietnamese community—a wonderful community that makes up part of my electorate, and how they would be unfairly affected by this. I would just like to go through what the provisions will be after this bill is in place. Pensions will still be portable. That means: if you qualify for the aged pension, you can travel offshore, go on holidays, visit relatives or go on a trip and your pension will go with you. You will be paid the full Australian pension for six weeks without any questions asked. After six weeks, there is a slight reduction, depending on how many years you have been a resident in Australia. So anyone that migrated from Vietnam in 1981 or before gets the full Australian pension, portable and paid into Vietnam for as long as they like.

To put that in some context: the current average monthly wage in Vietnam is US$145 in Hanoi and US$148 in Ho Chi Minh City. That is the equivalent of $100 per fortnight. Yet an Australian citizen that goes to live in Vietnam is entitled to get the Australian pension in full, which is $800 per fortnight. They are able to get eight times the average wage, all paid for by the Australian taxpayer. We talk about fairness and sustainability, and I would like this House to think about someone that is on $80,000. For every extra dollar they earn, they are taxed—now under the current provisions—close to 40c in the dollar. Yet someone in Singapore that earns the equivalent of $80,000 pays only 11.5c in tax for every extra dollar that they earn. So that 40c in tax simply becomes a disincentive for people to work.

The other thing we have seen this week here in parliament is how completely illiterate and dangerous the opposition would be, should they ever get back to the Treasury benches. We had the member for Watson claiming that the way he was going to fund all this great new expenditure from Labor was by taxing smokers. Now, I would like to see smoking rates come down and I would like to see no smoking in Australia. However, the member for Watson claimed that Labor's policies would raise $47 billion in taxes. There are only 2.5 million smokers in Australia, so if we assume that there are no further reductions whatsoever, that works out at $8,800 per smoker. That is what the Labor Party proposes. If you are a smoker, the Labor Party wants to increase the taxes you pay on your cigarettes by $8,800—and these people are the lowest-income earners in the country. Where are they going to get $8,800 from? This shows us a plain example of why those that sit on the other side are completely unfit to ever occupy the Treasury benches of this country.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

The SPEAKER (16:29): It being nearly 4.30, I propose the question:

That the House do now adjourn.

Pentridge Jail: Development

Mr KELVIN THOMSON (Wills) (16:29): The former Her Majesty's Prison at Pentridge, with its grim and imposing bluestone walls, is the best known landmark in Coburg and one of
the best known landmarks in Melbourne. It is heritage listed by the National Trust of Australia and is also on the Victorian Heritage Register. For a time it housed two of Australia’s most famous political prisoners—John Curtin, imprisoned in 1916 for refusing to be conscripted, and the suffragette Adela Pankhurst, imprisoned in 1917 following a women’s anti-war demonstration—and also the Indigenous artist Ronald Bull. The hanging of Ronald Ryan for murdering a prison warder in the course of escaping from Pentridge galvanised the anti-capital punishment campaign under the leadership of a former distinguished member of this House, Barry Jones, and led to the abolition of the death penalty in Victoria. Its heritage significance is not unlike that of Port Arthur or the Tower of London.

When the jail was closed and the site sold off to private developers, elaborate promises were made about the attention that would be given to heritage preservation. In January 2000 the then Victorian government said that a museum would be built on the site. It has not happened. The Heritage Act provides for property owners to enter into covenants with the National Trust for the conservation of a site or parts of it. No covenant has been entered into. The approach of the various developers to the Pentridge site has been one of incremental destruction of its overall heritage values, with ever-increasing ruptures to the outer bluestone walls to make way for roads, demolition of the bluestone walls of the H Division exercise yards, and cheek by jowl apartment blocks right next to existing bluestone buildings with scant regard for the aesthetic and heritage consequences. And while this has been happening, successive Victorian governments and Heritage Victoria have done precious little. They have not covered themselves in glory. In 2009 the then planning minister obtained an exemption for public exhibition so no third parties were able to make submissions. As a result we have a Pentridge master plan prepared without community input.

On Christmas Eve I was contacted by local resident, Professor Michael Hamel-Green, who informed me that the developers had applied to build a 19-storey apartment tower on the site. Submissions were to close at the end of December. Springing this on us at Christmas was a breathtakingly cynical abuse of provisions designed to ensure proper public consultation. There was no notice in the local paper—there should have been—and the permit application was hidden away in a window. It was a farce, and I immediately wrote to both Heritage Victoria and the planning minister calling for the consultation period to be extended till the end of January. I am pleased that they responded positively to that request.

I also initiated a public protest meeting which took place on Saturday, 16 January and was attended by well over 100 people. Local residents do not want a 19-storey tower, for good reason. It would be the tallest high-rise residential development to date in Moreland. Moreland does not have the transport or other civic infrastructure to accommodate population growth on the scale of this and other proposed developments in Moreland. The surrounding buildings are low rise, but if this project gets through every other developer will say ‘Why can’t I build one’ and we will end up with Shanghai. Indeed if the Pentridge master plan were ever to be put into effect we would get not one high-rise tower, but six—two 19-storey, two 18-storey and two others of 13 storeys or more! Nineteen-storey towers are the slums of the future. They will create a soulless concrete jungle. You would think we would have learned something from the Housing Commission debacles of the 1960s. All people and no vegetation is a recipe for crime, drugs and mental health problems. It is ironic that we close a jail and property developers want to replace it with a breeding ground for crime.
This proposal will dwarf the bluestone walls, is recklessly indifferent to the heritage values of the prison and will erode its heritage significance. Heritage Victoria should reject this application, just as it recently stopped a developer from demolishing the Nylex silos in Richmond to build 20-storey high-rises. That decision was spot on, and the issues are the same here. This application should not proceed. Furthermore, as the National Trust and the City of Moreland have proposed, the Pentridge master plan should now be reviewed, this time with full and proper public consultation. When someone says 'You can't stop progress', I say 'This isn't progress, and we can stop this.'

Boothby Electorate: Roads

Dr SOUTHCOTT (Boothby) (16:34): The story of the South Road upgrades at Darlington in my electorate has been long and convoluted. In August 2007 I stood with John Howard in Bedford Park when he announced a $1 billion upgrade of South Road, including at Darlington. Labor later matched this commitment but then cynically broke it when in government. It took a Liberal commitment in 2013, and a staring down of the state government, to break the traffic jam for southern commuters. This is a $606 million infrastructure project, and the Turnbull government is contributing 80 per cent of those funds. It is an important piece of economic infrastructure for South Australia and will create 370 jobs each year during the construction phase—so it is vital that we get it right. The plan has gone through several revisions and there is nothing wrong with that. Each revision has been an improvement and has taken account of community concerns. Those concerned stated at the outset strong support for the project but indicated that it needed tweaking. A number of local groups including Flinders University, Marion council and Mitcham council expressed their concern that the Darlington plan did not have enough connectivity between the eastern and western sides of South Road, and particularly between Flinders' two campuses at Bedford Park and the new innovation hub at Tonsley Park.

Recently there has been some very good news on that front, and I would like to recognise the work that Nicolle Flint, the new Liberal candidate for Boothby, has done to achieve these changes. She has taken up the concerns of Flinders University and the Bedford Park Residents Association and been working with the minister for major projects and me as well as other members of the Turnbull government to get a better result for the local community. Just before Christmas, when the successful tenderer for the project was announced, we also revealed the final design. The new road has been extended, there is better access for local residents, and there are two additional grade separations and an additional bridge. That was well received by the local community and Flinders University, and I commend the state government and the traffic planners at DPTI for taking up local concerns.

As well as the road project there is now the real possibility of a rail line to Flinders. As a representative of Flinders University recently said, this proposal changes a rail line going nowhere to one with a destination. The Turnbull government is currently in discussions with the state government to extend the Tonsley rail line to link the Flinders Medical Centre and Flinders University to the existing passenger rail network. This is a project that will not only provide much better access to the hospital and health facilities at Flinders Medical Centre but also serve as an important component in driving the future of the Tonsley Park innovation precinct. It will require a 650-metre extension of the Tonsley rail line linking the Flinders Medical Centre and Flinders University to the rail network, including 520 metres of elevated...
single track over Sturt Road, Laffer's Triangle and Main South Road. It will require a new station adjacent to the Flinders Medical Centre and an integrated shared pedestrian and cycle path adjacent the rail line. This will be great for all those who study and work at Flinders University and all those who work at or have to visit the Flinders Medical Centre. I know that Nicolle Flint, the new candidate for Boothby, is doing everything she can to see this project go ahead. She has already met personally with the Minister for Major Projects, Territories and Local Government, and she is working very closely with the Turnbull government to explain why the line to Flinders is a priority for our community.

**Corbett, Dr Patricia**

Dr LEIGH (Fraser) (16:38): I rise this afternoon to pay tribute to Patricia Lukin Corbett, a branch member of mine and a terrific supporter of progressive politics in Australia. Pat passed away on 3 January this year aged 89. Her life was an extraordinary one of service to others. She reminded us of the adage that change is made by those who show up. In Marion City Council in Adelaide she showed up in 1974, serving first as a councillor and then as an alderman. She was the only woman on council and it was not always easy. As Pat noted in her memoir:

> The Advertiser, before I had got my picture with 2 sons and a PhD on page 3, reported a local Liberal Party secretary had sent a letter advising residents to vote against me as I was ALP. The Advertiser took an interest in party numbers.

I rang my local ALP’s federal MP and asked what I should do. 'Lean back and enjoy it' he advised on the grounds that any publicity in local government elections was a bonus. And it probably was. You can never judge the backlash or the frontlash either! The Advertiser probably did me a good turn.

Pat, as I have noted, was the only woman on council at that time. In her memoirs she reflected that she turned down an approach from the Australian Education Union to enter state politics in the Dunstan era. One cannot help imagining that if Labor's affirmative action reforms had come two decades earlier Pat Corbett might have served in the South Australian parliament or, indeed, the federal parliament. She was there, showing up, at her local Canberra North Sub-branch even on the coldest Canberra night, listening and engaging.

Pat was optimistic. She was one of those people who buoyed you up and made you feel lighter in spirit when you met them. She was not a hater, and she was proud of our first female Prime Minister. The eulogies at the funeral from Pat's children, Jenny, Joan, Philip and Peter, made it clear that she was not all sweetness and light throughout her 89 years. But when I met Pat she always had a smile on her face. It was that smile and that optimistic outlook on life that saw her earn the first political science PhD by a woman at the University of Adelaide. Pat was there, as bubbly as ever, wanting to make sure the Labor Party could become an even more perfect version of itself. She was always looking for the optimistic changes that could be made.

Her commitment to progressive change was lifelong. As I have noted, she served in Adelaide on council. In LNP territory in Bright she was out there handing out how-to-votes. When she moved to Parkdale she campaigned against Jeff Kennett, which she said was one of the easiest campaigns to run. Here in Canberra she helped out the Labor Party and was always on the ball with every contribution she made. She was generous in every encounter I had with her. When I was writing a book on economics a couple of years ago, Pat offered to help out. She ferreted out some fascinating tales of how poor education and a life of crime can
sometimes go together—about how notorious criminals like Mick Gatto and Neddy Smith might have had better lives if they had finished school. I love thinking now about Pat, in her 80s, going back through those biographies of Australia's most notorious criminals and looking for a way of telling that great story about how education can change lives—which so attracted her Australian Education Union friends to her during her days in South Australia.

The Labor family will miss Pat Corbett. We were privileged to be there as part of her funeral service, listening to the tributes from Pat's family and the musical choices from Richard Strauss, Vivaldi, Harry Belafonte and Bach. We are better for having known Pat Corbett and having worked with her. If we can learn from her example—to show up, to look on the bright side and to help others—we can perhaps help keep Pat Corbett's spirit alive, not just in Labor politics but in all we do to help our communities both in Canberra and across the nation. Rest in peace, Pat Corbett.

Water

Dr STONE (Murray) (16:43): Last Wednesday night, the Kyabram Club saw a packed house of hundreds of farmers and business people who had gathered to express their deep concern about their loss of access to affordable irrigation water in northern Victoria and southern New South Wales. Some had driven hours to get there from Deniliquin and Griffith. Others had driven from further west in the system from around Boort, home to the biggest and best olive groves in Australia. From closer by, from around Kyabram, we had representatives of the biggest and best dairy farms and fruit and tomato growers.

These hardworking men and woman were there because they are so deeply distressed about their own families, their communities and their enterprises. We began with a prayer and ended with a poem penned by one of the organisers, Loretta Warren. This summed up the despair and loss felt by so many. It is not drought and flood that is seeing the productivity of this part of the Murray Darling Basin plummet and the debt once again climb to unacceptable levels. It is not commodity prices or lack of demand for the fine foods—the dairy, fruit, olives, rice meats and oil seeds. In fact, manufacturers are turning away offers for supplying more infant formula, more oil seeds, more meats, apricots, rice and fine lamb.

The tragedy is that the loss of nearly half of the irrigation water out of the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District is a result of decisions first made by the Gillard Labor government, partnered with state governments, which apparently had no idea, or did not care, about the economic, community and other social and environmental impacts of transferring huge volumes of water out of the Murray-Darling Basin and production to flow, instead, out to sea.

The VFF came in for a particular caning on the night. They were seen as not caring, not there and not speaking up. Interestingly, the local VFF water committee representative, Mr Richard Anderson, was not there. He has since flailed about and suggested that all I am saying is that no more funding should go towards the closing down of the system. In fact, what I am saying is that this is a project that has $1 billion of federal funding, and the mid-term review—as recommended by the independent review which was commissioned by the state and federal governments—recommends that this project, shutting down half of the irrigation system of northern Victoria, must be reset.

It was shocking to read in that mid-term review that the business case does not refer to the impacts on irrigators or their enterprises following the removal of half of the water, or to the
impacts on the viability of the irrigation system itself should there be a removal of half of the water—45 per cent of the channels. This is extraordinary.

I would have loved to have read that business plan. I still want to see it. But it is an official secret. I have tried to get that business case for the $1 billion that Tony Burke, the then environment minister, signed up to with the state government, demanding that 204 gigalitres be passed from the irrigators to the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder. The business case for that deal is secret. I have tried to get it under FOI from the state and the Commonwealth. I have been refused. Apparently, as I said, the business case does not refer to the impacts of taking away the water, through shutting down the system, on the farm enterprise itself or on the viability of what was the biggest irrigation system in Australia. That is extraordinary.

This is taxpayer funded money, after all, for an infrastructure project—not for a secret submarine plan or how the Federal Police operate. This is a $1 billion federally funded piece of irrigation infrastructure, and its business case is secret. There is a reason for it being secret of course: it is because it is so unconscionable.

What other developed nation would deliberately dismantle its irrigation system in the face of growing demand for its produce? One of the extraordinary problems that the mid-term review identified was the fact that it is based on a false assumption. The false assumption was that farmers wanted to be shut down because, after all, they had sold some of their water to Penny Wong, then minister for the environment. They had not wanted to do that. They were forced to do it by the banks, to relieve the debt accumulated through the drought. So that was a false assumption. Farmers do not want to be shut down. Farmers have viable enterprises. Many still own their water. But they are being forced to agree to plans where they will no longer be viable as dairy farmers and where the communities around them are collapsing. There are just six children left at the Invergordon school where there were 60 not very long ago. So this is an extraordinary case and one we should all be deeply ashamed about. And we need to fix it. (Time expired)

**Shortland Electorate: Belmont Medicare Office**

Ms HALL (Shortland—Opposition Whip) (16:48): I am both sad and angry that I need to make this speech today. The Minister for Human Services confirmed to me this afternoon that he was closing the Belmont Medicare office. In the lead-up to Christmas last year, on 17 December, I was contacted by the local shopping centre, telling me that the government was going to terminate the lease on the Medicare office from 24 March. I did not believe that, because this Medicare office has a history. The Howard government closed that Medicare office when they were elected. There were numerous attempts to get it reopened. Then Labor reopened that Medicare office, and it was an enhanced Medicare office providing not only Medicare but also Centrelink services.

There is no Medicare office between Charlestown and Lake Haven, and this government is trying to sell the idea of closing the Belmont Medicare office and co-locating it with an office 12 kilometres away. There has been a co-location of the Medicare office and the NDIA in Charlestown, and I could see the benefit of that. But the Medicare office at Belmont services a very elderly population. It services people from Swansea to Belmont, down onto the Central Coast. I have been reliably advised that a lot of people from Gwandalan Summerland Point utilise the office. The population of Shortland is the ninth oldest in Australia—an elderly
population with restricted licences, unable to get to Charlestown. And this government is bloody-mindedly—I repeat, bloody-mindedly—closing the Belmont Medicare office.

I previously submitted petitions with over 20,000 signatures on them. Prior to it being reopened, staff at the Charlestown Medicare office identified the reopening of the Belmont office as the highest priority. I have continued to raise the issue in parliament. We went to a number of elections with a promise to reopen the office, and when we were elected we reopened it. We actually reopened it ahead of schedule. And now this government is totally disregarding the people of Shortland electorate.

We all know that Centrelink and Medicare have changed, particularly under this government. Everyone's office has been inundated with complaints about the fact that staff are not allowed to service them—that they are greeted by somebody with an iPad and then sent to a telephone or a computer. My elderly constituents do not like this, and they are very, very irate with this government for what it is doing in that space.

When I saw the minister today, he told me that the numbers at the Belmont Medicare office were down. There were 89 walk-ins a day. That was recorded on the iPad. I had never been in this office when there were fewer than 10 people there. The way the services are delivered has changed slightly. People are sent to computers when they come into the office. My staff member went there at lunchtime and there were six people lined up to use the computer.

When I spoke to the minister I was even more disappointed when he told me that we are both seasoned campaigners. 'To be quite frank with you,' he said, 'we're not going to win your seat in the next election, so you can make as much noise as you like about it.' He is going to totally disregard those elderly people in Shortland electorate. He was arrogantly saying that, because the people of Shortland live in a Labor electorate, they deserve second-class services. Well, minister, I totally disagree with that and I argue that the Medicare office in Belmont should remain open. (Time expired)

Innovation

Mrs SUDMALIS (Gilmore) (16:53): Following the government's launch of the National Innovation and Science Agenda, which is a blueprint for a more entrepreneurial Australia, I held an innovators forum. At that forum, our first 'baker's dozen' of local innovators networked with export advisers, regional development advisers and business growth mentors. It was a perfect mix of fantastic ideas, information on developmental potholes and requests for further workshops on patent registration, funding and export readiness.

Our local innovators will help transform Australia into a leading innovation nation and position us to seize the next wave of economic prosperity. I believe each of us realises that we are living in a time of rapid change. Technology and science are evolving faster than ever, and the internet is disrupting traditional jobs and industries. The coalition government is fostering innovation by introducing $1.1 billion over four years to energise Australia into being an innovation pacesetter.

Australians have no shortage of smart ideas. You only have to look at great discoveries and inventions like Wi-Fi, the Cochlear implant and the vaccine for ovarian cancer. But Australians who want to turn their brilliant ideas into great businesses can find it hard to get the money to start, and often have to go offshore. We are aligning our tax system and business laws with the culture of entrepreneurship and innovation that we are seeking to create. We are
providing new tax incentives to remove the bias against businesses that innovate, and co-investing to commercialise promising ideas, through a CSIRO Innovation Fund and a new Biomedical Translation Fund. Australians are naturally creative and enterprising, but we have a poor record of turning our best ideas into commercial realities. Often, there are barriers too hard for these individuals to overcome, so clever ideas are so often blocked by bureaucracy.

The ideas boom will be fuelled by universities, start-up industries and agriculture, embracing risk and working together like never before. We are reforming funding incentives so more university funding is directed to research done in partnership with industry, providing funding certainty for world-leading research infrastructure, and investing in the future of IT.

The inaugural Gilmore innovators forum featured the talents of Dr Pia Winberg, Director and Chief Scientist at Venus Shell Systems. Pia has been undertaking work in both industry innovations in the fields of fisheries and in sustainable aquaculture systems in coastal and estuarine ecology. She is the driving force behind the pioneering development and production of Australia’s unique seaweed biomass and extracts industry.

Also present was Simon Church of DSYNC, which is a small, Australian based systems integration company with offices in Shell Cove. It was recently included in the National Retail Federation’s list of 24 leading tech start-ups—the only Australian company to join the exclusive position as one of the top 24 worldwide companies to disrupt US retail in 2016! DSYNC is a unique solution, as well as a unique and innovative company, which at this time has the capacity to revolutionise the market for low-cost integration of data.

Also present were Paul Timbs from South Coast Dairy, a premium and boutique dairy industry, and other dairy industry representatives who are developing their products and strategies to capitalise on the three free trade agreements. They employ a large number of people. We are hoping to get more dairy into China, Japan and Korea.

Then we heard from Laurie Koster from Global Defence Solutions, a company at the forefront of nanotechnology applications, creating a technology for an ultra-thin layer to prevent moisture from being drawn into devices like smartphones and tablets.

Mark Freeman from Blackwater Treatments is developing a state-of-the-art tertiary blackwater treatment system that could be portable and available for disaster areas, in rapid distribution. Mark Allen has a number of innovations and now, following this forum, has initiated discussions with University of Wollongong to develop his alternative Hebel block, a material that has greater thermal qualities than existing materials, and they are already showing in the preliminary tests. Finally, there were Jay Mcilquham and Jack Twist, who have invented and built a prototype to enhance dust extraction and sludge from coalmining residue.

I thank Megan Cleary, Fiona Hatcher, Peter Masterson and Rory McAllister for their expertise and help in drawing other government services to the notice of our innovators. Gilmore is seriously blessed with innovators and entrepreneurs and I will be encouraging more attendees at future forums to turn this potential innovator energy to kinetic innovation growth, industry and ultimately jobs.

**Water**

Dr STONE (Murray) (16:58): Continuing on from my earlier comments, the federally funded Goulburn-Murray Water Connections Project must be reset, making irrigators and the
system's viability the key objective. Nothing else will serve the nation's interests. The state can supply the 204 gigalitres that were committed to the federal Tony Burke regime. That 204 gigalitres can be found by the state from the water that was given to Melbourne as part of the stage 1 deal, which cannot be supplied now because the pipeline is closed.

No further federal funding should be committed until this project is reset, as recommended by the mid-term review. The nation cannot afford to destroy over 1,000 primary producers, their families and their communities, because of bad public policy and gross incompetence. This is a national tragedy, a scam that is playing out. I do not think any clear-thinking Australian would or does support it. We need clear action. The way to overcome this horrific problem and shocking state of affairs is simple and plain, and I recommend to the ministers of this government that they set it right.

Question agreed to.

House adjourned at 16:59

NOTICES

The following notices were given:

Dr Hendy: to move:

That, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1969, the following proposed work be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for consideration and report: Fit-out of new leased premises for the Australian Taxation Office located in Gosford, New South Wales.

Mr van Manen: to move:

That this House:

(1) notes that:
   (a) football (soccer) is:
      (i) played by more than 1.18 million people in Australia in some capacity; and
      (ii) the most popular sport amongst children of both genders in Australia with more girls now playing soccer than netball;
   (b) the Hyundai A-League now has 104,913 members, creating a tremendous community spirit amongst supporters and players;
   (c) local football clubs are the backbone of the football community, with 2,155 clubs in Australia at the moment; and
   (d) there are positive effects on mental health of adults who play sport, including football;
(2) congratulates the Football Federation Australia on its positive community programs, including Sporting Schools, Football Fever, the AIA Vitality Miniroos, Female Football Week, and Play Project, as well as the Asian Football Confederation Asian Cup multicultural programs which encourage participation, community spirit, integration, as well as healthy, active living.
CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Tran, Mr Tan

Ms MacTIERNAN (Perth) (09:30): In December, Northbridge lost a much loved patriarch, Tan Tran, and Tan Tran truly was a patriarch—a dispenser of kindness and wisdom to his enormous family that includes 28 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren, to Perth's community of Vietnamese refugees and to all those traditionally built Australians who have been attracted like moths to a flame to that little corner shop in Palmerston Street; attracted by the Asian delicacies that were so exotic when Mr Tran opened his shop nearly 35 years ago but equally by the happy and gracious nature of Mr Tran, his extraordinary wife Mama Tran and their hardworking children and grandchildren.

The Tran family arrived in Perth as boat people in 1978. Tan had been a successful businessman in Vietnam, but with his characteristic cheerfulness and capacity for work he willingly took on the most menial jobs to build a foundation for his family. Within five years he had opened that now very famous little shop. David Hobbs, a local resident, sums this up brilliantly:

Mr Tran and his family are good examples of when cultural integration and assimilation travels in two directions—it is not just the case of the 'outsider' integrating into the local western society, what Mr Tran has provided is an example of local western society being invited into and to a degree moving toward an appealing set of values and ideas.

The Tran family's prosperity is underpinned not just by old-fashioned hard work and perseverance. The thing that really strikes one is the extraordinary level of family unity, inspired and driven by the love between Mr and Mrs Tran as the central theme behind this endeavour. To Mama Tran, Mien, Thai, Trung, Ming, Hoa, Phuong, Van, Le, Tammy, James and all the family, we are thinking of you at this sad time but we know that the spirit of Tan is still with you.

Wounded Heroes

Mrs PRENTICE (Ryan) (09:32): I rise to speak about Wounded Heroes—a not-for-profit charity organisation in our community which is providing invaluable support for our Defence Force personnel—and I wish to thank them for the honour of making me a patron along with Lady Mayoress Anne Quirk. My electorate of Ryan proudly hosts the second largest population of military personnel in Australia. As we know, our Defence Force members sacrifice so much for us. However, things are not always easy for their families at home. Wounded Heroes provides a range of support programs. Other than death, the most serious impact of deployment is permanent physical or psychological wounds. Whatever the individual outcome, the member and their family needs support and care for it is unlikely that their life will ever continue unchanged. Our service men and women are realistic about the professional risks they take, but they do expect to be treated fairly. Soldier recovery centres have been established around Australia for the rehabilitation of wounded personnel. These centres are not fully funded and rely on the community for the provision of vital equipment and facilities. Wounded Heroes provides funding, equipment and other support to ensure
soldier recovery centres are sufficiently equipped for their critical task of helping our wounded fully recover and adapt to new circumstances. They also provide many programs for families. Rehabilitation programs exist not only for the recovery process but for their family as well.

Wounded Heroes provides emergency funding and other assistance for almost anything that will help the family of a wounded veteran cope with a demanding set of new circumstances. When troops deploy their families often find they are overwhelmed by more than emotion, and this stress of separation is compounded in a military environment by the fear that a loved one is in harm's way. There are also bills to pay, children to care for, emergencies, responsibilities and pressures that may suddenly overtake a spouse used to sharing burdens with a partner. Urgent assistance is provided by some agents but is, more importantly, available from Wounded Heroes when they are not ready to step in. Wounded Heroes provides venues and funding for social gatherings and families and they provide financial assistance and services to stabilise families suffering by the absence of a partner or parent on deployment.

I also want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Mr Jim Shapcott, who is the founder and President of Wounded Heroes, which was established in 2007. Jim is determined to keep this organisation running by volunteers so every cent can be donated to the families that need it.

**Broadband**

**Ms CHESTERS** (Bendigo) (09:35): This week last year the VCAT in Victoria rejected the planning application to build an NBN tower in Mount Camel. VCAT overturned a planning approval to build this tower, which would have seen the people around Heathcote get fast speed broadband. The decision had an impact on four other towers that were in fact built in 2013. As a result, people in the north of the City of Greater Bendigo, to this date, still do not have access to NBN. A year on, nbn co and this government have failed. They have failed to find an engineering solution for the problem.

Four towers were to be connected to the Mount Camel tower. The Mount Camel tower was to be the relay tower for these other four towers. To this day an engineering solution has not been found. It is a disgrace that a year on the people in this area are still waiting. There is no plan and no solution has been found. Nbn co continue to extend the date, to say it will be another six months time. Quite frankly, that is not good enough. We are calling on the minister to step in to fix this crisis that we have.

I have been inundated with people in this area sharing their experiences with me because of the failure of these towers to be switched on. 'Eppalock,' which is one of the areas affected, 'does not even have the internet,' one person complains. Another person from Eppalock says: 'I live in Eppalock and I can't get the internet, making it very hard for my children to do their schoolwork. It works fine between 12 pm and 7 am, but who is up at two o'clock in the morning to do their studies?'

There are also issues in Ladys Pass. There are also issues in Goornong. Farming communities want access to the internet so that they can get on with doing the basics of tasks. Sarah Caroline said she completely agrees: 'We only live six kilometres from Strathfieldsaye and our children can't get access to the same education programs as their peers.' They are six
kilometres from Bendigo, yet because of the failure to turn these towers on they do not have access to the internet.

It is not just the north of the electorate that has these issues. There are also many parts of Bendigo and many parts of other council areas like Castlemaine, Woodend and Kyneton. On one street in Woodend alone, there are four different ways that people have been able to access very slow internet. It is not one service; there are four. Some have satellite, some have ADSL1, some have ADSL2, some have mobile and others have been told there is no internet service available. It is a mess and this government must act to clean it up. (Time expired)

Lyons Electorate: Australia Day Honours

Mr HUTCHINSON (Lyons) (09:39): I rise to congratulate and thank those people that were recognised this year with Australia Day awards in my electorate for their contributions to their communities. Firstly, Dr Myrtle Gray AM has been honoured for her service to rural medicine in Tasmania—a familiar face to the communities of Campbell Town and Oatlands. She was President of the Rural Doctors Association of Tasmania from 2010 to 2014 and a board member of the Rural Doctors Association of Australia for the same period. I know many people in those communities recognise the extraordinary work that Dr Gray does within her community. I understand she was originally from Brisbane. On finishing university, her first posting was to Mount Isa, and she found her way to Savage River in Tasmania and ended up at Oatlands.

I know Ian Mackinnon very well. He has been a farmer, a grain and livestock producer, in the northern Midlands for many years. He has more than 40 years of experience in contributions particularly to agri-politics, research and development. I know that he has been an active participant within the Grains Research & Development Corporation. The award that he has received recognises the passion he has for young people to take up careers in agriculture.

I spoke yesterday to Emeritus Professor John Coll, from Midway Point in my electorate. John has now retired to Tasmania. His award recognises his significant service to tertiary education as administrator, academic and researcher; to the environment; and to the community. He is a chemist, specifically involved with marine science. He is also well involved in the community through Sing Australia in Sorell, with the youth throughout Kingston and in other roles.

Mr Peter Kearney, who I know very well, was principal for many years at the Hagley Farm Primary School. He now lives on the West Tamar in Lanena. He is a very decent man. He is a committed educationalist, but also, as a councillor on the West Tamar Council, has continued that commitment to his community. It is a well-deserved recognition for Peter Kearney.

Mr Peter Maher, from Longford, is recognised for service to the community through a range of sporting and service organisations. I spoke to Peter the other day. It is people like him that build communities.

I recognise Peter Geard, of Brighton, and Mr Kelvin Jones, of Swansea, who received an Emergency Services Medal, and Mr Colin Cunningham, of Gretna, who received a Fire Service Medal.

I also mention the former member for Bass, Mr Geoff Lyons, who is now a councillor on the West Tamar Council, for the work he has done over many years with Marine and Safety
Tasmania and Surf Life Saving Tasmania. His recognition in this year's Australia Day awards was indeed well deserved.

**Isaacs Electorate: Sport**

Mr DREYFUS (Isaacs—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (09:41): I stand today to speak of some of the sporting activities that are being held in my electorate in coming weeks. Isaacs is an electorate that is blessed with just about everything. We have the beach and the bay, we have rivers and open fields, and sporting clubs abound. If you want to try anything, from football to fencing, from kayaking to kite-surfing, Isaacs is your place. Ours is a community that loves the beach, loves the outdoors and loves to be active. In Isaacs, as the eternal Roy Slaven and HG Nelson used to say, too much sport is never enough. There are two upcoming events that I would encourage all Melburnians to try out.

On Saturday, 13 February, the Aspendale Life Saving Club and the Edithvale Life Saving Club will combine their collective enthusiasm, experience and coffee supplies to again hold the famous Club2Club swim. This classic swim, from the Edithvale Life Saving Club to the Aspendale Life Saving Club, is one of Melbourne's great ocean swims. The Aspendale and Edithvale life saving clubs are both fantastic clubs in their own right, but when they work together, like the famous doubles combination of Mark Woodforde and Todd Woodbridge, they become world-beaters. February is the perfect time to swim in Port Phillip Bay, and the 2016 Club2Club swim will be my ninth time competing in the swim. Roger Federer did not win a French Open until his 12th attempt, and, like Roger, I am biding my time before taking a genuine shot at this prestigious event! All money raised from the Club2Club swim goes to the hardworking and community-serving Aspendale and Edithvale life saving clubs, and I encourage all Melbourne swimmers to get on board and register for this wonderful event.

If you are more of a runner than a swimmer, the great electorate of Isaacs has that covered too. On Sunday, 21 February, I will be having a go at the annual Carrum Coast Guard Around the River Fun Run. This event, as the name suggests, raises funds for the Carrum Coast Guard, an institution of the Carrum community that does so much to keep Isaacs residents safe. There are two options for runners. They can enter the 12-kilometre race or join me in the shorter six-kilometre event. Both run a circuit around the beautiful Patterson River. There will be plenty of coffee and breakfast rolls to help runners recover afterwards.

We Melburnians love our sport. I hope to see many Melburnians at the Club2Club Swim or the Carrum Coast Guard Around the River Fun Run in coming weeks.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Irons): I call the newly married member for Lindsay and add my best wishes to you and your husband.

**Lindsay Electorate: Infrastructure**

Ms SCOTT (Lindsay) (09:44): Today I stand to talk about the growth and development happening in Western Sydney. So many of us every single day sit in peak-hour traffic, and the traffic going through Penrith is just getting worse and worse. Over the next 20 years we will see another one million residents move into Western Sydney. Right around Lindsay today there are property developments going on in places like Jordan Springs, Caddens, Mulgoa Rise and Glenmore Park. All of these developments are going to add to some of the pressures we have. For too long our region has been run by successive governments, where we have
been made more dormitory suburbs. Two-thirds of our community now have to commute every single day for work.

I am not prepared for that to be the future of our region. As someone who has multiple generations—at least seven—of my family from the region, I think we have so much to offer and so many reasons why we need the jobs, the development and the growth in our area.

That is why I am proud to be part of a government that has invested $3.6 billion into infrastructure upgrades, like The Northern Road. $1.6 billion of that alone is for The Northern Road. When I first saw the plans it was only going to the M4. Having worked very hard with successive ministers, I am so proud that we have now put in an additional $6.6 million to see the upgrade of The Northern Road go all the way through to the Great Western Highway.

But I am not stopping there. I am also wanting to see upgrades to places like Mulgoa Road. In the last election I made a commitment to be able to fund and begin the works on Mulgoa Road—the element that is outside Penrith City Council. We are getting on with the job of delivering these projects. That is stage 1 of Mulgoa Road, but I will continue to fight for Mulgoa Road. At the end of last year, with the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister Fletcher and the state minister—

A division having been called in the House of Representatives—

Sitting suspended from 09:47 to 09:55

Ms SCOTT: As I was speaking about before the division, as a government we are not prepared just to invest in the road infrastructure; we are looking at how we are going to connect our cities. In fact, working with the New South Wales Baird government in November, it was in the south-west sector that we met with the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister Constance from New South Wales and Minister Fletcher to initiate a 12-month scoping study that will look at all the different funding options and the rail options which will be needed for the south-west growth sector. These rail options will look at how we will connect the different cities in the south—places like Campbelltown and Leppington through to Penrith. And, yes, a potential connection through to the Badgerys Creek airport. This is the work that we are doing. We are committed to Western Sydney and we will see these works done.

Williams, Ms Suzanne Rose

Ms HALL (Shortland—Opposition Whip) (09:56): On Monday, Suzanne Rose Williams died. She lost her battle with cancer. I first met Suzanne Rose Williams 20 years ago, when I was the state member for Swansea. Sue came to see me and to share her story with me, and over the years I have shared her battle for justice for herself and for her children.

Sue gave birth to a child, Christina, when she was 16 years of age, and that child was immediately taken from her—she was never allowed to see the child—and the child was adopted out. Sue was devastated by this. We were able to make contact with Christina, over the years, through Origins Australia, but Christina's life had been anything but perfect. She had been sexually abused and she was drug and alcohol dependent. Sue could never get away from the fact that if she had been able to keep Christina her life would have been different.

She then married an older man and she had a daughter called Kilie. When Kilie was a baby, Sue loved her. But she was also put into a foster home by youth and community services, as they were called at the time, who decided that it would be better if she were put in a foster
home because Sue actually did not have a cot for her and St Vincent de Paul—or, shall I say 'the charities'—would not provide her with a cot. Kilie went through a series of foster homes and she had a similar sort of story to tell, where she was abused over the years.

Sue then had a son, Stace, who has had quite a good life and now has children of his own. But her son Adam was abused in a toilet at one of the public schools. For many, many years Sue and I fought to get justice for Adam. Unfortunately, no matter how we tried that justice was never gained. Sue was not the kind of person that everyone went up to and said, 'Hey, let me help you.' She was a battler, and she was a person who I had great affection for.

I really pay tribute to her tenacity. She had one of the biggest hearts I have ever known. If anyone ever needed any assistance, Sue was there to help them. But, unfortunately, Sue never got the assistance that she was seeking throughout her life. Rest in peace, Sue—you deserve it.

Murray-Darling Basin

Dr STONE (Murray) (09:59): As most people know in this part of our national debate, we have lost over half the irrigation water supporting food and fibre growing in northern Victoria and in southern New South Wales. That is in itself a crisis for our Australian domestic and export values.

But there are other issues concerning us besides the irrigation water loss. We are major food producers and manufacturers, but we have to make sure our biosecurity protection remains well resourced and that the states, as they have done traditionally and according to their constitutional responsibilities, have an active role in both detecting and eradicating biosecurity diseases in our plants and our animals.

I want to talk about some of these diseases which we do not have but which are a great risk to us if they come in with imported product. One of these is the disease which is called the tomato-potato psyllid. It is found all across North and Central America and, in 2006, it was found in New Zealand. There has been no detection, fortunately, of this psyllid in Australia. The problem is the bacteria which cause this condition in both tomatoes and potatoes can cause other bacterial infections in potatoes, and then you have the disease called zebra chip. In New Zealand, zebra chip disease has caused them losses of up to $120 million a year. It is a shocking situation where the product is unusable. When you slice open the tuber, which can be small and misshapen, you get the dead cells. If the potato is deep-fried you end up with black marks, black stripes, in the product—hence the name zebra chip. In New Zealand, they are spraying their potato crops up to 18 times with insecticides. Of course, for that amount of saturation the insects are now developing resistance, and so they are having to look at some other treatments. We have to be so careful of any importation of potatoes from the US or New Zealand so that we do not accidentally import this terrible disease into our country.

Then there is another very nasty disease that is now affecting up to 80 per cent of olive crops in Europe. It is called Xylella. It is also a bacteria, and it is wiping out these crops. We do not at this point in time have it in Australia. We have had emergency measures for the last 12 months in relation to not letting any cuttings of olives come in. In my electorate, where we have some of the largest olive groves in Australia still, despite the threat to them of water removal, we have to make sure the Victorian department of agriculture gets active again, working on farm, in region, to be vigilant and to inform and educate growers as to what they
have to look out for. We have abandoned orchards and we have to make sure those abandoned
orchards are removed and certainly that the Victorian department of agriculture is active in
ensuring that trees that are no longer pruned and that have been abandoned are not harbours of
disease.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Prentice): If no member present objects, three-minute
constituency statements may continue for a total of 60 minutes. Is everyone in agreement?
Thank you—well, not for the member for Lingiari! I call the honourable member for Lingiari.

Japaljarri, Mr Andrew Spencer

Mr SNOWDON (Lingiari) (10:03): It is with much sadness today that I speak about the
passing of Andrew Spencer Japaljarri, who was born in 1954 at 4 Mile Outstation near
Yuendumu. He passed away from kidney and heart failure in Alice Springs surrounded by his
family in the early hours of 8 December 2015. His own traditional lands were around Mount
Wedge, located north of Papunya, west of Alice Springs.

Japaljarri was a noted painter with an incredible ability to use traditional painting to
produce message posters dealing with issues in Aboriginal communities such as family
breakdown, petrol sniffing, alcohol abuse and AIDS. On his death last year, a tribute appeared
in the Alice Springs News, an appreciation of Japaljarri's life and work by Dr Craig San
Roque. He reflected on Japaljarri's painting, saying he painted stories related to his country
located north of Papunya, although there was a strong influence from the Pintupi artists he
was associated with at Kintore, a community a couple of hundred kilometres west of Papunya.

It was at Kintore that Japaljarri worked, not only as a policeman but as a strong community
advocate for health services such as the dialysis unit that he helped establish with his wife,
Marlene Nampijinpa Ross/Spencer, and Sarah Brown.

As a highly-respected elder of the Western Desert region, Japaljarri took great pride in his
Warlpiri ancestors. He was a key member of the cultural staff that established the Warlpiri
Media Association in 1983 at Yuendumu, now known as PAW Media and Communications.
The association plays a vital role in broadcasting, preserving language history and providing
entertainment, sporting and other social information to communities west of Alice Springs.

In 1993, Andrew became an Aboriginal community policeman at Kintore. As a policeman,
Japaljarri had great skill in working seamlessly between Aboriginal culture and European law.
All who met him in his role noted his calming influence, his negotiating skills, his advocacy
for his people and his intelligence. Dr Craig San Roque noted in his tribute that he was able to
interpret and translate the meaning of the law both ways as an instrument of reconciliation.

As a policeman, Japaljarri's skill in managing and defusing heated incidents was legendary.
Remember, this lawman often had to face down angry people. He had a double duty to
represent the Northern Territory Police and kindred obligations to family and community.
This tension, no doubt, was a constant source of anxiety to him. It is to his great credit that he
was able to bear this burden and serve his community with honour, both in traditional culture
and with his European colleagues and friends, who number in the hundreds—if not thousands.

Last year, I spent one afternoon with Japaljarri and his family at Kintore. He was tired and
knew that his time would soon be up. In gentle tones he spoke of his concerns for his family
and community, and of his hope for the future. I saw him again shortly before he passed
away. He said goodbye.
To his wife, Marlene Nampijimpa Ross-Spencer, and to the family, on behalf of all who knew him across the Northern Territory, I give our deepest sympathy. He was a great man.

Lyne Electorate: Local Government

Dr GILLESPIE (Lyne) (10:06): I would like to highlight the concerns expressed to me by a number of my constituents about the possible merger of the Gloucester and Dungog councils under the New South Wales Fit for the Future program.—

A division having been called in the House of Representatives—

Sitting suspended from 10:07 to 10:47

Dr GILLESPIE: I would like to again highlight concerns expressed to me by my constituents about the proposed merger between Gloucester and Dungog councils and the Fit for the Future program. As I understand it, the New South Wales government has begun consultation on the possible merger following recommendations from the New South Wales Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal, known as IPART. It made a determination that both these councils were not fit for the future.

Personally, I have great concerns about this proposal. Whilst being a federal member I do not have a direct say on a state issue, I will be making a personal submission to the merger inquiry process. My personal view is that, if the New South Wales government wants to make regional councils like Gloucester and Dungog fit for the future, it should not be looking at mergers. If you have two struggling councils, putting them together will not make things that much better. It should consider changing the formula itself has developed for the New South Wales grants commission in how it allocates federal financial assistance grants it receives from the federal government.

There are many councils areas in metropolitan centres such as Sydney, as I know well, where you could almost throw a cricket ball across them. These councils receive significant funds for infrastructure under the financial assistance grants scheme. Yet most of them benefit from significant infrastructure that is already there, delivered by the New South Wales government itself, such as motorways, state road networks, public bus transport, public rail transport, massive sporting facilities and other facilities. Financial assistance grants should be allocated, I think, not on the basis of population alone, which they are currently skewed towards, but on the basis of the infrastructure and tasks that the local councils are challenged with, particularly the significant road networks that they must manage not only for their local population but also for key freight groups that are important to the nation's primary production. So I would encourage all locals to make their thoughts known and participate in the inquiry process. I am hopeful that a sensible outcome will be reached.

Franklin Electorate: Centrelink and Medicare

Ms COLLINS (Franklin) (10:50): Back in 2011 I had a lot of people in my electorate contact me about a lack of Centrelink and Medicare offices down in the Kingborough region of my electorate. So we organised a petition and lobbied the then Labor government to get some Centrelink services in the area. We ended up with a co-located Centrelink and Medicare office in Kingston, which, just two years later, in 2013, had to move to a larger premises, because this service was being overutilised by local residents, and the demand was much greater than the government had thought it would be.
The Kingborough area, south of Hobart, has about 35,000 residents, and the Huon area has about 15,000. There is also a small Centrelink office in the Huon area. Earlier this year I was contacted by constituents to tell me that they had heard that the Centrelink and Medicare co-located office at Kingston was being closed by the current government. Of course, I could not believe that this would be the case, given that we had started it with a petition. The community obviously wanted the service and it was in demand. Local residents were telling me there were waiting times at the centre, that people were still waiting to get the services they needed from Centrelink and Medicare at the Kingston office. So it was really unbelievable to hear that, under the current government, it was going to close after just two years of operation. I verified that this, indeed, is the case. I have written to the Minister for Human Services, Stuart Robert, about this issue. I met with him this morning. I have also written to local senators, Senator Abetz and Senator Bushby, about the imminent closure of the Centrelink office. I have also started a local community petition, which got over 1,000 signatures in just 24 hours of being live.

This is a really serious issue for the residents of Kingston, the Kingborough area and the Huon area. What it will mean is that there are no Medicare services available south of Hobart, in an area servicing 50,000 residents. They will have to travel up into Hobart to an office that is not very well located, that has no parking, that has very little disabled parking, that is nowhere near where the public transport buses terminate. For elderly and disabled people who are trying to access the services of Medicare or Centrelink, it is going to mean a lot of travel time, a lot of inconvenience, a lot of additional costs—not to mention the fact that some people will not actually go and claim the services and the refunds that they are entitled to, because it will all be too hard.

I was talking to a local resident in Cygnet just a couple of weeks ago. She said that her podiatrist does not do online refunds, so she just ducks next door to the local Medicare office at Kingston and gets her refund—of, I think, about $38. It will cost her more than $8, and half a day, to travel to Hobart to get that refund. If she were to drive, she could park at a parking metre nearby and go in—but, of course, the fine is $38.50 if she cannot get back to her car in time. This is a disgrace and should be reversed.

**Flinders Electorate: Phillip Island Medical Hub**

**Flinders Electorate: Awards**

Mr HUNT (Flinders—Minister for the Environment) (10:53): I am delighted to update the House on the progress of the Phillip Island medical hub and to acknowledge the work of some of our citizens within Flinders. The update on the hub is good. This has been a long battle. Obviously, the community was devastated when Warley Hospital was closed, when there was a change in government at federal level in 2008 and both the state and federal Labor governments decided it was not worth supporting. They were wrong then, but I am delighted that that position has been reversed, and we are now on the cusp of having a true medical hub, an integrated hub which can expand over the years to be a full service operation.

There are a number of people to acknowledge, including the Bass Coast Shire Council and, in particular, the Phillip Island Health Action Group: the recently retired president, Jock McKechnie; his secretary, Graeme Cock; all of the members of the Phillip Island Health Action Group; and so many other islanders who have supported it. The status is that there is $2.5 million in federal funding, $2.2 million in state funding and $1.2 million in Warley Trust...
funding. We will have a new medical hub on Phillip Island, and the final plan and form are within weeks of being agreed, if not sooner.

I am also delighted that my own staff member, Tina McGuffie, has played an extraordinary role as a de facto representative in helping to bring all of this together. It has been a labour of love and passion, and this really is the moment when the medical hub is on its way to becoming a physical reality for islanders who desperately need the support.

By the same token, I want to acknowledge the work of Aline Burgess, the Mornington Peninsula Shire 2016 Citizen of the Year. Aline established the Peninsula Carer Council to support carers. She is the mother of Gary, who is one of 20 residents who have moved into the new affordable housing in Hastings for people with disability and challenges. It has been a great task. She has been a champion, and to see her and all the other carers—and those who care for the carers—acknowledged is an appropriate tribute.

In the same way, I also want to acknowledge the joint Bass Coast Citizens of the Year, Allison O'Halloran and Trish Hogan. Allison, from Daylston, and Trish, from Harmers Haven, really did a fabulous thing. They put together and helped revitalise the Bass Coast Boardriders Club. It was in a pretty perilous situation in 2013. This is about opportunities for young people, it is about safety in the water, it is about recreation, the celebration of life, and it is about the best of our coastal community. Congratulations to them.

Deakin University Bridge Plan

Ms BURKE (Chisholm) (10:56): I rise to express my outrage and that of my local community at the decision of the state planning minister, Richard Wynne, to call in and approve the Deakin University bridge plan without going through any proper consultation with the local community. This bridge has been on the drawing board for in excess of 20 years. For 20 years the community has been saying, 'We do not want or need a massive, great big bridge built across our beautiful open parkland'. For 20 years we have been in discussion about how to resolve this issue. Then, in the dead of night over Christmas, the state planning minister called in and approved this bridge whilst it was actually going through the proper process of planning approval through Whitehorse Council. Whitehorse Council had put out its notice, it was calling for objections, the community were putting together their objections, there were meetings planned with the local community, there was a stall set up in the middle of Gardiner's Creek for people to come by and see what the bridge was about, and, without a jot of consideration to my local community, the planning minister has approved this bridge. He has only listened to the concerns of the university.

Whilst people understand that the university has concerns that they have two sites which are on one side of a creek and another, and that they need to get students across that creek, they do not need to build a massive bridge, 70 metres high, across our creek area. The university has cited disability access and concerns about safety. If there are concerns about safety, why is my community still safe walking on the ground while the students have to be safe 70 metres above the ground on a bridge? This just does not add up and it is a complete slap in the face to community concern and outrage. I, along with my Liberal state colleague in the state seat, have put out a petition to our local community, calling on the residents to say, 'We do not want this bridge.'
This is an area that the community rescued. They reversed the degradation of this area, they have managed to create a beautiful bit of parkland in the middle of busy suburbia. I, like many residents, use it on a regular basis as an off-lead dog walking path. It is a beautiful part of our community. We do not want it beautified; we want it left as a bit of bushland for us to utilise and walk along. We understand that the university is there, but actually the residents were there first. Deakin University have continued to say that they want to have a great relationship with their community in Burwood. They do not. They have no relationship with their community in Burwood. They may have a great relationship with their community in Geelong; indeed they do. But they have not built that relationship with my community in the suburbs. There are more students in the Burwood campus than there are anywhere, and I understand that they need to move resources. But this was not the way to do it and the minister should stand condemned.

Citizenship

Mr LAUNDY (Reid) (10:59): Last week I joined with people around the country to celebrate Australia Day, a day to celebrate our great country. In recent years, a campaign has been run by the National Museum of Australia called 'Australia Day—Your Way'. This campaign is to celebrate the many different ways of Australians around the country. For many people this year—16,000 of them, in fact—their way was to become a citizen of Australia at one of 400 citizenship ceremonies held on Australia Day. I have often said as the member for Reid that I have the honour of representing one of the most multicultural seats in this parliament. As a consequence of that I also have the honour of welcoming many of our new citizens at the regular ceremonies that are held across my electorate.

There is no doubt that Australia remains one of the most successful multicultural societies in the world. For generations our country has been built off the hard work and values that migrants have brought with them as they have settled into their new home, and that continues to this day. Australian citizenship symbolises much more than where we live or were born as an individual. It represents our commitment to Australia and its people, the values we share and our common future. And I can tell you that the pride I saw on the faces of our newest citizens on Australia Day and that I see throughout the year tells me that our country will continue to grow as a great multicultural society.

I attended three separate ceremonies on Australia Day—the first in Strathfield Park, the second in Burwood, at the library, and finally at Sydney Olympic Park in Auburn. I met people from too many countries to name—people who have come here from all around the globe. For all of those making the Australian citizenship pledge, the ceremony was a major milestone in what has been a long journey, often involving picking up their families and moving to an unknown land. I use the term 'milestone' here intentionally, rather than being a destination or a goal in and of itself, because, as I see every day, our most recent citizens always have the keenest awareness of what it means to be Australian citizens. They are eager to partake in society, to work or build their own businesses, to give back to their communities and to live in peace with their family. As the Prime Minister pointed out in his Australia Day address:

Our national identity is defined by shared political values, democracy, tempered by the rule of law. A deep belief that each of us owes the other a fair go, the best chance to realise our dreams.
I would like to thank the Mayor of Strathfield, Sang Ok, the Mayor of Burwood, John Faker, and the Mayor of Auburn, Le Lim, for the successful community events they held on Australia Day and for the work they do in holding these ceremonies. Particularly in an electorate such as Reid, it is an important part of our society. That gives you an idea of the importance of these ceremonies in my neck of the woods to so many families. To all our newest Australians, I say congratulations and welcome aboard.

**Marriage**

**Mr WATTS** (Gellibrand) (11:02): This morning we have seen the kind of 'respectful' debate that Malcolm Turnbull's completely unnecessary $160 million marriage equality plebiscite will bring to Australia. This image, which is a photoshopped rainbow noose around the neck of a woman, is crap produced by a group called the Australian Marriage Alliance, which describes itself as an 'Independent alliance bringing together individuals and organisations supporting a common cause that is opposing marriage equality.' While the Australian Marriage Alliance claims to speak for mainstream Australia or the silent majority, it will not disclose who funds it or who is a member of it. This is a group that regularly quotes data opposing marriage equality but refuses to disclose sources for this data. It is a group that recently accused marriage equality advocates of 'exploiting' the death of a married gay man, David Bulmer-Rizzi, for 'political purposes' by objecting to the fact that Mr Bulmer-Rizzi's widower was not recognised as his husband on his death certificate under Australian law. Understandably, Mr Bulmer-Rizzi took objection to this hurtful travesty that was inflicted on him in this time of mourning, yet the Australian Marriage Alliance was pointing out this injustice was 'emotional manipulation'.

Despite their bleating, these groups do not want a debate. A debate implies that there are people who are willing to change their minds, but, as we have seen through the comments of senators Abetz, Bernardi and McKenzie in recent times, not even an overwhelming majority resolved in favour of marriage equality at the plebiscite will change their minds or their votes. They have made it clear their position is not for moving. Indeed, BuzzFeed News has contacted the Australian Marriage Alliance 18 times to request an interview, without response.

It is only a tiny minority of the Australian public that hold these bigoted views against LGBTI Australians, but, by committing to a national plebiscite on this issue, Malcolm Turnbull will be giving them a megaphone. The opponents of marriage equality are demanding that both sides of the marriage equality issue be provided with taxpayer funding to make their case to the Australian public. This means that Malcolm Turnbull—the new Prime Minister, not the old Prime Minister—will be writing cheques to the kinds of groups who photoshop rainbow nooses over stock photos.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Henderson):** Excuse me, member for Gellibrand, props are not allowed. Can you put the prop down.

**Mr WATTS:** He will be writing cheques to the kinds of groups who produce television ads telling LGBTI Australians that they are flawed parents who will damage their children. He will be writing cheques to the groups that will install billboards telling LGBTI teenagers that the love they feel and the relationships that they enter into are inferior to heterosexual love and not deserving of recognition from the society in which they live.
You can understand why the former Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, wanted this. After all, the former Prime Minister was comfortable with groups like the Australian Marriage Alliance. He recently told the US Alliance Defending Freedom, a group that has actively sought to roll back anti-discrimination laws, that homosexuality was a personal choice. But why will Malcolm Turnbull write them a cheque? Because it is easier than showing leadership in his party. *(Time expired)*

**Bennelong Electorate: Australia Day Honours**

Mr ALEXANDER (Bennelong) (11:05): I rise to advise the House about three remarkable members of the Bennelong community who received awards in this year's Australia Day Honours. All are committed members of our local community and have been duly recognised for their volunteering and advocacy work.

Mrs Moya Potts has just been awarded an AM for her role as the President of the Catholic Women's League in New South Wales. This volunteer group raises money to support vulnerable women and families locally and across the globe. The organisation addresses social and moral issues as well as promoting values and equality in the areas of health, education and economic and social welfare. Mrs Potts joined the organisation in the 1970s, when she was inspired by members of the group. After all these years, she still says it is the people she meets that inspire her most. Under her leadership, the league has supported many well-known charities including Chris Riley's Youth Off The Streets, Pregnancy Help and the Mary Mackillop Outreach. Together they have helped thousands of young people, women and their families in times of hardship and struggle.

Mrs Monica Saville is a member of the Rotary Club of Epping and has spent much of the last two decades volunteering locally and around the globe. Her significant contributions to helping people have just been recognised with an OAM in the recent Australia Day Honours. Mrs Saville is currently the trustee and treasurer of the Australian Rotary Foundation Trust but has held most of the available positions since she joined the local Rotary Club in 1993, including serving as the first female president.

As a child, Mrs Saville contracted polio and has subsequently been a tireless volunteer to prevent its spread around the world, including administering polio vaccines to children by torchlight in India. She also manages Rotary's Youth Driver Awareness Program and their local debating competitions. Mrs Saville's considerable compassion and experience has been felt across the north-west of Sydney, and there are many people worldwide who have had their lives positively changed by her kind actions.

Even closer to home for me, I would be remiss if I did not also mention a fantastic volunteer from the area who also happens to be my cousin. Susan Alexander received an OAM for her tireless work in child protection for nearly six decades. This includes three decades with the children's welfare department and subsequent time volunteering with incredible organisations like Marist Youth Care and Stepping Stone. She is a wonderful person and one of the most generous members of the local community and my family.

I am sure everyone in this place will join me in congratulating all of these remarkable women for their contributions to Bennelong and the broader society and for receiving their well-earned recognition.
Moreton Electorate: Community Awards

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (11:08): I rise to acknowledge some of the recipients of the 2016 Moreton Australia Day awards. Up front, I thank the Moorooka Lions—Col Diachkoff, Ian Towers, Peter Coom, Erin Towers and all of the other Lions—who made the Australia Day event such a wonderful event. I also thank Councillor Steve Griffiths; Nicole Johnston; Minister Mark Bailey; the state member for Sunnybank, Peter Russo; and everyone who contributed, particularly in my office.

I am just going to list some of the recipients and note why they received the awards and then say a few more words about the overall winner of Moreton Australia Day award. The winners were: Kelevi Roqica, for his work at the welfare shop and the food bank; Riyaad Ally, for his work with the Crescents of Brisbane, Muslim Aid Australia and the Muslim Charitable Foundation; Tukula Tuqiri, for his church welfare shop, collecting donations for the food bank and delivering donated furniture to families in need; Yousuf Meer, for his work with the Muslim Charitable Foundation; Feisal Essof, for his Muslim Charitable Foundation, Shave for a Cure, Bushfire Appeal and White Ribbon Ambassador work; Leanne Hill, for her incredible work with MacGregor primary school; Victoria Hutchings, who has been a teacher for over 50 years, putting on musicals and drama events; Annie Sun, for her work with the World Arts & Multi-Culture Inc., Queensland Chinese Development Association and the Taiwan Friendship Association of Queensland Inc.; Narelle Morris, for her knitting skills, making teddies for sick children; David Gowdie, for his work for the Living in The Shires, a magazine all about encouraging residents to shop locally; Luis Oliveira, for his work in the gardens at Saint David's Neighbourhood Centre; Mr Gary Ramm, a former school principal working with district P&C forums; Mr Des Broom, for his work at the Sunnybank RSL Sub-Branch and the Sunnybank Men's Shed; Ruth Dart, for her religious instruction work at Runcorn State School; Yasmine Khan, for her work with Eidfest; James Leung, for his Tai Chi classes held in consultation with the Cathay Community Association; Merle Stockdale, for her work on Anzac Day, providing morning teas with the Yeronga Dutton Park RSL; Michael Dehmie, for his numeracy and literacy work with the Liberian Association of Queensland; Lindsay Hill at the Oxley Sports Club; Jack Rance at the Tennyson Residents' Association; Dr Sandra Woodbridge, for work with Flexi Care Inc.; and Rikki Lyon OAM, who has been a scout since 1948.

The overall winner of the award, presented by Lady Benise Killen, was Trish Cattermole. She is a passionate advocate for her community. Lady Benise Killen said some wonderful things on behalf of her late husband, Sir James Killen, about her being a dedicated employee, working for the south side, for local residents, for seniors and for new arrivals and families in Acacia Ridge. Trish will be recognised for her award at a later date because she could not be there on the day.

McMillan Electorate: Leongatha Anzac Memorial

Mr BROADBENT (McMillan) (11:11): Last Sunday, I was honoured to be present at the opening of a place of reflection, an Anzac memorial put together by the people of Leongatha. Particularly involved in this exercise were Lyn Skillern, the coordinator of the Leongatha Historical Society; Anne Davies from the RSL; Mark Paterson, builder and member of the reserve committee, acting in his capacity as rec reserve member; Penny Ellicott from the shire; and Troy Williams from Williams Signs.
It is a beautiful place—modern in the capacity of today's memorials. It has four parts to it, where all 330 names from the Great War of 1914-18 are now displayed. The rotunda is placed at the beginning of the avenue of honour, which was beautifully planted and cared for by the women and children of the district in Leongatha, and that avenue of honour is still there, going past the Murray Goulburn factory all the way into Leongatha.

Major General David McLachlan, the head of the RSL, is a great friend of Gippsland. As I opened the place, I said to him: 'David, we're glad to have you and your wife here in Gippsland, especially in the heart of west Gippsland in Leongatha. I know that Gippsland is your favourite area to visit, but you can't tell the rest of Victoria!' He is such an adornment to the work that the RSL does in Victoria and the RSL does for communities throughout Victoria, but especially the RSL in Leongatha.

There were so many gathered there that day at the place of reflection. They were all the families of those who currently live in Leongatha and district. But this was not particularly about the district; it was specifically about those who went to war from Leongatha. The Battle of Fromelles on 19 July 1916 caused the community of Leongatha and district much sadness and grief. I have spoken about the grief of those two world wars and other wars since that continue today, in my opinion. In this respect, perhaps the town was a microcosm for the nation. Over 5,500 Australians became casualties during that bloodthirsty event. On this memorial are the names of nine men who died as a result of the battle and two who died in the lead up to the battle. Harry Kossim was on guard duty when he fell from a moving train and was killed. Jack Daniel, formerly a junior school teacher at Leongatha Primary School, was killed by stray shell on 15 July.

This was a great event, held and loved by the community. The names of these men are still synonymous with the local area. There were boys named after their uncles—the late Jack Edny and Phil Bellingham who were killed in action on 19 July. (Time expired)

Nevin, Mr Raymond

Mahoney, Ms Desiree

Mr NEUMANN (Blair) (11:14): Today I rise to speak on the recent passing of two English-born Australians who touched the lives of many in the electorate of Blair. Raymond Nevin was born in London in 1945, a month after the end of the Second World War. While a boy, he and his family left England for Australia in search of a better life. He was the eldest of six: three children born in the UK and the last three in Australia. Imagine the rivalries they had between Australia and the UK in sporting fixtures! Ray left school at the age of 12. He worked as a typesetter at the Gold Coast Bulletin. Later he became a motor mechanic and for a time operated the only RACQ tilt tray truck in Ipswich.

He married Carol in 1973. In later years they were always inseparable and volunteered their time at my many mobile offices around the electorate of Blair. At the Ipswich Show, the pair would depart my booth laden with red Shayne Neumann information bags, and they would distribute these throughout the crowd. Ray got to know many, many people. Indeed, he developed friendships with people such as a Canadian woodchopper, and that friendship continued by email.

Though they were keen to volunteer, they did not actually join the Labor Party until fairly recently. They were concerned that in their orange high-visibility Shayne Neumann vests and
red Labor T-shirts they would be mistaken for road workers, so we made a special uniform for them. Sadly, Ray passed away in early January this year before I was able to present him with his uniform. He would have been tickled pink when he saw it, I can assure you. I finally got them to join the Raceview Flinders branch of the Labor Party, and when Carol told me about Ray's death she asked, 'When's the next Labor Party branch meeting?' Many people in the branch knew them, so they were warmly welcomed. Ray was, as I said, the husband of Carol. He was the loving father of Tabitha and Bernadette and grandfather to Cassandra, Nicholas and Hannah. He will be missed. Rest in peace, Ray.

Desiree Mahoney was a committed environmentalist who lived outside Esk in the Somerset Valley. She passed away at the end of December 2015. She was born in the UK in 1956 and she migrated to Australia. Her active political life began in 1990 as spokesperson for Communities Against Radioactive Dumps, a group that successfully opposed construction of a radioactive facility in Esk. There was nothing that would stop her. She became an active member of the Greens and ran as their candidate in many state and federal elections. In fact, I knew her very well, because I was the Labor Party's campaign director in Ipswich, and we always had courteous and constructive relationships.

For 20 years she was the coordinator of the Brisbane Valley Multicultural Association. From 1998 to 2012, she was the coordinator of the very successful Brisbane Valley Multicultural Festival. To the delight of many in the Labor Party, she joined the Labor Party, leaving her Greens credentials behind, and there were many Labor Party branch members there at her funeral. She was intrigued by ancient and medieval history, and her farewell ceremony at the Somerset Civic Centre began with a pagan ritual and was swathed in purple. It was unlike any funeral I had ever been to. Vale, Desiree. You will be missed. No-one will ever forget you.

Robertson Electorate: Australia Day Honours

Mrs WICKS (Robertson) (11:17): I rise to congratulate and to commend three outstanding citizens from my electorate of Robertson who were awarded Medals of the Order of Australia. The Order of Australia is the pre-eminent way we recognise achievements and service. I am proud to speak today about Geoffrey Grenfell OAM, Denise Begg OAM and Donald Young OAM.

Donald Young, from Woy Woy, received the medal for service to veterans and their families. I was pleased to be able to write in support of Don for his recognition, because his service has been wide-ranging in our community on the Central Coast over many decades. Don is often out doing voluntary work with youth rehabilitation and police. However, it is his tireless work for veterans that stands out. Don spends countless hours every week visiting veterans on the Central Coast, particularly those who are disabled, and supporting their wives, widows, carers and families. Often it is to assist with pension and welfare issues or with health and aged-care matters.

Don has had long-held roles with organisations like the Gosford RSL sub-branch, the Woy Woy Ettalong-Hardys Bay RSL sub-branch, the Ettalong Beach War Memorial Club, National Malaya and Borneo Veterans Association and the Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Association of Australia. He has also been a member of the RSL in Australia since 1956. After receiving the award, Don admitted that he was a bit shocked but also very honoured. It is an honour well deserved.
Denise Begg, from Point Frederick, is also a highly deserving local recipient of an OAM for her service to young people through the Scouting movement. Denise was the group leader of the 1st Clovelly Scout Group from 1986 to 2012 and a Cub Scout Leader for six years before that. Across three decades of service, she has received a Silver Koala, the Silver Wattle, and a Medal of Merit. Denise said she was shaking when she received her OAM, but her commitment to young people has been unwavering, and it is great to have her acknowledged as a member of our Central Coast community. It also reflects just how strong the Scouting movement is on the Central Coast.

The third recipient in my electorate, Geoffrey Grenfell, from Erina Heights, has also been awarded an OAM for service to the community of the Central Coast and also to youth. Like Denise, Geoffrey has served as a Scout Leader. He said he joined the Scouts when he was just eight, and now at age 77 he loves being a part of it. Geoffrey has been an Honorary Commissioner of the Hunter and Coastal Region since 1996, and his leadership at 1st Erina Heights dates back to 1957. He has been a great leader in Rotary in our community for over 40 years, spending the majority of his time in Gosford and a decade at Terrigal. And he has a great passion for the local arts scene on the Central Coast.

So, on behalf of the Central Coast community, I offer my sincere congratulations and thanks to these remarkable people. They reflect the calibre and character of the many others who tirelessly and sacrificially serve our community every day.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Landry): In accordance with standing order 193, the time for members' constituency statements has concluded.

STATEMENTS ON INDULGENCE

Natural Disasters

Ms PARKE (Fremantle) (11:21): Today I rise to extend my thanks to the hundreds of professional emergency personnel and countless volunteers who have come to the aid of communities across the south and south-west of Western Australia, which have recently been ravaged by unstoppable and fatal bushfires. I particularly offer my condolences to those who have suffered loss as a result of these fires.

Burning for 17 days, the devastating Waroona-Yarloop fire basically razed the small town of Yarloop, claiming the lives of two elderly residents, destroying important community heritage and impacting more than 400 agricultural properties and national parks across almost 70,000 hectares. Last November, four people in Esperance lost their lives during another massive set of bushfires that scorched more than 300,000 hectares of mostly agricultural land where farmers had been eagerly anticipating the harvest of a bumper wheat crop.

In the face of these catastrophes, emergency personnel worked tirelessly to alert and protect affected communities. Even while embers and smoke still filled the skies, the wider community sprang into action to help evacuate people and animals from the path of the fires. At the holiday community of Preston Beach, where there is only one road in and out, local sea-rescue teams and recreational boaters plucked stricken families from the beach and ferried them to safety. I know that the equestrian community, which is so prominent in the south-west, rallied to help people transport their horses to safety. Around 400 livestock, mostly cattle, are reported to have perished, but the farming community's livestock removal effort as the fire approached, and the donation of feed, saved the lives of many more creatures. Staff
and volunteers at the Waroona vet clinic continue to work around the clock caring for both the injured domestic and the injured native animals that have been rescued. It is often a very sad fact that bushfires bring terrible consequences for our native, farm and domestic animals.

Whether for human or horse, dog, kangaroo or cow, these disasters—as so many before them also have done—reveal the ultimate strength of our communities: the compassion and volunteerism and the unquestioning camaraderie that spontaneously emerges in the face of such danger. Residents in neighbouring shires and towns in the south-west offered free emergency accommodation to complete strangers. The organisers of the Southbound Music Festival, which was cancelled due to the Waroona-Yarloop emergency, quickly established a relief fund based on ticket refund donations and organised a fundraising concert in Perth to help with the expense of recovery.

The emergency phase of these fires may now have passed, but the relief and recovery effort continues. It is truly humbling to witness the extent and broad range of specialist support that is being offered to the recovery and rebuilding effort. Musicians in my electorate of Fremantle are lending their talents to a fire appeal concert this weekend. Others have given their time to help reinstate more than 25 kilometres of irrigation to a melaleuca oil plantation near the town of Harvey. This Friday, volunteers working through BlazeAid, an organisation set up in the wake of the 2009 Black Saturday fires in Victoria to expedite the urgent re-fencing needs in agricultural communities struck by fire, will set up camp on Waroona Oval to assist with replacing the countless miles of essential agricultural fencing lost during the blaze. Nearly three months on BlazeAid continues to run a volunteer camp at Grass Patch to assist those who need help restoring fences lost during the Esperance fires. People have done, and will again in the future, all that they physically can to stop these fires or hold back flood waters to minimise the loss to life and property.

The south-west corner of Australia is amongst the most biodiverse places on the planet. Since the mid-1970s this unique place has seen a steady decline in rainfall—the rate of which is accelerating—and increasing temperatures. The country is tinder dry and entire forests are in a state of collapse. Last year was the hottest year since recording began. Fire has been an ever-present threat in our country but, as we have witnessed across the south-west, as we saw in Victoria in 2009 and again recently and as we are seeing in Tasmania right now, it is clear that the ferocity and sheer magnitude of bushfire events are on the rise.

Taking effective action on climate change to minimise its devastating impacts should be the key concern of our time. Ignorance and delay only imperil our future and offend the type of community can-do spirit of the people who have battled to survive horrific natural disasters.

Mr HASTIE (Canning) (11:26): I also rise today to speak on the bushfires in the south-west of WA this last month. The people of the Peel-Harvey region have suffered much over the last month. The raging bushfires of January burnt through 71,000 hectares of bushland, farms and properties and destroyed many homes and businesses throughout the region. The historic township of Yarloop was engulfed in flames in a matter of minutes. Livestock and wildlife have been injured and killed. Primary producers have seen their livelihoods destroyed before their very eyes. Sadly, the greatest tragedy has been the loss of two lives in Yarloop—two everyday Australians who in the midst of the festive season did not expect to perish in an inferno in their own homes.
The fires are a painful reminder of the environmental challenges that Western Australians have faced since settling the colony in 1829. Thomas Peel, the first European settler in Mandurah and namesake of the Peel region, lies buried in the heart of Mandurah city. Peel endured many financial and environmental setbacks trying to build a settlement out of nothing. On his headstone is the epitaph: 'The first settler here who bore with much fortitude the hardships and disappointments endured by the first colonists'.

Of course, Indigenous Australians, especially the Noongar people in the Peel region, have long appreciated the harshness of the Western Australian landscape—well before the arrival of European settlers. Their history and relationship with the land looms large over the region. I note that my predecessor, the late Don Randall, in February last year spoke on fire in the same region and made reference to the Noongar people, who have long understood fire and have used fire to reduce fuel loads and also for hunting. I would like to add to his comments that I think we can learn from historic practice in this area.

Thomas Peel died in 1865, but if he were to wander my electorate today he would hardly recognise it with the vast increase in population and economic development over the past 150 years. The Peel region began with only a few hundred European settlers in 1830. It now boasts 129,000 people, with a phenomenal population growth of 45,000 people between 2004 and 2014. It now encompasses the city of Mandurah and the shires of Murray, Boddington, Waroona—where the fires were concentrated—and Serpentine Jarrahdale. The Peel economy is built on mineral processing, mining—Boddington is home to Newmont, Australia's largest goldmine—agriculture, tourism and building construction.

Peel is endowed with many natural resources but its greatest strength lies with its people. We saw this displayed in the heroic efforts of volunteer and professional firefighters who battled the flames day after day over that eight-day period, even when exhausted by the heat and lack of sleep. I spoke to many local volunteer firefighters who went 72 hours without rest. We saw this with the Pinjarra volunteers, who cared for those in need at the Murray Leisure Centre, those evacuated from Waroona and Yarloop; we saw this with the local and state leaders who rallied around those devastated by the fires; and we saw this in the faces of those—and I spoke to many of them—who had lost everything but who showed concern for their neighbours before themselves.

As the fires have demonstrated, our prosperity is fragile. Throughout the electorate of Canning, particularly in Waroona, many of my constituents have suffered. Businesses have been destroyed. Bernie Worthington, the owner of Drakesbrook Winery, lost his whole vineyard just prior to harvest. This amounts to a loss of 60 tonnes of wine, even before we factor in the loss of damage to the vines, the irrigation and other infrastructure essential to his business operations. I acknowledge the outstanding efforts of the Peel Thunder Football Club who assisted the Worthington family with a clean-up of the winery two weekends ago.

Graeme and Sonia Watson, owners of Forest Edge Recreation Camp, also suffered extensive damage to their property and infrastructure. Forest Edge provides recreational activities to groups of people from all walks of life who are trying to build personal relationships and stretch themselves with challenging outdoor activities. They employ 20 staff and have had to cease operations due to the effects of the fire on the infrastructure essential to their business. I also note that this fire has set back their plans for the future. Graeme and Sonia have only recently returned from the United Kingdom, where they were investigating...
the next step of their business development. Forest Edge Recreation Camp is situated on
beautiful hill country to the east of the Waroona township. The gradient on their hills is near
perfect for a 300 by 300 metre artificial ski slope. This is their plan to develop their business,
and this would be a first for WA. Of course, the fires have set that back.

I met with Helen and Mick Muir who live right along a road that was engulfed in flames.
They have a 1,000 acre property, and they have lost 15 kilometres of fencing. They have lost
their tractor, they have lost feed. They face a huge task. They are just one funding family of
many who have suffered through the fires. The consistent message that I have received from
farmers has been: ‘We need help with fencing, we need help with feed and we need help with
labour.’ I am hoping that many Australians, not just in my electorate but throughout the Perth
region, will step up and assist these people with fencing.

I do want to make note of the Rotary clubs of Pinjarra and Mandurah who have given
significant financial assistance to those in need through the fire relief efforts. The Pinjarra
Rotary Club, headed up by local farmer Geoff McLarty, last weekend came to Waroona,
along with 112 volunteers from Rotary clubs around the state of WA, and worked on 10
separate properties, removing fences. It was great to see the volunteer spirit alive. It certainly
complements the efforts of the state and federal governments, who have provided assistance
thus far.

The Peel region needs more than just a recovery from fires. We need to build long-term
resilience against both bushfires and the WA economic downturn. The commodities boom has
slowed in WA and the impact has been felt across all sectors of the economy. In the Peel
region, retail and real estate markets have softened, and youth employment currently sits at
almost double the national average. Building construction has slowed. I have many FIFO
families who live in my electorate who are asking, ‘What’s next for the Peel region?’ With so
many people now having to rebuild their lives after the fires, I think this is a very important
question.

I am working very closely with local Peel leaders across the five shires to look at a long-
term vision for job creation and economic development out to 2050. In December last year, I
attended the launch of the Peel Development Commission’s Peel Regional Investment
Blueprint. This blueprint casts a vision for the region built on its natural strengths as the basis
of our economic future. Three investment opportunities have been identified. Firstly, the
completion of the state-of-the-art multifunctional Murray Equestrian Centre at Coolup will
bring a new focus to the local economy that goes beyond WA. I hope that, if this is fully
funded and completed, it will transform our region into the equine capital of the Indian Ocean
rim. Perhaps, most importantly, in future bushfires it will serve as a temporary housing
facility for large numbers of livestock that need to be evacuated from nearby properties.

Secondly, the establishment of the Peel Business Park at Nambeelup will bring together
Peel’s strong industries, such as agriculture and food innovation. This in turn would broaden
the focus of the WA economy beyond cyclical commodity exports.

Nambeelup is central to the Peel region and ideally positioned to service all five shires. It
would bring many workers together and keep them off the freeway headed north to Perth on
those very congested mornings that we see every day.
Finally, Mandurah city is the heartbeat of the Peel region. It services the rest of the region with medical, educational and professional services. It is home to 82,000 residents. It boasts a world-class marina and is a popular tourist destination. We need further investment in it—in infrastructure—but, particularly, public transport. I am keen to see more trains, I am keen to see my electorate linked up—like the City of Melbourne, the City of Sydney and much of Perth. So that is something I will be fighting for into the future.

I will close by acknowledging the hardship of the people of the Peel and Harvey region over the past month. They have my full support. I have been very heartened by the volunteer efforts that I see throughout Canning and, of course, the division of Forrest to the south. It has inspired me, and I hope the residents of the electorate will also take heart in these efforts. Thank you.

Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (11:36): Every summer Australia is dogged by bushfires. We see it having a significant impact on communities. We see it stretch the resources of our emergency workers and firefighters. But this summer something that has really haunted me has been one of the bushfires—the one in Yarloop. I just cannot get out of my mind the thought of those two men—in their 70s—who perished in the fires. I understand that one required a hearing aid and had a tradition of going to bed early and his relatives suggested that he may have turned off the hearing aid—hence he would not have heard what was coming. So those two men in their 70s—I just cannot get out of my mind what they went through in their last moments. It really does haunt me.

As I understand, at least 143 properties were destroyed in that fire, including 128 houses in Yarloop. That included sheds, caravans and community buildings. Four firefighters were injured in that fire, and it has had a significant and devastating effect on that community. We heard from the Leader of the Opposition this week about 58 students from the local primary school who had to start their school year attending other schools, because their school had burnt down. So you can imagine: not only had they been through the trauma and the aftermath of the fire but here they were starting their school year separated around the region. My thoughts go to those students, their parents and the community.

Over the course of summer, we also saw the destruction along Victoria's Surf Coast in December—around Christmas Day and beyond—including the loss of 116 homes at Wye River. We also saw bushfires in Tasmania and South Australia that my colleagues have spoken about. I just want to take this opportunity to thank the firefighters, the emergency workers and the communities for their exceptional and courageous work over the course of these fires. As we know, many of these emergency workers and firefighters are volunteers. They give up their summer to help keep communities safe. So I just want to send a very big thank you to them for their extraordinary efforts.

Canberra has not been safe from bushfires. This year marks the 13th anniversary of the bushfires that ravaged Canberra in 2003 that left four people dead, 490 injured and 500 houses destroyed or severely damaged—and all of them in my electorate. They were houses in Duffy, Holder, Kambah, Rivett, Curtin, Torrens, Chapman and the settlement of Uriarra. Perhaps the most notable cultural and scientific loss caused by those fires was the damage to the scenic and renowned Mount Stromlo Observatory, which is the headquarters of the Research School of Astronomy and Astrophysics at the Australian National University. It is estimated to be the source of a third of Australia's astronomical research. At that time, five
historically significant telescopes were destroyed. Instrumentation and engineering workshops, the observatory's library and the main administration buildings were also consumed. Bushfires severely harmed the vegetation of the Cotter River Catchment and caused water quality problems in the three dams in that catchment: the Cotter, the Bendora and the Corin.

I want to take this opportunity to remind Canberrans about the devastation of the bushfires. I want to take this opportunity to remember those who perished in the fires: Alison Tener, who was 38; Peter Brooke, who was 74; Douglas Fraser, who was 60; and Dorothy McGrath, who was 76 and who lived in the Mount Stromlo Forestry Settlement.

Despite the tragedy and devastation of those 2003 bushfires, the Canberra community rallied around the families and friends of those who had lost their lives or who had been injured or those who had lost their homes, because in Canberra it is half a degree of separation. We are a very close community and most of us knew at least one person or one family that had been affected by the fires. My friend former Chapman resident, now a Narrabundah resident, Jane Smyth, lost her home. At the 10th anniversary service at the memorial that is being built over the road from the suburb of Duffy, at the foot of Mount Stromlo, she said the trauma strengthened the Canberra community. I want to quote her here: We'll always remember the great losses but we also remember that time of strength following the fires when the people of Canberra and district, friends, neighbours, strangers, reached out in new ways to each other and in our time of recovery, Canberra worked as a community.

I know communities go through a range of emotions following the loss and the trauma and the tragedy of bushfires. Ten years on from the Canberra bushfires, some Canberrans were still experiencing anger, and this is not surprising given the devastation. But, as the former ACT emergency services commissioner, Mark Crosweller, told 7:30 ACT on the 10th anniversary of the bushfires:

Simply to blame people in that circumstance … robs us of the opportunity to forgive and move on and we really need to do that. If people are still grieving 10 years later or if they're still angry 10 years later then we do have a problem in society.

As has been mentioned by the previous speaker, the really important thing here is to develop resilient communities. A few years ago, I met members of the community that had been devastated by the Black Saturday bushfires in Victoria and, despite the massive losses, they were determined to face the future and rebuild their lives. There were determined, absolutely determined, to build a resilient community, and they had set up a number of mechanisms to do that. From the devastation and the tragedy and the loss that came from the bushfires, they were determined to create something good.

I think it is vitally important, at this point in time—where those communities are in mourning, are angry, are going through the grieving process—that we give them support. The former speaker mentioned that his community needs support in fencing. We also need support in infrastructure, in housing, in clothing, in food. We need to provide these communities with support in so many different ways, in the physical as well as in the emotional way. We particularly have to provide them with support for their mental health. We cannot forget that. It is vitally important that we ensure the tragedy, the trauma and the loss of bushfires unites our communities as it did here in Canberra. As I said, there where people there who were still experiencing anger 10 years afterwards; there were still people experiencing grief. But it is
vitaly important we remember that we need to unite as a community in this moment, in this
time, of tragedy, loss, and trauma, rather than divide as a community.

COMMITTEES
Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit
Report

Debate resumed on the motion:
That the House take note of the report.

Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (11:44): It gives me great pleasure to speak on the tabling of the JCPAA report Development of the Commonwealth performance framework. Those who have followed the issues in this report will know it has been a long road—a very long road, beginning, in fact, in the previous parliament, when I was at one stage deputy chair of the committee and the chair was the former member for Lyne, Rob Oakeshott. I have been privileged as a member of the JCPAA to have taken part in this journey and look forward to continuing to do so as we pursue the issue further this year.

These reports by the JCPAA—particularly on governance frameworks and performance frameworks—some would see as being incredibly dry, but for me they are significant. They are significant in the governance of this nation, they are significant in the transparency of what is actually taking place in the Public Service and they are significant in the governance of the Public Service. The reforms aim to modernise the financial framework of the Australian government so it will support high-quality resource management and performance now and into the future.

The reforms are based on five guiding principles. The agenda states:
1. Government should operate as a coherent whole
That is a great ambition to have, because anyone who has worked with government knows that it can be incredibly fractured and it can be incredibly frustrating, particularly for the Australian people when they are trying to engage in government. The agenda also states:
2. A uniform set of duties should apply to all resources handled by Commonwealth entities
3. Performance of the public sector is more than financial
4. Engaging with risk is a necessary step in improving performance
5. The financial framework, including the rules and supporting policy and guidance, should support the legitimate requirements of the Government and the Parliament in discharging their respective responsibilities.

I mention the fact that these sorts of governance frameworks—these performance frameworks—are seen by some as being incredibly dry and not terribly interesting, but when you think about the figures that we are dealing with—the scale of what we are dealing with in terms of government right across the nation—I do think it is important that people actually take a close interest in greater accountability and transparency and getting a greater understanding and greater granularity on KPIs—on whether we have actually achieved the objective we wanted to achieve with taxpayers' money. I quote here from the report, Madam Deputy Speaker, and this just gives you an understanding of the scale of what we are dealing with here:
The difficulty is that the scope of reforms must encapsulate some $430 billion of annual Australian Government expenditure, covering 'more than 190 separate entities and companies, hundreds of boards and committees, and a large number of subsidiaries and other arrangements'. In addition, consideration must be given to 'cultural change, technology transformation and rethinking the design of many existing programs and services'. The latter requires much more than legislative change as it is these aspects of reform that require significant engagement and 'buy-in' from the wider public service.

That buy-in results in cultural change, Madam Deputy Speaker. As you know, the role of parliament in maintaining oversight of government administration is—and has been in terms of the historical evolution of our parliamentary system—a fundamental plank of democracy, and I just outlined the scale of the democracy that we are dealing with. And we need to make the further point that our stress on transparency and accountability derives from our ultimate interest in ensuring that government programs are well managed and delivered efficiently and effectively to give the best outcome for the Australian people.

To go back to the genesis of the changes we have been examining in this report, the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act had lofty objectives which are only meaningful with real action. For example, the following ones are set out in division 2:

(b) to establish a performance framework across Commonwealth entities; and
(c) to require the Commonwealth and Commonwealth entities:
   (i) to meet high standards of governance, performance and accountability; and
   (ii) to provide meaningful information to the Parliament and the public—
and I stress the word 'meaningful' there—
   (iii) to use and manage public resources properly; and
   (iv) to work cooperatively with others to achieve common objectives, where practicable …

However, these are just hollow words if they are not embraced, if they are not lived and if they are not championed by all involved. And for this reason I would like to emphasise the following statement from our report.

Leadership must come from all levels. This includes from all Ministers (especially the Finance Minister); all Members of Parliament (especially parliamentary committees, including this Committee); all central agencies (especially Finance); and from all senior leadership teams within entities. All have a role to play in striving for the success of the Public Management Reform Agenda.

The potential of the new framework to address key issues, like performance measurement and risk aversion, is particularly significant.

The quest in the public service for robust and meaningful performance measures has a long—a not always a happy—history. An ANAO report of 2012 made it clear that there was still a long way to go in terms of coming up with KPIs, key performance indicators, that do what they are meant to do, particularly in measuring the impact—and, I stress here, the impact—of government programs, whether they are achieving the program objectives determined by government rather than just monitoring process and monitoring expense. 'Did we actually achieve what we wanted to achieve through this spend by the Australian taxpayers?'

What has excited me about this process is that it has brought into sharp focus the nature of performance information and the ways in which it is presented for the consideration of parliament and, indeed, for the community at large. Much of our discussion leading up to the
production of this report has been on just that issue. In particular, with respect to the performance information to be given in portfolio budget statements, the Department of Finance provided three iterations of a proposed direction that set out the minimum requirements on this. That is an indication of the robust and healthy debate that characterised the committee's consideration of the matter.

As is set out in the report, on this matter the committee has supported the issuing of a direction subject to certain amendments contained in recommendations. What is particularly important is that the committee will have an ongoing role in the development and the review of the reforms and it will be following up on a number of issues over the course of this year. Among these is one in which I have a very close and particular interest—and that is of improving risk management practices. An important area of discussion in the future should be the question of what we need to do to encourage a less risk-averse approach, or culture, in the public service. A crucial challenge in achieving this is that we do not, on the whole, have incentives in the system that would encourage less risk aversion. It is very difficult to encourage a risk culture in the public service. In fact, it seems to me that many of the incentives point the other way.

I am sure most of us have heard complaints about what seems like an inordinate amount of concern shown by public servants about documenting and accounting for small sums of money. Clearly, a wish on the part of those responsible for public expenditure to be totally scrupulous about the rules is to be welcomed—absolutely. But the thrust of this anecdotal evidence is that, sometimes, a caution becomes process for its own sake with no real benefit to the taxpayer. This, in turn, can be seen as being too close to the adverse pole on the spectrum of attitude to risk.

While there is heavy stress on compliance, there is likely to be greater risk aversion where it is more important to tick the compliance box than to do things more efficiently, since the punishments for compliance failures strongly outweigh the rewards of greater efficiency or good judgement. As senior public servants like to remind more junior officers, nobody ever got sacked for an error of judgement, but they are sacked for errors of process. It is this that underlines the importance of the observation that I quoted earlier from the committee's report, that leadership must come from all levels on this issue.

I am encouraged by the ambitions of the performance framework in this regard. And on this, and with other aspects, I look forward to continuing efforts of progress. I would like to conclude by expressing my appreciation to the officials from the Department of Finance for their work with the committee, and also to the staff of the secretariat of the committee for their tireless—as always—support.

Debate adjourned.

Standing Committee on Economics Report

Debate resumed on the motion:
That the House take note of the report.

Mr ALEXANDER (Bennelong) (11:54): I rise to speak on the review of the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority annual report. I draw attention initially to the letter from APRA to the banks. It says:
There are a number of additional regulatory and supervisory tools that APRA can apply to address emerging risks, building on the enhanced monitoring and review of recent years. These include additional supervisory monitoring and oversight, supervisory actions involving Pillar 2 capital requirements for individual ADIs, and higher regulatory capital requirements at a system-wide level. Beyond this, there are also more direct controls such as regulatory limits on lending activities, as introduced in other jurisdictions to manage risks emerging in the housing market.

At this stage, APRA does not propose to introduce increases in system-wide capital to address current risks in the housing market, or introduce new regulatory limits, although we will keep these options under active review. Based on our current assessment of the risk outlook, however, APRA considers that it is necessary to further increase the level of supervisory intensity in this area, to reinforce sound lending practices, with a particular focus on some specific areas of prudential concern.

The area of concern that I would like to speak to is in this letter, where there is a concern regarding increased lending to investors. In this letter, it is stated that:

In the current economic environment, prudential risks in the housing market appear to be increasing. Interest rates remain at historically low levels, household leverage remains high, and housing loans represent a large and increasing concentration on many ADI balance sheets. Strong competition in the housing market is also evident, which is accentuating pressure on lending standards. Against this backdrop, housing credit growth has accelerated, with lending to property investors particularly strong; the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) has noted that this could be funding additional speculative activity in the market. These forces have contributed to strong house price growth, particularly when viewed against the more subdued growth in household incomes.

While the work of APRA has been effective and ostensibly was undertaken to protect our banking system, which is correct, the collateral benefit that this restriction in lending has had, particularly to investors, is a cooling of the marketplace.

The problem that has arisen, as noted here, is that at this time, when we have interest rates lower than many rental rates in markets, speculation has driven prices out of the range of a homebuyer. More and more properties being held by fewer and fewer speculative investors would appear to raise the concern of further volatility. The fact that we are getting further away from the traditional ratio of four years of average income buying an average home in Australia, to the point where we are now approximately at a 12 to one ratio, should give further reason for concern.

So while APRA should be congratulated on the work that has been done to ensure the security of our banks, in fact giving some meaning to the saying that money is safest in banks, there is a great need for further vigilance to protect the value of homeownership and investment in the time that no doubt will come when interest rates go up, because it would appear that what has driven the investor market—lower and lower interest rates—will cool when interest rates return to traditional levels. While the work that has been done should be applauded, we need to be ever vigilant. I look forward to their continued work in this area.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Price): The debate is adjourned, and resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms VAMVAKINOU (Calwell) (12:00): I move:
That the Federation Chamber do now adjourn.
Barry, Mr William 'Liam'

Ms PARKE (Fremantle) (12:00): 'If you're not making someone else's life better, then you're wasting your time.' This was the lifelong philosophy of Mr William 'Liam' Barry, a human rights and social justice campaigner of Australind in the south-west of WA who died aged 68 last November. Born in County Cork, Ireland, the young, adventure-seeking Liam took the £10 migration offer to Australia, landing in Fremantle in 1970. As a fitter and turner he would easily find work across the north-west of Western Australia in the booming mining industry, and ultimately spent 28 years working for Alcoa at the company's Pinjarra and then Wagerup operations before retiring from his mechanical supervisory position in 2006.

Liam was recognised early on for his natural leadership skills. At Alcoa, he became the worker's representative as a union convenor in the 1980s. The satisfaction of helping people and improving working conditions drove Liam's passion for politics and positive change. He quickly became a sharp negotiator and public speaker and, though unsuccessful in his quest to gain preselection, remained dedicated to the Australian Labor Party.

I came to know Liam when I stood for the then seat of Mitchell as a Labor candidate in the WA state election of December 1996. Liam joined me on the election campaign as an enthusiastic volunteer. Even though we lost that election, Liam stayed in touch with me over many years, inviting me to speak at the John Boyle O'Reilly ceremonies he organised each year. During the eight years I worked as a lawyer with the UN, Liam would send me regular emails updating me on local, national and international news, as well as his progress on the books he was working on and his local campaigns to raise money and awareness for Amnesty International and other good causes.

Liam also undertook, at his own expense, various missions to some of the world's poorest and most war-torn places, carrying out volunteer engineering and other work. A 2002 trip, for which he took long service leave, to Palestine's West Bank to conduct volunteer research work at Nablus University made international headlines when Liam and seven others were arrested at gunpoint and held for five days by the Israeli Army. The group had been in Balata refugee camp trying to help the sick and wounded after it had been shelled by Israeli forces. Being based in Gaza at the time, I exchanged phone calls with Liam regarding his arrest and detention and offered moral support, not that he really needed it. He was happy in the knowledge that he had been acting in support of the Palestinian people.

In 2004, Liam took his interest in peace and human rights to Curtin University, ultimately earning a Masters degree in human rights, and later publishing the book *Israel's Brutal War Against the Palestinian People*. Liam was an avid supporter of the United Nations, Amnesty International, the Red Cross, World Vision and Greenpeace.

Together with working many hours of overtime to support his family, Liam pursued his great passion chronicling the lives of Irish Republican or Fenian figures and researching many facets of oral history, writing or contributing six books on the subject. His best-known work, *The Dramatic Escape of John Boyle O'Reilly*, details the life and times of a Fenian convict sentenced to death, but whose sentence was commuted to deportation to the Western Australian penal colony in 1869.

Even as a prisoner, O'Reilly was a charismatic figure, a writer and poet, who was assisted by a local catholic priest to escape the Bunbury prison hide-out on the coast, and catch a lift
with an American whaling ship to Boston. Following his escape to Boston, O'Reilly became a renowned author, poet, human rights activist and newspaper owner, and assisted in planning the famous escape from Fremantle prison of six other Fenian prisoners on the Catalpa whaling ship to America. There is a memorial to John Boyle O'Reilly in Boston and Liam drove the installation of a granite memorial to O'Reilly at his purported escape point—the northern tip of Leschenault Peninsula north of Bunbury and for 25 years organised annual celebrations of the unlikely historical feat, a task that has now been taken up by others, including Bunbury's Tom Dillon.

In 2012, Liam was awarded the prestigious Brendan Award by the Irish Australian Heritage Association for his contributions to Irish-Australian history and his John Boyle O'Reilly efforts in particular. Liam served as the president of the South West Irish Club from 1994 to 2000, organising Rose of Tralee Balls and St Patrick's Day parades. Many a Barry family outing would be spent touring local grave and other historical sites around the southwest. I am told that his broad knowledge and keen interest rendered his children too scared to ask for help on school assignments for fear of it resulting in a book being published.

The second child of six born to Catherine and Daniel Barry, Liam came from humble origins. He always said that life was tough growing up, but always knew that there were people out there worse off than himself. Like so many migrants who have dedicated their lives to this country, Liam's life epitomises the implicit Australian social contract: opportunities and acceptance in return for hard work and social commitment. I say thanks to Liam for his passion and his activism for good causes and for the long support and friendship that he gave to me. I offer my condolences to Liam's family: his wife of 42 years, Lyn; his four children, Tania, Shayne, Michelle and Scott; and his seven grandchildren.

Banks Electorate

Mr COLEMAN (Banks) (12:05): I am pleased to have the opportunity this morning to note a number of achievements and events in my local community of Banks in recent weeks. I would like to acknowledge the winners of the Banks Leadership Scholarship, who were announced late last year. I started the Banks leadership scholarship in 2013 to recognise exceptional efforts of students in our community. The scholarship is awarded at the year 10 level, and there is also a junior scholarship for year 6 students—it is right across the electorate. Kirby Pearson, from East Hills Boys High School, won the senior scholarship, this year, and Liana Siteine from Tower Street Public School won the junior scholarship. Kirby has excelled academically and has many awards highlighting his level of achievement. He is a regional Indigenous ambassador and a very accomplished athlete in athletics, soccer, cross-country and cricket. To Kirby: congratulations on your success.

I would also like to congratulate Liana Siteine, of Tower Street Public School in Panania. Liana was school captain and has a very strong academic record along with a wide range of activities including debating, choir, netball and also caring for people in the community who are less fortunate. So, Liana, congratulations on your tremendous success.

Late last year I attended the annual presentation of Picnic Point High School, one of the largest and most successful schools in the Banks electorate. Close to 1,000 people attended the presentation at the Revesby Workers' Club. I would like to congratulate the many students who received awards for their academic success on the day and the many performers, because this presentation day was quite artistic in nature, with a number of theatrical presentations,
songs and so on. It was a great day and was enjoyed very much by everyone who was there. I say to Picnic Point High School—to the principal, Wolly Negroh, and to the students and staff—congratulations on a tremendous event.

The Probus community in the Banks electorate is very strong and I have been fortunate in recent weeks to visit some of our very strong Probus clubs. In January, I visited Oatley Probus Club at their meeting at Oatley RSL. Ted Canute has been the president there for some time, and it was great to see Ted and also Noela Tazewell, the secretary. It is a fun and informal get-together, twice a month, at Oatley RSL and provides a lot of camaraderie and friendship to people in our community. I thank the executive of Oatley Probus for everything they do in our community.

I also recently attended Grandviews Ladies Probus, where Evelyn Harwin is the secretary. It is a very well attended group of ladies. They have guest speakers at each meeting, various social events, regular outings, walks and so on. Grandviews Ladies Probus provides great opportunities for people in our community to get together, have a chat and enjoy some social activities. I again thank everybody at Grandviews Ladies Probus for having me along and indeed Paul Nicholls, the General Manager of Club Grandviews, for his support of Probus clubs and many other clubs in our community.

I also, on 17 January, attended the BLIA Chinese New Year celebration at Club Central Hurstville. As it is every year, it was a great day with lots of celebrations and fundraising for community groups. There were performers from Peking Opera and it was a terrific day. It was good to see Chief Abbess Man Ko there and of course the President of the BLIA, my friend Francis Wong. The BLIA does an enormous amount of work in our community. It makes very constructive contributions throughout Sydney and particularly in the St George region, and I do thank it again for having me along to its tremendous Chinese New Year event.

Multinational Tax Avoidance

Mr SWAN (Lilley) (12:10): Last year the Australian Commissioner of Taxation published the tax details of 1,500 large corporate taxpayers which showed a staggering one-third of these companies paid no tax in 2014. This transparency measure was part of a wider package of ground-breaking legislation contained in the Labor budget of 2013 which was aimed at stopping corporate tax minimisation and evasion. At that time, all of those measures were opposed in total by the Liberal Party. Over our six years in government, the Liberals opposed every measure introduced by Labor to close corporate tax loopholes which had in themselves been opened up by previous Liberal governments.

Remarkably, we saw in the House yesterday the Treasurer boasting about his government's success in cracking down on multinational tax evasion. This is a joke. There is no success and no crackdown from this government. Firstly, we had the Treasurer talking about audits conducted by the ATO. These are audits which would not have been possible without Labor's legislation or the funding that we provided for the audits to occur in the first place. The audits have so far returned over $500 million in revenue to Australia. They were launched by the Labor Party and only made possible by $109 million provided in the 2013 budget.

Secondly, we saw the Treasurer yesterday laughably claim that Labor had voted against action on multinational tax evasion. Nothing could be further from the truth. What we did vote against was a last-minute deal between the Greens and the Liberals to water down tax avoidance legislation.
transparency which we had introduced in the first place. Our record is very substantial in this area. We have consistently supported action against multinational tax evasion and gone further now with a very big proposal to raise a further $7.2 billion by closing down additional tax loopholes.

Our decision to oppose the Liberal-Green deal was vindicated last year, when the ATO reported that one in four public companies earning more than $100 million paid no tax and—get this—nearly half of all foreign companies with total revenues of $21 billion paid no tax. The UN and OECD conservatively estimate that globally this sort of tax evasion is costing $240 billion annually. Gabriel Zucman noted in a recent book called The Scourge of Tax Havens that 55 per cent of all the foreign profits of US firms are now kept in tax havens. The cost to that country is US$130 billion from US firms alone.

One of the most disappointing revelations that we have seen from Senator Dastyari’s tax inquiry has been the extent to which two of Australia’s largest and oldest mining companies, BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto, were exposed for using aggressive transfer pricing activities, costing the public billions of dollars in revenue. The full impact of their activities is yet to be fully realised, but they are part of a scourge which has seen billions of dollars smuggled out of Australia in recent years. Assuming conservatively that 10 per cent of corporate tax revenue over the forward estimates is lost to aggressive minimisation and evasion, a minimum cumulative cost to the budget will be $26 billion over four years.

At the core of these activities is the use of tax havens such as the Cayman Islands and tax shields such as Singapore. When global companies seemingly as respected and as large as BHP and Rio operate in this cavalier way, through tax havens, it compromises the integrity of our social contract and gives the green light to everybody else in the community to go about minimising, avoiding or evading their tax. I say to the directors of these companies and to their chief executives, to all of the major accounting firms that advise them in these practices: you have become part of a scheme and a culture which is diverting essential funding away from the country that nurtured and educated you. Is that the sort of legacy you wish to leave to your country?

The government’s tax agenda is about making the overall personal tax system much more regressive through a higher GST. It is a pea and thimble trick: whack low and middle income earners with a 15 per cent GST and pretend that they can be compensated by personal income tax cuts and that there is going to be all this money left health and education—not true. The end result will be low- and middle-income earnersshouldering a higher tax burden and high-income earners getting a tax cut, and no money for health and education.

### Constitutional Monarchy

Mr NIKOLIC (Bass) (12:15): Every Australia Day we are assailed by a predictable chorus of voices reigniting the monarchy-versus-republic debate. The shiny bauble attracting media attention this year was a freshly signed letter by several state premiers supporting the Australian Republican Movement. But the fact that the premiers signed the letter personally rather than as leaders on behalf of their parliamentary parties was not well reported. When South Australian Labor Premier Jay Weatherill was asked, ‘What sort of republican model do you have in mind?’ he replied, ‘I haven’t directed my mind to that.’ Isn’t that the key point? If you are selling a car, people are entitled to know what sort of car.
Putting aside for a moment whether you support the monarchy or a republic, there is already a gold standard built into our Constitution for changing it. It is called a referendum and it was designed to protect the interests of Tasmania and the other smaller states. A majority of people in a majority of states must support any change, and at least one of the smaller states must join with the three largest states for any constitutional change to succeed.

A plebiscite, on the other hand, is a non-binding poll where a simple majority of voters determine the result. We had one in 1977 when the Fraser government proposed a plebiscite on a national song. While it is defensible to choose a national song by this method, a plebiscite in the context of the monarchy-versus-republic debate is another word for overruling smaller states like Tasmania. The reason for that is that enrolment figures from the Australian Electoral Commission show that the number of voters in New South Wales and Victoria is more than the total number in all other states combined. A plebiscite could therefore potentially override voter sentiment in the smaller states. It is simply not good enough to say, as the Australian Republican Movement's national chairman does, that we should make a change by enhancing the voting authority of the bigger states over the smaller states and let's worry about the detail later. Australians are not mugs. They will only support change when they are convinced of two things: it is a necessity, and the consequences of the change have been thoroughly scrutinised.

It is also worth noting that the coalition has a proud record in our evolving relationship with the Crown. Robert Menzies initiated two crucial pieces of legislation: the Royal Style and Titles Act and the Royal Powers Act, both of 1953. And 33 years later the Australia Act 1986 was implemented. The Royal Style and Titles Act made clear that the Queen was the Queen of Australia. Menzies initiated the Royal Powers Act after doubts were raised about whether the Queen, who was about to visit Australia for the first time, had any powers at all with the Governor-General in place. The Royal Powers Act allowed Her Majesty to open the federal parliament, chair a meeting of the Executive Council, assent to laws and make regulations. The final piece of this puzzle was the Australia Act 1986. Section 7 deserves much greater attention because it makes clear that the functions of the monarch in a state can only be exercised by the Governor of the state unless the monarch is physically present. These three pieces of legislation make it clear that, apart only from the appointment of the Governor-General and state governors—on which of course the Queen always acts consistently with the advice of the Australian Prime Minister or the respective Premier—everything else in relation to the government of Australia is already done by Australians.

While the Queen is our formal head of state, the Governor-General is our executive head of state. Menzies and his legal advisers knew this back in 1953, which is precisely why the Royal Powers Act was passed. The esteemed constitutional scholar Sir Zelman Cowen had no doubt that the Australian monarchy was a separate and distinct institution from that of Great Britain.

Former High Court Justice Michael Kirby said:
… given that we have in Australia in all truth a crowned republic … [why] inflict upon our country the wound of a divisive debate about a republican form of government?

Cowen and Kirby were right. The Prime Minister is also absolutely right when he points to the dangers of prematurely reopening this debate, which risks dividing, rather than uniting, Australians. Given that we are already an independent, proud and confident nation with laws
made by Australian representatives and signed into effect by Australians, more and more Australians are asking the obvious question: what is all the fuss about?"

Throsby Electorate: National Broadband Network

Mr STEPHEN JONES (Throsby) (12:20): When you live in regional Australia, you understand the critical importance of the three things that make a difference between a good life—a life of happiness; and the alternative—a life of misery. Those three things are decent jobs—secure jobs, well-paid jobs—a decent health care system and a decent education system. These have to be our No. 1 priority. That is why it is deeply concerning that this government seems indifferent to the plight of workers who daily see their jobs being lost, often overseas or by overseas workers coming to Australia.

As the parliamentary year starts, I want to remind this government and this Prime Minister that we will not rest until it puts Australian jobs first, and local workers at the front of the queue when it comes to those Australian jobs. Can we, this year, end the madness where Australian workers are woken up in the middle of the night, dragged off a ship, only to be replaced by a foreign crew being paid a fraction of the worker's pay that they were earning? Can we end the madness where government workers are having their jobs offshored and the federal government is seriously putting out expressions of interest on how they can copy other jurisdictions about offshoring Commonwealth government work? This is happening now. Even locally we are seeing the madness where you have highly-skilled workers who are, regrettably, losing their jobs in industries such as manufacturing being looked over. And you have got companies who are doing contracts for the National Broadband Network, shipping in workers to the Illawarra from other regions—from as far away as Queensland and Western Australia—to do the very work that could be done by skilled, local workers. Can we end this madness, Deputy Speaker Kelly?

We know that the Illawarra and the Southern Highlands are resilient regions. They are going through economic change. When you live in a region which is built around a port, you know that your future is intrinsically linked to the rest of the world. But looking to the future and the rest of the world does not mean you close your eyes to the jobs and the needs of your region today. We know that the traditional industries of manufacturing, agriculture and mining have given way to the service industries as the major employers, but they are still critical to the local economy. Government has a role in the transition.

I turn to the National Broadband Network, because fast, reliable broadband is crucial for business—and I know those over on the other side of the chamber, who are interjecting now, do not understand the importance of the National Broadband Network. They railed and campaigned against it, but in the Illawarra and the Southern Highlands, we know it is critical to small business and it is critical to households. I know this, because last year I surveyed my electorate and asked them to tell me about the problems that they were having with telecommunications and broadband. Many of them were telling me that after 3 pm in the afternoon, their broadband crashed and slowed to a crawl. They are telling me that they cannot start their small home based businesses, because they do not have access to an ADSL port.

If we are going to transition the economy of regional areas such as those which I represent and ensure that they have a foot in the new economies and the jobs of the future, then the NBN has to be critical to this. I am committed to doing everything that we can to ensure that
my region enjoys the benefits of a future economy, but that does not mean—and this is a point that we need to ram home to this Prime Minister—that we give up on the jobs of the current workers. Last year before we went away for Christmas and before the parliament adjourned, we had massive debates about the role of the Commonwealth government in ensuring that we continued to have a steel industry in this country.

I welcome the industry minister to come to the Illawarra—a place he did not even know where it existed. He could not tell you where Port Kembla was on the map. I invited him to come to the Illawarra and visit the steelworks, talk to the workers who were losing their jobs—workers who were hoping to transition to new jobs in other industries. It has been months since this invitation was issued, and the Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science has still not been able to find his way to the Illawarra. I invite him to come down to the Illawarra, listen to the workers whose livelihoods are being threatened, listen to the workers who are seeing their jobs offshored and seeing their jobs replaced by foreign workers on foreign crews so that he can put in place the policies that we need in my region.

Community Safety

Mr SUKKAR (Deakin) (12:25): The Commonwealth government has a number of obvious roles that we are responsible for. But as a local member one issue that is constantly raised with me and is at the forefront of my mind at all times is community safety. It is often said that there is no greater obligation on government than to maintain the good law and order for our citizens to allow them to go about their daily lives in safety and in security. This year, I have spent a lot of time since coming back from a great summer break speaking to my electorate, and time and time again the issue of personal safety arises, particularly personal safety for women going about their business. We have seen in Victoria some absolutely disgusting examples of recidivist criminals, who are—and in no surprise to the community—people who have a track record that is an abomination. Time and time again, they are released back onto our streets to cause mayhem, harm and, ultimately, tragedy to the lives of decent families.

As the member for Deakin, one of the areas that I have constantly spoken about and championed—I have spoken to our state government on, written to our state government on, cajoled our state government on and fought our state government on—is to absolutely review and reform our sentencing guidelines of, in fact, the entire judicial system as it relates to crimes against women and children, and, indeed, any serious crimes. Time and time again, I have people speak to me about changing the way that they go about their lives to accommodate for those feelings of a lack of safety. So that may be a woman who gets the earlier train home because she does not want to walk from the station to home in the dark. As a society, we should never accept or allow for people to have to change the way they go about their lives in order to accommodate people who are allowed on the street—and I will not name them because many of these cases are before the courts at the moment—who have committed crime after crime and who have not been sentenced correctly.

One of the things that I have asked of the Victorian state Attorney-General is to undertake a detailed review into changing our sentencing laws from concurrent to cumulative sentencing. In short, if you are convicted of three crimes at the moment and you are imprisoned then you are in prison for the single crime that has the highest penalty. We should have cumulative crimes where, if you are found guilty of three crimes, each sentence that applies to those three
crimes cumulatively adds to your time in jail. In many of the cases that I have looked at, if those criminals had been behind bars for the true amount of time that they should have been, they would not have been on the street and the tragic circumstances of rape, death and mayhem would not have been there.

Broader than that, though, of course, is our obligation to the safety to not just individual citizens but our entire nation. I am very, very proud that last year, through the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Powers, Offences and Other Measures) Bill and the Proceeds of Crime Act, we have been very keen as a government to look at what levers the federal government can pull in order to ensure that we have the strictest possible regime for criminal offences in this country.

Of course, due to our constitutional arrangements the states take primary responsibility for our justice system, so the Commonwealth government is limited in the extent to which it can impact on these changes. I am comfortable—in fact, I am very proud—that this government has done absolutely everything within our purview and within our power to make sure that our criminal laws are as strict as they possibly can be. I am calling on the Victorian state government—indeed, I am calling on every single state government in this country—to say that enough is enough. Enough is enough of us seeing these outrageous criminals who are not sentenced correctly continually undertaking these crimes. We need to reform our— (Time expired)

**Shipping**

Mr CONROY (Charlton) (12:30): I rise to talk about maritime security. There is no more important issue in this place than the security of our nation, and maritime security must be at the heart of it.

Our sovereignty depends upon our maritime security, and this government is undermining that security day by day. We must be able to build, maintain and repair our naval vessels in this country. Yesterday marked the end of the journey for Forgacs workers—900 Forgacs workers have lost their jobs because of the inaction of the Turnbull-Abbott federal government. They have sat on their hands for 2½ years and done nothing about the naval shipbuilding ‘valley of death’. Thousands of naval-building jobs hang around their necks, and they should be ashamed for undermining our maritime security.

An equally important part of our maritime security is the merchant navy, and the ability to move, transport and feed this nation using Australian-crewed maritime vessels. I am proud of the coastal-trading laws put in place by the last Labor government. I am proud of them, and I am ashamed that the current government is undermining them. The current government tried to change them. They tried to introduce Work Choices on water. They tried to ram it through parliament and they were defeated. They were defeated by the Labor Party and the crossbench in the Senate.

Now they are undermining it. They are not respecting the will of the parliament. They are going through the back door by issuing temporary licences for permanent trade. That is a gross disrespect to the parliament and a gross disrespect to the sovereignty of the people embodied in the will of the parliament, and it is ordinary workers in this country who are suffering because of this gross abuse. It is the workers of the MV Portland and it is the workers of the CSL Melbourne—workers marched from their berths and their bunks in the
dead of night. They were replaced by foreign workers being paid as little as two dollars an hour, all because this government does not support Aussie jobs, Aussie workers and Aussie wages.

I have met some of these workers. I had the privilege of attending a rally yesterday where I met some of the workers, and I am going to attend the community picket around CSL Melbourne at the first available opportunity to express my support for these Australian workers who are standing up for Australian wages and conditions. This is what is at stake in this struggle—Work Choices on water, where the current government says, 'If you drive down the Pacific Highway in a truck you get Australian wages; if you drive around the Pacific Highway you have to use an Australian registered truck. But if you are on the blue highway—the great maritime highway that surrounds this nation—you can bring foreign workers in and exploit them. Pay them two dollars an hour by using flag-of-convenience vessels that are often poorly maintained and dangerous.' What is at stake is not just the future for Australian families; what is at stake is the economic prosperity of this nation. We should be able to pay decent wages to Australian workers so they can live and prosper in this country.

There is also the environmental risk. I represent the beautiful Hunter region, where the Pasha Bulker washed up into the electorate of my neighbour, the member for Newcastle, in 2007. That was a foreign-flagged vessel with a foreign crew. It washed up there because they ignored instructions from the port authorities. I have seen the damage done to the Great Barrier Reef by foreign-flagged vessels ignoring safety warnings; they do not understand the environment and do not understand what is at stake. So there are great environmental issues at stake here if we allow Work Choices on water.

And there are huge national security issues. Every year, like my colleagues, the members for Newcastle and Shortland, I attend Merchant Navy Memorial Day—

Mrs McNamara: So do I!

Mr CONROY: So does the member for Dobell. I am glad she is associating herself with my remarks! It is the day where we commemorate the sacrifice of the thousands of merchant mariners who lost their lives fighting for freedom. They lost their lives in some of the worst conditions one could imagine—whether it was in the Arctic convoys going to Russia or in the South Pacific. We honour their contribution and their sacrifice. We need to honour it by keeping the merchant navy alive and by keeping the maritime industry alive because we never know when we are going to need them.

Work Choices on water, ignoring the Labor party's great coastal trading laws, undermines that. It says that we do not care who staffs our vessels and we do not care where they are flagged; we just want the cheapest possible transport. That same logic could easily be applied to Australian truckies and it could easily be applied to ignoring Australian environmental laws. It is the thin end of the wedge and it is an un-Australian approach. I stand proudly with the MV Portland crew, I stand proudly with the CSL Melbourne crew and I stand proudly with the Maritime Union of Australia and say 'no more'. We need to stand up for Australian workers, Australian wages and Australian conditions and say 'no more' to undermining our maritime security.
Hinkler Electorate: Broadband

Mr Pitt (Hinkler) (12:35): It is no secret that I have been a strong advocate for the NBN and the benefits it will bring to people living in regional Australia. I wore a track to Malcolm Turnbull's door when he was Minister for Communications, which resulted in Bundaberg becoming one of only 10 sites prioritised nationally for fibre-to-the-node. In December Bundaberg became the first city in Queensland—and only the second in Australia—to connect to the NBN fibre-to-the-node network. There are more than 23,000 premises in Bundaberg that are now in the fibre-to-the-node footprint.

Unfortunately, as so often is the case with the introduction of anything new, there have been some teething problems. Most of the problems rest squarely at the feet of the retail service providers. About a dozen constituents have sought my office's help after being totally disconnected—they lost both internet and phone—for prolonged periods of time. Others have experienced significant delays in getting a technician to attend their home or business.

The majority of complaints have been from Telstra customers. For example, one Bundaberg business had their phone line disconnected in the process of trying to switch to NBN. This was the same line they used for EFTPOS, causing massive interruptions to the day-to-day running of their business. After much back and forth, the business was eventually offered a wireless dongle as an interim fix, until a more permanent solution could be found. It is my understanding that, in most cases, Telstra has an obligation to its business customers to provide a temporary alternative and to do it quickly.

A Bundaberg teacher from Avenell Heights also contacted my office after having no phone or internet at her home for 20 days. It is simply not good enough. She had reported it to Telstra, as had my office. At one point she was told she was connected, but she was not. I am pleased to say she was connected a couple of days ago.

We have also heard some alarming stories from residents about hardline marketing by Telstra. A 79-year-old disabled Norville woman contacted my office. She was very upset after being called by an aggressive telemarketer. She claimed that the telemarketer kept pushing her to make an appointment for a technician to come out to connect her to NBN. The resident insisted she wanted time to consider her options, but the telemarketer persisted 'like a dog with a bone'. My staff explained to her that she did not have to make a decision right now; she has 18 months to switch her phone line over. They also advised her to shop around.

Unfortunately, as a result of Telstra flooding the region with marketing material, many elderly residents think Telstra is their only option and the only provider of the NBN. I only wish Telstra would invest as much money in technicians as they do in marketing. We need boots on the ground and not a never-ending sales pitch. My advice to Hinkler residents is to consider what their personal requirements are. Do you have an EFTPOS terminal, fax, alarm system or medic alert? How many people are in your home or business, how many devices do you have, and how do you use the internet? Make sure you discuss your requirements with more than one retail service provider and find out what is best for your situation. Shop around. That is my advice.

I should point out that there have been many happy FTTN customers too, but they are far less likely—as anyone in this room knows—to contact their federal member's office to
express their views. A caller to ABC Wide Bay talkback recently said that NBN was the best thing since sliced bread. He said his speeds had doubled and his monthly bill had halved.

There are many factors involved in the NBN rollout, such as engineering plans, cultural and heritage sites, local government approval, areas of greatest need, population density, distance, as well as existing contractual and commercial arrangements with Telstra, the owners of the existing copper network. It took 70 years to build the copper network, but the NBN will be rolled out and connected to around 10 million premises, and is being built in 10 years. It is the biggest infrastructure project in Australia's history. So it is important to remember that the process of switching over to fibre-to-the-node is far easier compared to the all-fibre NBN that was being rolled out by the Labor government. Labor's all-fibre FTTP plan would have involved excavation, new equipment and additional equipment in each building and installed inside every single existing home.

I do feel for the people in my electorate who are having difficulties. It is impossible to run a business or do school homework with no internet or phone line. But I want them to know that their concerns are not falling on deaf ears. It seems there is a lot of buck-passing happening. Retailers are blaming the NBN; nbn co are blaming retailers. At the end of the day, I do not care whose fault it is; these issues just need to be fixed so residents and businesses can use the NBN to its full potential.

Finally, I have not forgotten those who are without broadband in many of Hinkler's small towns. Bundaberg is a point of interconnect for the NBN, and in just two years time more than 70,000 Hinkler premises will have either FTTP, FTTN or fixed wireless NBN. This will be a successful rollout; the technology will work. The technical people with the actual knowledge whom I have spoken to have advised me it will be incredibly successful and will be a great boon for regional Australia.

**Shipping**

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler) (12:40): Yesterday I attended a rally outside of Parliament House with the crew of the MV Portland. Last month, these five workers—Warren Hopkins, Liam Conaghan, Brett Kolpin, Zac Kinzett and Michael Pawson—were woken up in the middle of the night and frogmarched off the MV Portland to have their jobs replaced by a foreign crew being paid foreign wages on that ship that had served the local community at Portland, and Alcoa as a company, taking product from Western Australia to Victoria for the alumina refinery there. They are to lose their jobs. They are the human face of this government's ideologically driven attack on shipping: real men with real families, real bills to pay and real food to put on the table.

Parliament rejected the 'Work Choices on water' legislation in November, but the government is abusing the temporary licence provisions to impose its program through the back door. No other G20 nation does this. Every other economically significant nation in the world understands the importance of having a domestic shipping industry. The MV Portland takes that freight from WA to Portland and back again about 20 times each and every year; there is no way possible that you can define that journey and that domestic freight task as temporary. Yet a temporary licence will be allowed for a foreign ship with a foreign crew and a foreign flag on the back to replace that Australian vessel with an Australian flag and an Australian crew creating Australian jobs. This is a government that wants to take the
Australian flag off the back of Australian ships and replace it with the white flag of surrender when it comes to Australian jobs.

You know full well, Madam Deputy Speaker Claydon, that the same thing is occurring in your great city of Newcastle as we speak, with the attempt to replace the *Melbourne* and its Australian workforce with foreign seafarers. This was a piece of legislation last year which clearly stated in its intention that it would destroy Australian jobs. It said this:

Many of the operators currently operating under the Australian General Register would likely re-flag their vessels in order to compete with the foreign operators who enjoy the benefit of comparatively lower wage rates. Australian seafarer jobs would be adversely affected as Australian operators re-flag from the Australian General Register.

Ship operators are likely to replace Australian seafarers … with foreign seafarers

That is what the legislation said and that is why it was rejected in the Senate. Yet we have a government that is not only undermining Australian jobs but now undermining Australian democracy and the intention of this parliament. This parliament clearly found it unacceptable that we would carry legislation that was un-Australian; was not in the national economic interest, with the loss of those jobs and those taxes paid in Australia; was not in our environmental interest given that the ships *Shen Neng*, *Pasha Bulker* and *Pacific Adventurer*, which created environmental disasters around our coast, were all highlighted by having foreign flags on their backs; and is certainly not in our national security interests. Labor, and I think all Australians, should want to see the Australian flag flying proudly on the back of vessels engaged in trade around the Australian coast and around the world. I pay tribute to those brave seafarers who stood up not just for their own jobs but for the national interest by exposing the disastrous consequences of the government's actions when it comes to the MV *Portland* and the disastrous consequences of their anti-Australian shipping policies.

**Citizenship**

_Mrs McNAMARA* (Dobell) (12:45): I take this opportunity to reflect on Australia Day and citizenship. Australia Day is a day when we reflect on the values that make our country great and acknowledge the citizens that contribute to and define Australia's values. It may be said that the decision to make 26 January the commencement date of Australia's first citizenship legislation linked Australia Day with the concept of citizenship. Taking an oath or affirmation of citizenship is the ultimate expression of loyalty and commitment to this great nation of ours. We, as Australians, value our concept of citizenship, particularly our commitment and loyalty to our great nation.

Australians are trusting and compassionate by nature but perhaps too much so, to our detriment. Sadly, perhaps until recent world events, we have been somewhat complacent in thinking that all those who come to our shores share our values and beliefs and concept of citizenship. The Greek philosopher Aristotle once said of citizenship, 'It is not always the same thing to be a good man and a good citizen.' What Aristotle was referring to was that there is nothing virtuous in and of citizenship itself; rather it is what we do with it that counts. It is how we exercise our responsibilities as citizens to participate respectfully and considerately in public discussion and debate, always working towards the betterment of our great nation through service to our community.

Australia has a rich history that has shaped our culture, our laws and our systems of governance, and our unified and harmonious society. Our country has been built on the
combined contributions of our Indigenous people and those who came later from across the world. No-one would ever dispute that Australia is truly the lucky country, but not for one moment should we ever consider that our great nation was born from luck. Since the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788, consisting of around 1,330 people, our nation and her people have endured famine and adversity, but through iron will and determination our nation prospered. The foundation of the Australian culture and all that we value about being an Australian lies with the tenacity of the contribution of our forefathers—the convicts, marines, free settlers, migrants and Indigenous Australians. Now as then, as citizens of this wonderful land we should never take this great nation of ours for granted. Citizenship is a public commitment to embrace Australian values and institutions and brings with it certain responsibilities and privileges, such as the right to vote and access to an Australian passport. Citizenship also brings with it civil and social rights, especially the right to express cultural heritage and beliefs, as well as the responsibility to accept the rights of others to express their heritage and beliefs.

We are proudly a multicultural society that is vibrant, colourful, tolerant and cohesive. Australia and its people are defined by their defence of freedom, democracy, tolerance, a fair go and, importantly, mateship. As Australians, we live within and are protected by a strong justice system. We embrace living in harmony and peacefulness in our local and national communities.

Australia is well known as a land of opportunity, and we certainly do have boundless opportunities to live and grow and raise a family in a free and open society, without fear of oppression, systemic violence or censorship. As Australian citizens, we should all share in the common good and the bounty of our great land. In return for the honour of being an Australian, we owe Australia and our fellow Australians our duty to be good neighbours and good citizens.

As collective members of our inclusive Australian society, citizenship is a demonstration of our commitment to honour and respect one another and to uphold our democratic beliefs, rights and liberties. For those coming to our shores, we welcome you to participate in our way of life, our culture and our values. But only through sharing the same values and respect for Australia will we continue to thrive and our nation remain strong and secure. All our great nation asks for in return is mutual respect—respect for our way of life, respect for fellow Australians, respect for other religions, respect of our past and respect for the contribution of Indigenous Australians—and together we will create a thriving, strong, secure and prosperous Australia that is and always will be a land of opportunity for all.

**Goods and Services Tax**

Ms ROWLAND (Greenway) (12:50): I rise today to discuss the extremely damaging impact that an increase in the GST would have on small businesses around the country. As the Turnbull government continues to soften the ground for an increase in the GST, it is prudent to examine the devastating effect this would have on Australia's small business community. Small businesses employed around 4.5 million people in 2012-13, approximately 43 per cent of private sector employment. In the same period small businesses contributed around 33 per cent of private industry-added value, that is, the contribution by businesses to GDP. It is therefore crucial that we do all we can to assist small businesses in their growth and reject proposals that stifle this growth. A vital part of this is protecting household consumption.
Members of the government like to rattle off these figures but, when it comes to the crunch, they are completely ignorant about the impact that a hit to consumer confidence from a GST increase would have on these businesses. This is also at a time when the national accounts show that, for the past three years, average wages have been falling by 0.4 per cent a year after allowing for inflation, and wage growth is the lowest in records going back to the early 1960s. As well as this, consumer confidence just had its worst start to a year since 2008, just before the onset of the global financial crisis. This is the context in which those opposite want to increase the GST.

In Australia, household spending constitutes about three-fifths of the Australian economy. When we shop, visit restaurants and cafes, hire tradespeople or purchase services, we are providing income to other people and adding to the growth of small businesses in our local communities. That is the nature of our economy. The key to sustaining and improving this is protecting consumption and encouraging people's ability to spend and consume goods and services throughout the economy. If this is our motivation—and it should be—then one of the worst things a government could do is jack up a regressive tax on consumption.

Increasing or broadening of the GST would have a devastating impact on low-income earners and small businesses throughout Australia, and small business owners know it. They are telling me in my local community, they are telling me as I travel around Australia, and I know for a fact they are telling government MPs. What disdain from an out-of-touch Prime Minister and Treasurer that their own backbenchers are being referred to as 'bed-wetters' by their own colleagues over their concerns, as reported in today’s media.

I recently had the pleasure of visiting some small businesses in the Queen Victoria Market with Labor's outstanding candidate for Melbourne, Sophie Ismail, and the message we received, loud and clear, was that an increased or broadened GST would mean people will consume less.

This is supported by the research. A paper for the International Tax and Public Finance journal explored the effect of a change in the effective VAT rate on the level of per capita aggregate household consumption in EU countries from 1960 to 2005, and it found that under all estimation methods and empirical specifications, the VAT is negatively related to the level of per capita private consumption. Specifically, the paper found that a one percentage point increase in the VAT rate typically leads to a one percentage point reduction in the level of private consumption in the short run and a larger reduction, about 60 per cent, in the long run. In other words, an increase in the GST—or, in this case, the VAT—was found to result in an equivalent reduction in consumption in the short turn and a larger reduction in the long turn. As the shadow Assistant Treasurer, the member for Fraser, has succinctly pointed out:

Individual businesses can’t afford to see their sales shrink, and neither can the Australian economy. Falling consumption can actually tip a nation into outright recession, as one of our major trading partners recently found out. In 2014 the Japanese government raised their consumption tax from 5 per cent to 8 per cent. Consumption dropped by almost 2 percentage points in the months that followed, taking Japan’s weak economy into recession.

We on this side of the chamber know that an increased or broadened GST will hit the family budget. It will hit Australian small businesses and the economy as a whole.

As David Uren writes in a very insightful piece in The Australian today:
There is a risk that the government’s tax reform may be a hit to consumer confidence, which may already be softening under the impact of falling share prices and softer housing markets.

This is a stark warning and one that must be heeded. It is one of the many reasons why Labor will not support an increased or broadened GST that will smash confidence and hit small businesses right around the country.

**Migration**

Mr GOODENOUGH (Moore) (12:55): Business migration is a vital part of our economy and society. I wish to highlight the effects of recent changes to the complying investment framework for the Significant Investor Visa Program, which came into effect on 1 July 2015. The changes excluded a number of eligible investment categories for business migrants who bring in a minimum of $5 million under the visa, including investment in proprietary limited companies, government bonds and property development projects. In their place, higher risk investments into venture capital and complying funds have been mandated.

The rationale behind the measure is that the government sought to redirect capital brought into Australia by holders of Significant Investor Visas into more productive sectors of the economy with existing thin capital flows such as venture capital, start-ups, technology, research and development, and operating businesses, which create employment rather than the passive investments in government bonds and real estate, which do little to stimulate the economy. Whilst the government's efforts in promoting greater investment in venture capital and other higher risk funds being included as part of the complying investment framework are positive measures, the decision to exclude investment in proprietary limited companies and property development projects has proved problematic in practice.

As evidence of the situation, in the year leading up to the change which occurred on 1 July 2015, 590 SIV visa applications were approved, equating to over $2.95 billion of investment capital flowing into Australia. As a benchmark, during this period the SIV program was achieving more than 128 applications per month on average. However, since the changes were implemented, this number has dramatically fallen to an average of only eight applications per month, representing about six per cent of the original volumes. This is very serious, and as a nation we could be forgoing up to $7.2 billion in investment through the business migration program per year due to the recent changes in the program. That is without factoring in the major downstream flow-on effects on job creation and new business start-ups in our economy.

Of the 2,573 SIV applications lodged since 2012, 1,544 applications—equating to more than 60 per cent of the total applications—were lodged in the 12 months leading up to the change on 1 July. This indicates that there was a major ramp-up of awareness and interest in this program just before the change, which appears to have caused a major drop in the program numbers. Given that over 90 per cent of SIV applications were from China and Hong Kong, such changes would most likely cause a decline in the inflow of capital. According to Mr James Clarke from the WA Branch of the Australia China Business Council, from his professional experience with Chinese clients, he believed that they are generally risk averse, conservative investors who prefer investment in proprietary companies in which they can directly participate in management decision making. They also have a preference for bricks and mortar property development projects.
The industry is advocating for the reinstatement of the previously permitted complying investment options to be restored to the SIV program, including investment in proprietary limited companies and property development projects. Investment in property development projects should be differentiated from real estate investment, as new mixed-use business developments create construction jobs and downstream demand in other sectors of the economy, as well as increasing the supply of dwellings for the domestic market, increasing housing affordability.

I make the case for a ministerial review of the recent changes to the complying investment framework for the SIV program, with a view to providing an adequate response by the government to the decline in investment through the SIV business migration program.

Question agreed to.

Federation Chamber adjourned at 13:00.
QUESTIONS IN WRITING  

Department of Employment: Departmental Hospitality  
(Question No. 1433 - Amended)  

Mr Conroy asked the Minister representing the Minister for Employment, in writing, on 17 August 2015:  

(a) what total sum was spent,  
(b) for what functions was the catering and hospitality,  
(c) on what date(s) did each function occur, and at what location(s), and  
(d) for each function, what sum was spent on (i) meals, (ii) drinks, (iii) hospitality staff, and (iv) other costs.

Mr Pyne: The Minister for Employment has authorised the following answer to the honourable member's question:  

The figures provided in the response to House of Representatives parliamentary question 1433 that was tabled on 21 October 2015 did not include all items of expenditure on catering, hospitality and other associated costs during 2014-15 due to an administrative error.

Total hospitality expenditure (excluding GST) for the Department of Employment for the period was $172,425.38.

Please refer to the table attached for a breakdown of events with a cost exceeding $1,000. Events costing less than $1,000 are grouped together as to provide details for each item of expenditure would require an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Revised expenditure (Ex GST)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22-Jul-14</td>
<td>Queensland Art Gallery, Stanley Place, South Brisbane QLD</td>
<td>G20 - Dinner for 80 delegates for Taskforce for Employment delegates</td>
<td>13,868.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-Jul-14</td>
<td>Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary, 708 Jersmon Rd, Fig Tree Pocket QLD</td>
<td>G20 – lunch and cultural experience for Taskforce for Employment delegates</td>
<td>7,296.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-Sep-14</td>
<td>Melbourne Cricket Ground, Brunton Ave, Richmond VIC</td>
<td>G20 - Labour and Employment Ministerial meeting welcome function</td>
<td>26,074.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-Sep-14</td>
<td>The Dome, 333 Collins St, Melbourne VIC</td>
<td>Catering for Labour and Employment Ministerial meeting Dinner</td>
<td>23,913.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-11-Sep-14</td>
<td>Gifts for delegates to the G20 Labour and Employment Ministerial Meeting</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>14,414.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-May-15</td>
<td>Double Tree Hilton, Darwin</td>
<td>Employment Services training, 45 attendees</td>
<td>1,172.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-Jun-15</td>
<td>Rydges Southbank, Townsville</td>
<td>Employment Services training, 71 attendees</td>
<td>2,693.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-Oct-14</td>
<td>Rydges Southbank, Brisbane</td>
<td>Employment Services Information Session 2015-</td>
<td>1,218.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Attendees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29-Jul-14</td>
<td>The Old Woolstore, Hobart</td>
<td>Employment Services training, 2020</td>
<td>120 attendees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-28 May</td>
<td>Holiday Inn, Melbourne Airport</td>
<td>Labour Economics Organisation Conference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-May-15</td>
<td>Double Tree Hilton, Darwin</td>
<td>Employment Services training, 2015</td>
<td>61 attendees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-Oct-14</td>
<td>Hilton, Adelaide</td>
<td>Employment Services Information session 2015</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-Aug-14</td>
<td>Sofotel Broadbeach, Gold Coast</td>
<td>Seasonal Worker Program Conference, 150</td>
<td>150 attendees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-Dec-14</td>
<td>Novotel, Brisbane</td>
<td>Employment Services training, 2015</td>
<td>100 attendees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-Jun-15</td>
<td>Mantra, Darwin</td>
<td>Employment Services training, 2015</td>
<td>40 attendees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-12 Aug-14</td>
<td>Mecure, Cairns</td>
<td>Employment Services training, 2015</td>
<td>35 attendees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-Dec-14</td>
<td>Rydges World Square, Sydney</td>
<td>Employment Services training, 2015</td>
<td>110 attendees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-26 June-15</td>
<td>Rydges Southbank, Townsville</td>
<td>Employment Services training, 2015</td>
<td>79 attendees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-18 June-15</td>
<td>Rydges Southbank, Brisbane</td>
<td>Employment Services training, 2015</td>
<td>156 attendees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Jun-15</td>
<td>Mantra on Russell, Melbourne</td>
<td>Employment Services training, 2015</td>
<td>72 attendees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-19 June-15</td>
<td>Rydges Southbank, Brisbane</td>
<td>Employment Services training, 2015</td>
<td>155 attendees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-10 July-14</td>
<td>Novotel, Perth</td>
<td>Employment Services training, 2015</td>
<td>74 attendees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-Jun-15</td>
<td>Mecure, Adelaide</td>
<td>Employment Services training, 2015</td>
<td>119 attendees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-Aug-14</td>
<td>East Hotel, Canberra</td>
<td>Seasonal Worker Programme conference, 93</td>
<td>93 attendees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-May-15</td>
<td>Rydges, Sydney</td>
<td>Employment Services training, 2015</td>
<td>97 attendees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Jul-14</td>
<td>Mantra on Russell, Melbourne</td>
<td>Employment Services training, 2015</td>
<td>138 attendees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13 March-2015</td>
<td>Hotel Grand Chancellor, Launceston</td>
<td>The Joint Commonwealth, Tasmanian State Government and OECD Workshop on Job Creation and Local Economic Development</td>
<td>8,695.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Events less than $1,000 22,890.19

**Total** 172,425.38

**Department of Health: Costs associated with change of scope (Question No. 1691)**

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Health, in writing, on 15 October 2015:

To ask the Minister representing the Minister for Rural Health—In respect of the Minister's appointment on 21 September 2015, will the department provide an itemised account of all associated
costs, including (a) signage, (b) stationery, including business cards and letterheads, (c) web design and IT services, (d) vehicular signage and painting, and (e) marketing materials, including logos, pamphlets, and audio-visual materials such as DVDs.

**Ms Ley:** The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

a) Nil
b) Stationery costs were $1613.52 GST Exclusive.
c) Changes to the department's websites were undertaken as business as usual.
d) Nil
e) Nil

**Department of Health: Departmental and Agency Venue Hire Costs 2014-15**

(Question No. 1962)

**Mr Conroy** asked the Minister for Health, in writing, on 10 November 2015: 10 November 2015:

In respect of the departmental and agency venue hire in 2014-15, (a) what total sum was spent, (b) what functions were these hires for, and (c) on what dates were these functions held.

**Ms Ley:** The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

(a - c) The Department of Health's corporate systems do not allow for the requested information to be collected in one report. To provide the level of detail requested would involve an unreasonable diversion of resources.

**Medibank Private**

(Question No. 2031)

**Ms Rowland** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance, in writing, on 12 November 2015:

What conditions were in the Medibank Private sale terms about keeping branches open and why is the Blacktown Medibank Private office closing while others, including Parramatta and Castle Hill, are not.

**Mr Morrison:** The Minister for Finance has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

The **Medibank Private Sale Act 2006** requires Medibank Private to maintain a substantial business and operational presence in Australia.

As an ASX traded healthcare company providing private health insurance and health solutions, to 3.9 million people in Australia and New Zealand, decisions around how retail store locations (including, Blacktown, Parramatta, and Castle Hill) are optimised for the benefit of customers and shareholders are commercial operational issues that are the responsibility of Medibank Private's management and Board.

**Perth Freight Link: Documents**

(Question No. 2032)

**Ms MacTiernan** asked the Minister for Cities and the Built Environment, in writing, on 12 November 2015:

(1) Why did the Minister not transfer documents relating to the Perth Freight Link to the new Minister with responsibility for this project.

(2) Where are the documents that where identified by the Minister's then Chief of Staff as being available for release under Freedom of Information applications AMO 16-01 and 16-02.
Mr Hunt: The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) The Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development is responsible for briefing, and providing relevant documents to, Ministers in the Infrastructure and Regional Development portfolio.

(2) As outlined in part 2.44 of the Australian Information Commissioner’s Freedom of Information guidelines, where an FOI request is made to a minister and there is a change of minister in the course of the request or an IC review, the new minister is the respondent. If the requested document is not in the possession of the new minister, the FOI Act will not apply as the document is no longer an ‘official document of a minister’.

This approach is entirely consistent with the decision taken by the FOI Commissioner when Philip Morris Ltd had originally sought documents from the then-Treasurer, the Member for Lilley (Mr Swan MP), who was replaced by the Member for McMahon (Mr Bowen MP). This access was denied on the basis that the documents were no longer in the possession of the Treasurer, making them no longer official documents of the Treasurer. Therefore there was no right of access to the documents under the FOI Act.

National reporting requirements for adverse reactions to vaccines
(Question No. 2033)

Ms MacTiernan asked the Minister for Health, in writing, on 12 November 2015:

(1) What are the national reporting requirements for adverse reactions to vaccines that are listed on the National Immunisation Programme Schedule.

(2) Which states and territories mandate reporting of adverse reactions to vaccines.

Ms Ley: The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) Sponsors of vaccines (drug companies) are required to report to the TGA all serious adverse reactions to vaccines within 15 days of their becoming aware of them, and they must record all adverse events and be able to provide this information when requested by the TGA. Health professionals and consumers may report adverse reactions directly to the TGA, on a voluntary basis.

Most reports of suspected adverse reactions to vaccines are received by the TGA from state and territory health departments under a cooperative agreement for the prompt and regular sharing of information between the Commonwealth and states and territories.

(2) Adverse events following immunisation are notifiable diseases (as a requirement of state and territory legislation), and thus subject to mandatory reporting by health professionals, in the following states and territories: New South Wales, Northern Territory, Queensland, and Western Australia.

Genetic markers and adverse reactions to some vaccines
(Question No. 2034)

Ms MacTiernan asked the Minister for Health, in writing, on 12 November 2015:

In light of research showing clear links between specific genetic markers and adverse reactions to some vaccines, why is this not listed in the Australian Immunisation Register Immunisation Exemption Form as a medical contraindication.

Ms Ley: The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

Expert advice provided by the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance has confirmed that there are no genetic markers for which there is a reliable and clinically relevant association with adverse events following immunisation. Based on this advice, genetic markers will not be listed as a valid reason for exemption on the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR) Immunisation Medical Exemption Form.
National Immunisation Program Schedule
(Question No. 2035)

Ms MacTiernan asked the Minister for Health, in writing, on 23 November 2015:

In respect of each of the vaccines in the National Immunisation Program Schedule, how many adverse reactions have been reported in the past five years.

Ms Ley: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

Approximately 19 million vaccinations (including National Immunisation Program (NIP) vaccines and private market vaccines) were provided to children aged 0-4 during the period 1 January 2011 to 19 August 2015 with a total of 11,097 suspected adverse reaction reports or an adverse reaction reporting rate of approximately 0.06%. Approximately 2.8 million vaccinations (including NIP vaccines and private market vaccine) were provided to children aged 10-15 years in the same period with a total of 3,630 suspected adverse reaction reported (approximately 0.13%).

The breakdown by vaccine and age group is as follows:

Table 1: Reports of suspected adverse reactions following vaccinations in children aged 0-4 years from 1 January 2011 to 19 August 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vaccine</th>
<th>Suspected reaction reports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis B (hepB)</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis B, diphtheria, tetanus, acellular pertussis (whooping cough), Haemophilus influenzae type b, inactivated poliomyelitis (polio) (hepB-DTPa-Hib-IPV)</td>
<td>2,228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pneumococcal conjugate (13vPCV)</td>
<td>1,913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotavirus</td>
<td>2,074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR)</td>
<td>2,117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measles, mumps, rubella and varicella (chickenpox) (MMRV)</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diphtheria, tetanus, acellular pertussis (whooping cough) and inactivated poliomyelitis (polio) DTPa-IPV</td>
<td>1,977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haemophilus influenzae type b and meningococcal C (Hib-Men C)</td>
<td>421</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Reports of suspected adverse reactions following vaccinations in children aged 10-15 years from 1 January 2011 to 19 August 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vaccine</th>
<th>Suspected reaction reports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Varicella (chickenpox)</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human papillomavirus (HPV)</td>
<td>1,933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diphtheria, tetanus and acellular pertussis (whooping cough) (dTpa)</td>
<td>833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis B</td>
<td>507</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
- Inclusion of a suspected adverse reaction report in the tables does not imply causality between the administration of the vaccine and the adverse event, as the reports received contain suspected associations that reflect the observations of an individual reporter. The relationship is usually not certain and the symptom may be related to an underlying illness or to other factors. There might be no relationship between the adverse reaction and the vaccine it may be a coincidence that the reaction occurred after a vaccine was administered.
The vast majority of side effects following vaccination are minor and short-lived, the most common being local reactions at the injection site, fever or tiredness.

Suspected adverse event data is for all vaccines on the child and school immunisation programs only, as data for at risk adult population groups under the NIP is not identifiable within the adverse reaction reporting data base.

Suspected adverse reaction reports include all vaccines whether provided free of charge under the NIP or purchased by individuals through the private market, as the suspected adverse event data does not identify how an individual may have accessed the vaccine.

The total reports across all vaccines is higher than actual reports made, because a single suspected adverse reaction report may contain more than one vaccine, which means that it is counted against each vaccine (i.e. one report may be counted multiple times).

The data does not provide any analysis of potential trends in the rate of suspected adverse reaction reporting, for example, where reporting may have increased due to raised awareness of the importance of reporting, or increased vaccinations with the addition of new vaccines to the schedule, over the five year time period.

The data provided is for vaccines currently available under the NIP (as at 20 April 2015) and does not account for any changes to the NIP schedule in previous years.

The majority of reports are received from state and territory Health departments, however, data is provided from all reporting sources.

**Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action**

(Question No. 2043)

Mr Danby asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the 23 November 2015:

What progress has Iran made in respect of the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Ms Julie Bishop: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

See the International Atomic Energy Agency Director General's report to the Board of Governors on the IAEA website.

**Centrifuges at the Natanz and Fordow Plants**

(Question No. 2044)

Mr Danby asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the 23 November 2015:

Is it a fact that that Ali Shamkhani, Secretary of the National Security Council, announced on 10 November 2015 that Iran had ceased shutting down centrifuges at the Natanz and Fordow plants after 20 Iranian parliamentarians wrote to the Iranian President informing him that deactivating the centrifuges contradicted the directives of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Ms Julie Bishop: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

See the IAEA Director General's report to the Board of Governors on the IAEA website.

**Iran: United Nations Security Council resolution**

(Question No. 2045)

Mr Danby asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the 23 November 2015:

Is it a fact that Iran has committed a violation of a United Nations Security Council resolution in the past two months, by test-firing the Emad long-range ballistic missile.

Ms Julie Bishop: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:
The UN Iran Panel of Experts has concluded that Iran’s 10 October launch of an Emad ballistic missile was a violation of paragraph 9 of Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1929.

**Iran: United Nations Security Council resolution**

(Question No. 2046)

**Mr Danby** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the 23 November 2015:

Is it a fact that since the signing of the agreement with P5+1, Iran has deployed a further expeditionary force to Syria to fight for President Bashar al-Assad; if so, was this deployment a violation of a United Nations Security Council resolution.

**Ms Julie Bishop:** The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

Iran has deployed troops to Syria at the request of the Government of Syria. The issue of violation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions involving Iran is a matter for the UN Iran Panel of Experts. They have not made a determination on the issue.

**Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade: Advisory Council**

(Question No. 2049)

**Mr Conroy** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in writing, on the 23 November 2015:

(1) Has the Minister established an Advisory Council; if not, why not. (2) If the Minister has established an Advisory Council, (a) on what date, (b) who are the members, (c) what are its functions and purpose (mission/charter), (d) how often has it met and what were the outcomes, (e) for each meeting, will the Minister's department provide the following, the (i) date, (ii) name of the host city/town, (iii) attendance record, (iv) venue and why it was chosen, (v) details of allowances paid to Advisory Council members for expenses, including but not limited to travel and accommodation, (vi) itemised details of hospitality and catering, including but not limited to the cost of meals, beverages and any other costs associated with food and beverages, and (f) has the Minister's department provided any equipment to Advisory Council members, including but not limited to (i) business cards, (ii) personalised pens and stationery, (iii) mobile phones, (iv) laptops, (v) tablet devices, and (vi) email addresses; if so, can an itemised breakdown of these costs be provided.

**Ms Julie Bishop:** The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

(1) No. A separate foreign affairs advisory council on deregulatory matters was not required.

(2) N/A

**Department of Agriculture and Water Resources: Advisory Council**

(Question No. 2053)

**Mr Conroy** (1) Has the Minister established an Advisory Council; if not, why not. (2) If the Minister has established an Advisory Council, (a) on what date, (b) who are the members, (c) what are its functions and purpose (mission/charter), (d) how often has it met and what were the outcomes, (e) for each meeting, will the Minister's department provide the following, the (i) date, (ii) name of the host city/town, (iii) attendance record, (iv) venue and why it was chosen, (v) details of allowances paid to Advisory Council members for expenses, including but not limited to travel and accommodation, (vi) itemised details of hospitality and catering, including but not limited to the cost of meals, beverages and any other costs associated with food and beverages, and (f) has the Minister's department provided any equipment to Advisory Council members, including but not limited to (i) business cards, (ii) personalised pens and stationery, (iii) mobile phones, (iv) laptops, (v) tablet devices, and (vi) email addresses; if so, can an itemised breakdown of these costs be provided.

**Mr Joyce:** The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:
(1) Yes. The Agricultural Industry Advisory Council (AIAC).
(2) (a) The AIAC was established on 29 January 2014.
(b) The list of council members is at Attachment A.
(c) The purpose of the AIAC is to provide the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources with information, advice and recommendations from a cross-section of industries and stakeholders on contemporary issues affecting Australia's agricultural, fishing and forestry sectors.
(d) Since 29 January 2014, the AIAC has met eight times. The minutes from AIAC meetings are not on the public record. Discussions between the Minister and his council are conducted with the expectation of confidentiality in line with the council's terms of engagement.
(e) (i) and (ii) The AIAC met face-to-face on the following dates and locations:
   11-12 April 2014—Rutherglen, Victoria
   21-22 August 2014—Darwin, Northern Territory
   31 October 2014—Sydney New South Wales
   1 April 2015—Devonport, Tasmania
   15 July 2015—Bunbury, Western Australia
   18 November 2015—Brisbane, Queensland
   The AIAC also met via teleconference on:
   10 June 2014
   17 June 2014
   17 June 2015
(iii) Attendance records for the eight meetings are at Attachment B.
(iv) Meeting venues are outlined below:
   11-12 April 2014—All Saints Winery, Rutherglen, Victoria—Council member (host) business
   21 August 2014—Office of Northern Australian Development, Darwin, Northern Territory—Council member (host) workplace
   31 October 2014—Westpac Group, Sydney New South Wales—Council member (host) workplace
   1 April 2015—Ghost Rock Vineyard, Devonport, Tasmania—venue was chosen due to the appropriate facilities (Wi-Fi, teleconference and AV) available to conduct meeting and supporting events
   15 July 2015—Light House Beach Resort, Bunbury, Western Australia—venue was chosen due to the appropriate facilities (Wi-Fi, teleconference and AV) available to conduct meeting and supporting events
   18 November 2015—Pullman Hotel, Brisbane, Queensland—venue was chosen due to the appropriate facilities (Wi-Fi, teleconference and AV) available to conduct meeting and supporting events.
   (v) AIAC members are not paid. The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources covers travel, accommodation and incidental expenses as outlined in Attachment C.
   (vi) Itemised details of hospitality and catering, including the cost of meals, beverages and other costs associated with food and beverages are outlined in Attachment D.
(f) (i) to (vi) No.

ATTACHMENT A
Agricultural Industry Advisory Council members list
Chair
The Hon. Barnaby Joyce Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources

Members
David Moon—Queensland
Eliza Brown—Victoria
Stuart Richey—Tasmania
Rob de Fegely—New South Wales
Kevin Sorgiovanni—Western Australia
Susan Bower—New South Wales
Luke Bowen—Northern Territory
Hamish McLaren—New South Wales
Dean Wormald—Western Australia
Lenore Johnstone—Queensland
Andrew Inglis—South Australia (from 14 August 2014)

ATTACHMENT B

Attendance at AIAC meeting on 11-12 April 2014 Rutherglen, Victoria
The Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP (Chair)

AIAC members
Eliza Brown
David Moon
Luke Bowen
Susan Bower
Lenore Johnstone
Hamish McLaren
Stuart Richey
Dean Wormald

Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
Paul Grimes, Secretary
Paul Morris, Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper Taskforce
Karen Schneider, First Assistant secretary
Sally Standen, Assistant Secretary
Bronwyn Edwards, Secretariat
Ros Matley, Secretariat
Richard Hyett, Minister's Adviser
Brett Chant, Minister's Assistant Media Adviser

Attendance at AIAC teleconference on 10 June 2014

AIAC members
David Moon
Eliza Brown
Stuart Richey  
Rob de Fegely  
Kevin Sorgiovanni  
Susan Bower  
Luke Bowen  
Hamish McLaren  
Dean Wormald  
Lenore Johnstone

**Attendance at AIAC teleconference on 17 June 2015**

AIAC members  
David Moon  
Eliza Brown  
Rob de Fegely  
Susan Bower  
Luke Bowen  
Hamish McLaren  
Dean Wormald  
Lenore Johnstone

**Attendance at AIAC meeting on 21 August 2014 Darwin, Northern Territory**

The Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP (Chair)  
AIAC members  
Luke Bowen  
Eliza Brown  
David Moon  
Rob de Fegely  
Kevin Sorgiovanni  
Susan Bower  
Lenore Johnstone  
Hamish McLaren  
Stuart Richey  
Dean Wormald  
Andrew Inglis

Department of Agriculture and Water Resources  
Paul Grimes, Secretary  
Paul Morris, Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper Taskforce  
Lee Cale, Assistant Secretary  
Sally Standen, Assistant Secretary  
Bronwyn Edwards, Secretariat  
Kylie Johnson, Secretariat
Richard Hyett, Minister's Adviser
Brett Chant, Minister's Assistant Media Adviser

**Attendance at AIAC meeting on 31 October 2014 Sydney, New South Wales**

The Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP (Chair)

**AIAC members**
- Susan Bower
- Luke Bowen
- Eliza Brown
- David Moon
- Rob de Fegely
- Lenore Johnstone
- Hamish McLaren
- Stuart Richey
- Dean Wormald
- Andrew Inglis

**Department of Agriculture and Water Resources**
- Paul Grimes, Secretary
- Paul Morris, Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper Taskforce
- Lisa Elliston, Assistant Secretary
- Bronwyn Edwards, Secretariat
- Kylie Johnson, Secretariat
- Richard Hyett, Minister's Adviser
- Gerard McManus, Minister's Senior Media Adviser

**Attendance at AIAC meeting on 1 April 2015 Devonport, Tasmania**

The Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP (Chair)

**AIAC members**
- Stuart Richey
- Luke Bowen
- Eliza Brown
- David Moon
- Rob de Fegely
- Lenore Johnstone
- Hamish McLaren
- Dean Wormald
- Andrew Inglis
- Kevin Sorgiovanni

**Department of Agriculture and Water Resources**
- Phillip Glyde, Acting Secretary
- Lisa Elliston, Assistant Secretary
Attendance at AIAC teleconference on 17 June 2015

AIAC members
David Moon
Eliza Brown
Rob de Fegely
Kevin Sorgiovanni
Susan Bower
Luke Bowen
Hamish McLaren
Dean Wormald
Lenore Johnstone

Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
Daryl Quinlivan, Secretary
Lee Cale, Acting First Assistant Secretary
Karen Schneider, First Assistant Secretary
Donna Hawkes, Director
Greg Williamson, First Assistant Secretary
Bronwyn Edwards, Secretariat
Richard Hyett, Minister's Adviser

Attendance at AIAC meeting on 14-15 July 2015 Bunbury, Western Australia

The Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP (Chair)

AIAC members
Kevin Sorgiovanni
Stuart Richey
Luke Bowen
David Moon
Rob de Fegely
Lenore Johnstone
Hamish McLaren
Dean Wormald
Andrew Inglis
Susan Bower

Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
Daryl Quinlivan, Secretary
Lee Cale, Acting First Assistant Secretary
Bronwyn Edwards, Secretariat
Kylie Johnson, Secretariat
Richard Hyett, Minister's Adviser
Melinda Hashimoto, Minister's Adviser

**Attendance at AIAC meeting on 17-18 November 2015 Brisbane, Queensland**

The Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP (Chair)

**AIAC members**
David Moon
Lenore Johnstone
Stuart Richey
Luke Bowen
Eliza Brown
Rob de Fegely
Hamish McLaren
Dean Wormald
Andrew Inglis
Susan Bower

**Guest attendees**
John Hewitt (Telstra Corporate Affairs Manager, Queensland)
Channa Seneviratne (Telstra Director of wireless networks)
Marcus Bezzi (Executive General Manager, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission)
Gabrielle Ford (General Manager, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission)

**Department of Agriculture and Water Resources**
Daryl Quinlivan, Secretary
Melissa Brown, Acting Assistant Secretary
Bronwyn Edwards, Secretariat
Kylie Johnson, Secretariat
Richard Hyett, Minister's Adviser
Sam Harma, Minister's Assistant Adviser
Gerard McManus, Minister's Senior Media Advisor

**ATTACHMENT C**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Face-to-face meeting location</th>
<th>Total members travel costs</th>
<th>Total members accommodation costs</th>
<th>Total members incidentals and other transport costs</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rutherglen, Victoria</td>
<td>$6 625.60</td>
<td>$1 398.00</td>
<td>$996.82</td>
<td>$9 020.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darwin, Northern Territory</td>
<td>$7 134.64</td>
<td>$3 809.00</td>
<td>$618.33</td>
<td>$11 561.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney, NSW</td>
<td>$4 977.56</td>
<td>$2 793.00</td>
<td>$597.49</td>
<td>$8 368.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devonport, Tasmania</td>
<td>$6 212.81</td>
<td>$3 072.00</td>
<td>$894.62</td>
<td>$10 179.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bunbury, Western Australia</td>
<td>$6 521.39</td>
<td>$3 434.00</td>
<td>$1 423.77</td>
<td>$11 379.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Face-to-face meeting location</th>
<th>Total members travel costs</th>
<th>Total members accommodation costs</th>
<th>Total members incidentals and other transport costs</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane, Queensland</td>
<td>$5,491.91</td>
<td>$4,018.00</td>
<td>$1,098.57*</td>
<td>$10,608.48*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Estimate as final costs are still being settled.

### ATTACHMENT D

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Meals (including non-alcoholic beverages)</th>
<th>Beverages/alcohol (see meals column)</th>
<th>Other food and beverage costs</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rutherglen, Victoria</td>
<td>$1,748.00</td>
<td>$912.00</td>
<td>Catering for meeting $210</td>
<td>$1,958.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darwin, Northern Territory</td>
<td>$1,805.50</td>
<td>$912.00</td>
<td>Catering for meeting $324.00</td>
<td>$3,041.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney, NSW</td>
<td>$1,775.95</td>
<td>$1,291.40</td>
<td>Catering for meeting $788.50</td>
<td>$3,855.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devonport, Tasmania</td>
<td>Itemised invoice for meals, beverages, networking function and catering not provided by venue.</td>
<td>$935.90</td>
<td>Catering, room and equipment hire for meeting $1,218.50</td>
<td>$3,850.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bunbury, Western Australia</td>
<td>$1,480.00</td>
<td>$935.90</td>
<td>Catering, room and equipment hire for meeting $2,093.52</td>
<td>$3,634.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane, Queensland</td>
<td>$1,190.00</td>
<td>$595.00</td>
<td>Room hire for dinner $225.00</td>
<td>$4,103.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Department of Immigration and Border Protection: Advisory Council**

*(Question No. 2055)*

**Mr Conroy** asked the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, in writing, on 23 November 2015:

1. Has the Minister established an Advisory Council; if not, why not.
2. If the Minister has established an Advisory Council,
   a. on what date,
   b. who are the members,
   c. what are its functions and purpose (mission/charter),
   d. how often has it met and what were the outcomes,
   e. for each meeting, will the Minister's department provide the following, the
      i. date,
      ii. name of the host city/town,
(iii) attendance record,
(iv) venue and why it was chosen,
(v) details of allowances paid to Advisory Council members for expenses, including but not limited to travel and accommodation,
(vi) itemised details of hospitality and catering, including but not limited to the cost of meals, beverages and any other costs associated with food and beverages, and
(f) has the Minister's department provided any equipment to Advisory Council members, including but not limited to
(i) business cards,
(ii) personalised pens and stationery,
(iii) mobile phones,
(iv) laptops,
(v) tablet devices, and
(vi) email addresses; if so, can an itemised breakdown of these costs be provided.

Mr Dutton: The answer to the honourable member's question is:

Question 1: Has the Minister established an Advisory Council; if not, why not?

The Minister for Immigration and Border Protection used existing committees to establish a Ministerial Advisory Council or equivalent consultation mechanism on deregulation/regulatory reform. The inclusion of deregulation/regulatory reform into the terms of reference for these committees has not increased running costs above existing levels. Four different committees have been used, at different times, to act as the deregulation/regulatory reform Ministerial Advisory Council, these include:

1) the Customs and Border Protection National Consultative Committee – 26 March 2014 to 17 November 2015;
2) the panel responsible for the Independent Review into Integrity in the 457 Programme – 4 April 2014 to 30 June 2014;
3) the Ministerial Advisory Council on Skilled Migration – 17 November 2015 to current; and
4) the National Committee on Trade Facilitation – 17 November 2015 to current.

Question 2 (A): If the Minister has established an Advisory Council, on what date?

1) On 26 March 2014, the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection approved a Terms of Reference change to the Customs and Border Protection National Consultative Committee to include deregulation.
2) On 4 April 2014, the former Assistant Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, Senator the Hon Michaela Cash extended the Terms of Reference of the panel responsible for the Independent Review into Integrity in the 457 Programme to include providing advice on deregulation measures that go beyond the 457 programme arising as part of the review process. The panel provided their final report titled "Robust New Foundations: A streamlined, Transparent and Responsive System for the 457 Programme" to the Assistant Minister on 30 June 2014.
3) On 17 November 2015, the Ministerial Advisory Council on Skilled Migration was approved by the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection as the stakeholder consultation mechanism on deregulation/regulatory reform for immigration matters.
4) On 17 November 2015, the National Committee on Trade Facilitation was approved by the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection as the stakeholder consultation mechanism on deregulation/regulatory reform for trade matters.

Question 2 (B): If the Minister has established an Advisory Council, who are the members?
The members of each group are as follows:

**Customs and Border Protection National Consultative Committee**
- Shipping Australia Limited
- Stevedores Industry
- Customs Brokers and Forwarders Council of Australia Inc.
- Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Law Council of Australia
- Institute of Chartered Accountants
- Australian Federation of International Forwarders Ltd.
- Board of Airline Representatives of Australia
- Conference of Asia Pacific Express Carriers
- Australia Post
- Australian Quarantine Inspection Service
  - 457 Integrity Review
- Mr John Azarias (panel lead)
- Ms Jenny Lambert
- Professor Peter McDonald
- Ms Katie Malyon

**Ministerial Advisory Council on Skilled Migration (MACSM)**
- Mr Innes Willox (Chair), Chief Executive of the Australian Industry Group
- Ms Gerardine Kearney, President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions
- Mr John Azarias, a consultant who was formerly a Senior Partner from Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu
- Ms Su McCluskey, formerly Chief Executive Officer at Regional Australia Institute
- Mr Steve Knott, Chief Executive at Australian Mines and Metals Association
- Mr Brett Moller, President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland;
- Ms Carol Giuseppi, Acting Chief Executive Officer at Tourism Accommodation Australia
- Ms Sylvia Burbery, General Manager of Mars Petcare Australia/New Zealand
- One representative from State and Territory governments at MACSM meetings on a rotational basis.

**National Committee on Trade Facilitation**
1) Commonwealth Government Agencies
- Austrade
- Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Department of Immigration and Border Protection
- Department of Industry, Innovation and Science
- Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development
  2) Industry
- American Chamber of Commerce in Australia
Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI)
Australian Federation of International Forwarders (AFIF) Ltd
Australian Industry Group (AIG)
Board of Airline Representatives of Australia (BARA)
Conference of Asia Pacific Express Carriers (CAPEC)
Customs Brokers and Forwarders Council of Australia (CBFCA)
Customs and Trade Advisory Group (CTAG)
Export Council of Australia (ECA)
Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI)
Food and Beverage Importer Association (FBIA)
Freight and Trade Alliance (FTA) Pty Ltd
International Network of Customs Universities (INCU)
Shipping Australia Limited

**Question 2 (C):** If the Minister has established an Advisory Council, what are the functions and purpose (mission/charter)?

The function and purpose of each group is as follows:

Customs and Border Protection National Consultative Committee (CBPNCC)

1) The Terms of Reference state that the CBPNCC will: review and make recommendations on:

   a. emerging strategic issues in the Customs and Border Protection international trade operating environment;
   
   b. the work program of the sub-committees;
   
   c. where appropriate, proposed changes to the Customs Act 1901 and other related legislation;
   
   d. recent developments in case law in the Customs and Border Protection commercial operating environment;

   e. the approach and progress of regulatory reform within the Service; and

   f. potential opportunities for deregulation in their representative communities.

**457 Integrity Review**

1) The Terms of Reference for the 457 Integrity Review were:

   a. determine the level of non-compliance by sponsors in the Subclass 457 programme, both historically and under the current regulatory framework;
   
   b. evaluate the regulatory framework of the Subclass 457 programme and determine whether the existing requirements appropriately balance a need to ensure the integrity of the programme with potential costs to employers in accessing the programme;
   
   c. report on the scope for deregulation while maintaining integrity in the programme;
   
   d. review and advise on the appropriateness of the current compliance and sanctions;
   
   e. consider the size, composition and Terms of Reference for a future incarnation of the Ministerial Advisory Council on Skilled Migration; and

   f. provide advice on deregulation measures that go beyond the 457 programme arising as part of the review process.

Ministerial Advisory Council on Skilled Migration
1) The Ministerial Advisory Council on Skilled Migration (MACSM) is a tripartite body comprising industry, union and government representatives which will provide advice to the Minister and Assistant Minister for Immigration and Border Protection on Australia's temporary and permanent skilled migration programmes and associated matters.

2) The MACSM will advise the Ministers on:
   a. programme specific visa and policy settings to optimise the contribution of skilled migration to Australia's productivity and economy.
   b. the size and composition of Australia's temporary and permanent migration programmes, and the impacts of these programmes on Net Overseas Migration levels and population growth.
   c. The composition of the Consolidated Sponsored Occupations Lists, with a view to increasing the productivity contribution of sponsored migration.
   d. Skill shortages in the labour market which cannot be met from the domestic labour force and domestic training and education programmes.
   e. opportunities to reduce regulatory burdens and costs on Australian businesses seeking to access visa programmes to fill genuine skilled vacancies.
   f. policies to ensure that Australian workers are afforded priority in the labour market.
   g. the role of State and Territory governments in skilled and business migration.
   h. the adequateness of regulatory powers of the Department of Immigration and Border Protection to ensure integrity and detect and prevent practices which are inconsistent with the intent of the programme.
   i. the role and regulation of the migration advice industry.
   j. the impacts of migration to Australia, including social and settlement matters.
   k. potential changes to visa programmes to enhance productivity in the Australian economy, support economic growth, assist employers address genuine skill shortages, and better align Australia's visa programme with domestic training and education policies.

National Committee on Trade Facilitation (NCTF)

1) The charter/mission of the NCTF is as follows:

The NCTF will fulfil the obligations required by the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Trade Facilitation by providing the forum for the Australian Government and industry to monitor implementation strategies.

The NCTF provides a forum for government and industry stakeholders to discuss strategic issues relating to trade facilitation affecting Australian Industry stakeholders in the international trade environment. The NCTF will discuss opportunities for reform and improvements to Australia's domestic trade facilitation environment and engagement with the international trade environment.

For the purposes of the NCTF, trade facilitation refers to measures designed to expedite the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit. The NCTF will explore opportunities to improve trade facilitation including the delivery of efficiencies and deregulation at the border and any associated recommendations for policy, regulation or legislative change.

NCTF industry members will serve as the Department of Immigration and Border Protection's Ministerial Advisory Committee on Deregulation for trade facilitation issues in accordance with the Regulator Performance Framework.

Question 2 (D): If the Minister has established an Advisory Council, how often has it met and what were the outcomes?

A number of meetings occurred during 2014/15. The meetings include outcomes relating to the committee's original functions and the newly expanded deregulation/regulatory reform responsibilities.
Customs and Border Protection National Consultative Committee (CBPNCC)

1) The CBPNCC met twice during its tenure as the Regulation Reform stakeholder consultation mechanism.

457 Integrity Review

1) The 457 Integrity Review panel met as a group for formal panel meetings 14 times following the extension of its Terms of Reference to include deregulation. In addition to these formal panel meetings extensive stakeholder consultations were undertaken with members of the panel in Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne and Perth.

2) The outcome of the 457 Integrity Review was the panel report "Robust New Foundations: A Streamlined, Transparent and Responsive System for the 457 Programme" which was released by Government on 10 September 2014. The report made 22 recommendations to improve the 457 programme. These recommendations included identified a range of deregulatory measures relating to the 457 programme and permanent visa pathways.

Ministerial Advisory Council on Skilled Migration (MACSM)

1) MACSM has met once since incorporating Regulation Reform. Further meetings are planned in 2016.

National Committee on Trade Facilitation (NCTF)

1) The NCTF has not met since it became the stakeholder consultation mechanism on regulation reform for trade matters on 17 November 2015.

Question 2 (E) (i-v) If the Minister has established an Advisory Council, for each meeting, will the Minister's department provide the following:

i. the date
ii. name of the host city/town
iii. attendance record
iv. venues and why it was chosen
v. details of allowance paid to Advisory Council members for expenses, including but not limited to travel and accommodation
vi. itemised details of hospitality and catering, including but not limited to the cost of meals, beverages and any other costs associated with food and beverages

The following meetings occurred in 2014/15:

Customs and Border Protection National Consultative Committee Meeting 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Host City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 June 2014</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Industry Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian Federation of International Forwarders</td>
<td>Mr Brian Lovell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference of Asia Pacific Express Carriers</td>
<td>Mr Ben Somerville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customs Brokers and Forwarders Council of Australia</td>
<td>Mr Bob Wallace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customs Brokers and Forwarders Council of Australia</td>
<td>Mr Steve Morris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Export Council of Australia (ECA)</td>
<td>Mr Andrew Hudson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law Council of Australia (LCA)</td>
<td>Mr Bill Cole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qantas Group</td>
<td>Mr Steve Jackson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qantas Group</td>
<td>Ms Arundhati Gupta</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
iv. Ground Floor Conference Room, Customs House, Sydney International Airport

v. No allowances or expenses were paid to industry members. Government members received normal travel allowances and expenses as part of their employment.

vi. Food and drinks - $383
Branch
National Manager Customs Branch Ms Sharon Nyakuengama
National Manager Trade Branch Mr Geoff Johannes
Regional Director NSW Mr Tim Fitzgerald
Director Industry Engagement Ms Stephanie Lee
Manager Industry Engagement Ms Donna Cummins
Manager Deregulation Section Mr Tom O'Connor
Supervisor Industry Engagement Ms Sarah Moseley

Department of Immigration and Border Protection
Assistant Secretary – Innovation Branch Mr Robert Jansen
Director Deregulation Section Mr Ben Crabb

iv. Ground Floor Conference Room, Customs House, Sydney International Airport
v. No allowances or expenses were paid to industry members. Government members received normal travel allowances and expenses as part of their employment.
vi. Food and drinks - $458.50

457 Independent Review Meeting 1
i. 16 April 2014  ii. Canberra
iii. John Azarias, Jenny Lambert, Katie Malyon, Peter McDonald, Departmental Secretariat
iv. DIBP Office for cost efficiency
v. Allowance Total*: $56,468.01
John Azarias – Panel Lead
$1,500 sitting fee
$222.66 taxis
$1,094.76 flights
$192.00 accommodation
Jenny Lambert
$621 sitting fee
Katie Malyon
$621 sitting fee
$91.75 taxis
$1,057.92 flights
$384.00 accommodation
Peter McDonald
$621 sitting fee
$61.92 taxis
*excluding travel allowances, which cannot be itemised by meeting.
vi. Nil

457 Independent Review Meeting 2
i. 30 April 2014  ii. Canberra
iii. John Azarias, Jenny Lambert, Katie Malyon, Peter McDonald, Departmental Secretariat
iv. DIBP Office for cost efficiency
v. Allowance Total*: $4,519.82
John Azarias – Panel Lead
$1,500 sitting fee
$58.83 taxis
$58.83 taxis

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
$621 sitting fee  
$154.00 accommodation  
$638.78 flights  
Katie Malyon  
$621 sitting fee  
Peter McDonald  
$154.00 accommodation  
*Kexcluding travel allowances, which cannot be itemised by meeting.

457 Independent Review Meeting 3

i. 15 May 2014  
ii. Canberra  
iii. John Azarias, Jenny Lambert, Katie Malyon, Peter McDonald, Departmental Secretariat  
iv. DIBP Office for cost efficiency  
v. Allowance Total*: $6,375.60  
John Azarias – Panel Lead  
$1,500 sitting fee  
$197.00 accommodation  
Jenny Lambert  
$621 sitting fee  
Katie Malyon  
$1,511.27 flights  
Peter McDonald  
$621 sitting fee  
*excluding travel allowances, which cannot be itemised by meeting.

457 Independent Review Meeting 4

i. 28 May 2014  
ii. Canberra  
iii. John Azarias, Jenny Lambert (teleconference), Katie Malyon, Peter McDonald, Departmental Secretariat  
iv. DIBP Office for cost efficiency  
v. Allowance Total*: $6,294.40  
John Azarias – Panel Lead  
$1,500 sitting fee  
$1,041.50 flights  
Jenny Lambert  
$621 sitting fee
Katie Malyon
$621 sitting fee
$119.63 taxis
$1,041.40 flights
$215.00 accommodation
Peter McDonald
$621 sitting fee
*excluding travel allowances, which cannot be itemised by meeting.
vi. Nil

457 Independent Review Meeting 5
i. 4 June 2014 ii. Canberra
iii. John Azarias, Jenny Lambert (teleconference), Katie Malyon, Peter McDonald, Departmental Secretariat
iv. DIBP Office for cost efficiency
v. Allowance Total*: $6,368.24
John Azarias – Panel Lead
$1,500 sitting fee
$203.88 taxis
$1,041.50 flights
$352.00 accommodation
Jenny Lambert
$621 sitting fee
Katie Malyon
$621 sitting fee
$141.36 taxis
$1,041.50 flights
$225.00 accommodation
Peter McDonald
$621 sitting fee
*excluding travel allowances, which cannot be itemised by meeting.
vi. Catering: $35.00

457 Independent Review Meeting 6
i. 11 June 2014 - 14 June 2014 ii. Canberra
iii. John Azarias, Jenny Lambert, Katie Malyon, Peter McDonald, Departmental Secretariat
iv. DIBP Office for cost efficiency
v. Allowance Total*: $15,779.63
John Azarias – Panel Lead
4 x $1,500 sitting fee
$169.83 taxis
$840.80 flights
$880.00 accommodation
Jenny Lambert
4 x $621 sitting fee
$60.00 parking
Katie Malyon
4 x $621 sitting fee
$85.00 parking
Peter McDonald
4 x $621 sitting fee
*excluding travel allowances, which cannot be itemised by meeting.
vi. Catering: $292.00

457 Independent Review Meeting 7
i. 18 June 2014 - 20 June 2014  
ii. Canberra  
iii. John Azarias, Jenny Lambert, Katie Malyon, Peter McDonald, Departmental Secretariat  
iv. DIBP Office for cost efficiency  
v. Allowance Total*: $12,139.06  
John Azarias – Panel Lead  
3 x $1,500 sitting fee  
$140.97 taxis  
$833.80 flights  
$880.00 accommodation  
Jenny Lambert  
3 x $621 sitting fee  
$50.00 parking  
$19.93 taxi  
Katie Malyon  
3 x $621 sitting fee  
$90.00 parking  
$35.36 taxi  
Peter McDonald  
3 x $621 sitting fee  
*excluding travel allowances, which cannot be itemised by meeting.  
vi. Catering: $292.00

457 Independent Review Meeting 8
i. 24 June 2014  
ii. Canberra  
iii. Allowance Total: John Azarias, Jenny Lambert, Katie Malyon, Peter McDonald, Departmental Secretariat  
iv. DIBP Office for cost efficiency  
v. Allowance Total*: $4,327.00  
John Azarias – Panel Lead  
$1,500 sitting fee  
$116.22 taxis  
$638.78 flights  
$179.00 accommodation  
Jenny Lambert  
$621 sitting fee  
Katie Malyon  
$621 sitting fee  
$30 parking  
Peter McDonald  
$621 sitting fee  
*excluding travel allowances, which cannot be itemised by meeting.  
vi. Nil
457 Independent Review Meeting 9

i. 27 June 2014
ii. Canberra
iii. Allowance Total: John Azarias, Jenny Lambert, Katie Malyon, Peter McDonald, Departmental Secretariat
iv. DIBP Office for cost efficiency
v. Allowance Total*: $4,288.34

John Azarias – Panel Lead
$1,500 sitting fee
$113.22 taxis
$195.02 flights
$372.00 travelling allowance
Jenny Lambert
$621 sitting fee
Katie Malyon
$621 sitting fee
Peter McDonald
$621 sitting fee

*excluding travel allowances, which cannot be itemised by meeting.

vi. Catering: $245.10

Ministerial Advisory Council on Skilled Migration Meeting 1

i. 11 December 2015
ii. Sydney.
iii. Mr Innes Willcox, Mr John Azarias, Ms Su McCluskey, Ms Gerardine Kearney, Ms Carol Giuseppi, Ms Sylvia Burbery. A number of Departmental staff and observers were also present at the meeting.

v. Estimated Total: $5370.78*.

Mr Innes Willcox – Chair
$717 sitting fee
Mr John Azarias
$646 sitting fee
Ms Su McCluskey
$646
$729.03 airfares
$63.00 train and airport parking (inclusive of GST)
Ms Gerardine Kearney
$646 sitting fee
$1,923.75 airfares

*Final travel and other expenses have yet to be acquitted.

vi. Estimated Venue hire (including catering) - $1,520

Question 2 (f): has the Ministers department provided any equipment to Advisory Council members?

1) No equipment has been provided to the Advisory Council members.

Department of Health: Advisory Council

(Question No. 2057)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Health, in writing, on 23 November 2015:

(1) Has the Minister established an Advisory Council; if not, why not.

(2) If the Minister has established an Advisory Council,

(a) on what date,
(b) who are the members,
(c) what are its functions and purpose (mission/charter),
(d) how often has it met and what were the outcomes,
(e) for each meeting, will the Minister's department provide the following, the
   (i) date,
   (ii) name of the host city/town,
   (iii) attendance record,
   (iv) venue and why it was chosen,
   (v) details of allowances paid to Advisory Council members for expenses, including but not limited to travel and accommodation,
   (vi) itemised details of hospitality and catering, including but not limited to the cost of meals, beverages and any other costs associated with food and beverages, and
(f) has the Minister's department provided any equipment to Advisory Council members, including but not limited to
   (i) business cards,
   (ii) personalised pens and stationery,
   (iii) mobile phones,
   (iv) laptops,
   (v) tablet devices, and
   (vi) email addresses; if so, can an itemised breakdown of these costs be provided.

Ms Ley: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

(1) Yes, the former Minister of Health, the Hon Peter Dutton MP, established the Health Ministerial Advisory Council (Health MAC).

(2)(a) The Health MAC was established on 4 April 2014.

(b) The members of the Health MAC are:

Dr Sheilagh Cronin
Dr Michael Harrison
Professor John Horvath AO
Mr Glenn Keys
Hon Rob Knowles AO
Mr Rohan Mead
Dr David Rosengren
Dr Noel Hayman
Ms Rhonda White

(c) The Health MAC was established to provide advice to the Minister for Health on issues relating to the Health Industry, with a specific focus on deregulation.

(d) The Health MAC has met on two occasions. There were eleven action items arising from the two meetings. Of the 11, five are complete and work is underway on the remaining six.

(e) Meeting one
   (i) 5 August 2014
   (ii) Canberra ACT
   (iii)
QUESTIONs IN WRITING

(iv) Parliament House Canberra ACT due to its central location.

(v) Parliament House Catering by the Intercontinental Hotels Group. $624.00. Lunch (Food only).

Tea and Coffee.

Meeting two

(i) 17 November 2014

(ii) Canberra ACT

(iii) Parliament House Canberra ACT due to its central location

(iv) Parliament House Canberra ACT due to its central location

(v) Parliament House Canberra ACT due to its central location
Parliament House Catering by the Intercontinental Hotels Group. $539.47. Lunch (Food only).

Tea and Coffee.

(f) The Department of Health has not provided members with any equipment.

Department of Veterans’ Affairs: Advisory Council

(Question No. 2059)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, in writing, on 23 November 2015.

(1) Has the Minister established an Advisory Council; if not, why not.

(2) If the Minister has established an Advisory Council, (a) on what date, (b) who are the members, (c) what are its functions and purpose (mission/charter), (d) how often has it met and what were the outcomes, (e) for each meeting, will the Minister's department provide the following, the (i) date, (ii) name of the host city/town, (iii) attendance record, (iv) venue and why it was chosen, (v) details of allowances paid to Advisory Council members for expenses, including but not limited to travel and accommodation, (vi) itemised details of hospitality and catering, including but not limited to the cost of meals, beverages and any other costs associated with food and beverages, and (f) has the Minister's department provided any equipment to Advisory Council members, including but not limited to (i) business cards, (ii) personalised pens and stationery, (iii) mobile phones, (iv) laptops, (v) tablet devices, and (vi) email addresses; if so, can an itemised breakdown of these costs be provided.

Mr Robert: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

As I am not a Cabinet Minister, this is not applicable.

Minister for Communications: Advisory Council

(Question No 2060)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister representing the Minister for Communications, in writing, on 23 November 2015.

(1) Has the Minister established an Advisory Council; if not, why not.

(2) If the Minister has established an Advisory Council, (a) on what date, (b) who are the members, (c) what are its functions and purpose (mission/charter), (d) how often has it met and what were the outcomes, (e) for each meeting, will the Minister's department provide the following, the (i) date, (ii) name of the host city/town, (iii) attendance record, (iv) venue and why it was chosen, (v) details of allowances paid to Advisory Council members for expenses, including but not limited to travel and accommodation, (vi) itemised details of hospitality and catering, including but not limited to the cost of meals, beverages and any other costs associated with food and beverages, and (f) has the Minister's department provided any equipment to Advisory Council members, including but not limited to (i) business cards, (ii) personalised pens and stationery, (iii) mobile phones, (iv) laptops, (v) tablet devices, and (vi) email addresses; if so, can an itemised breakdown of these costs be provided.

Clarification:

On 24 November 2015 the Department of Communications and the Arts received the following further clarification from the House of Representatives Table Office, on behalf of Mr Conroy:

Prior to forming Government, the Liberal National Coalition released a policy document titled, 'Our Plan, Real Solutions for all Australians'. In the subsection titled 'Action Plan to Boost Productivity and
Reduce Regulation’, it states, ‘The Coalition will establish Ministerial Advisory Councils for each Cabinet Minister to ensure proper consultation’. My questions relate to this election commitment.

The House of Representatives Table Office indicated:

It is our understanding that this multi-Minister question refers to the time period of the 44th Parliament (November 2013 – current).

Mr Fletcher: The answer to the member’s question is as follows:

In response to Question 1:

The former Minister for Communications, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP, established the Ministerial Advisory Council on Communications (MACC) in February 2014.

On 12 November 2015 the Assistant Minister for Productivity, the Hon Dr Peter Hendy MP, announced the Government’s proposed transition to a strengthened Regulation Reform Agenda. The advisory mechanisms best suited to supporting this new agenda will be determined by the Minister for Communications and the Arts in due course. No decisions about the future role of the MACC have been made at this point in time.

In response to Question 2:

(a) The MACC was established in February 2014.

(b), (c) and (d) The MACC membership, its functions and purpose, the date of its meetings and the outcome of its meetings can be found in the media release issued by the former Communications Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull, on 7 March 2014 titled ‘Advisory council meets to discuss reform agenda’.

(c)(i) The MACC meetings were held on 7 March 2014.

(ii) The MACC meetings were held at the Department of Communications’ office in Sydney.

(iii) The MACC membership is listed in the media release issued by the former Minister for Communications on 7 March 2014 titled ‘Advisory council meets to discuss reform agenda’. Four members (Andrew Gordon, Greg Hywood, David Buckingham and Inaki Berroeta) were unable to attend the relevant meeting.

(iv) The venue was the Department of Communications offices in Sydney. The venue was chosen as the Department was able to host the meetings at no hire costs.

(v) MACC members did not receive any allowance or any reimbursement for their attendance.

(vi) Catering costs for the meeting were $279.46 including GST, which was for refreshments served at the meetings.

(f) The Department did not provide any equipment to MACC members.


Department of Employment: Advisory Council
(Question No. 2061)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister representing the Minister for Employment, in writing, on 23 November 2015:

(1) Has the Minister established an Advisory Council; if not, why not.

(2) If the Minister has established an Advisory Council, (a) on what date, (b) who are the members, (c) what are its functions and purpose (mission/charter), (d) how often has it met and what were the outcomes, (e) for each meeting, will the Minister’s department provide the following, the (i) date, (ii) name of the host city/town, (iii) attendance record, (iv) venue and why it was chosen, (v) details of allowances paid to Advisory Council members for expenses, including but not limited to travel and
accommodation, (vi) itemised details of hospitality and catering, including but not limited to the cost of meals, beverages and any other costs associated with food and beverages, and (f) has the Minister's department provided any equipment to Advisory Council members, including but not limited to (i) business cards, (ii) personalised pens and stationery, (iii) mobile phones, (iv) laptops, (v) tablet devices, and (vi) email addresses; if so, can an itemised breakdown of these costs be provided.

Mr Pyne: The Minister for Employment has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

(1) No.

The Minister for Employment uses an existing body, the National Workplace Relations Consultative Council, as the Ministerial Advisory Council to ensure proper consultation with stakeholders.

Department of Social Services: Advisory Council
(Question No. 2062)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Social Services, in writing, on 23 November 2015:

(1) Has the Minister established an Advisory Council; if not, why not. (2) If the Minister has established an Advisory Council, (a) on what date, (b) who are the members, (c) what are its functions and purpose (mission/charter), (d) how often has it met and what were the outcomes, (e) for each meeting, will the Minister's department provide the following, the (i) date, (ii) name of the host city/town, (iii) attendance record, (iv) venue and why it was chosen, (v) details of allowances paid to Advisory Council members for expenses, including but not limited to travel and accommodation, (vi) itemised details of hospitality and catering, including but not limited to the cost of meals, beverages and any other costs associated with food and beverages, and (f) has the Minister's department provided any equipment to Advisory Council members, including but not limited to (i) business cards, (ii) personalised pens and stationery, (iii) mobile phones, (iv) laptops, (v) tablet devices, and (vi) email addresses; if so, can an itemised breakdown of these costs be provided.

Mr Porter: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

(1) No. There is a sufficient range of existing engagement and advisory mechanisms with Social Services portfolio stakeholders.

(2) N/A

Department of Social Services: Costs associated with training departmental staff
(Question No. 2067)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Social Services, in writing, on 23 November 2015:

Further to his answer to question in writing No. 1282 (Hansard, 10 November 2015, page 112), can his department provide a breakdown of the $6,534,703 spent on training departmental staff, and for each training program completed, can his department provide details including (a) the name of the training program, (b) the company that delivered the training program, (c) the number of staff who attended each training module, (d) when and where each training program was held, (e) the cost of (i) meals, (ii) transport, and (iii) accommodation (where provided), and (f) how this training specifically benefited staff and added value to his department.

Mr Porter: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

The Department does not have data collection mechanisms in place to respond to this question without an unreasonable diversion of resources.
Commission of the Status on Women Luncheon
(Question No. 2068)

Mr Conroy asked the Prime Minister, in writing, on 23 November 2015:

In respect of the luncheon and Pacific roundtable for the delegation attending the Commission of the Status on Women held on 9 March 2015 in New York, (a) at what venue was the luncheon held, and why was it chosen, (b) how many people were present and can he provide their names, (c) can he provide a copy of the (i) menu, and (ii) invoice or itemised list of meals and drinks ordered, with a breakdown of costs; if not, just the breakdown of costs for meals and drinks, and (d) for what purpose was the luncheon held.

Mr Turnbull: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

On 19 March 2015, Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash, Minister for Women (then Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women), as head of the Australian Government delegation to the 59th Session of the United Nations (UN) Commission on the Status of Women (CSW59), co-hosted the Pacific Roundtable and lunch. The details of this event are as follows:

(a) The event was held in the UN Delegates Dining Room, UN Headquarters, New York. The venue was chosen due to its convenience for all attendees, given that the majority of official CSW59 meetings and events take place within the UN building.

(b) A list of all attendees is at Attachment A.

(c) The menu for this lunch was:
   - Entree—Grilled Seasonal Vegetables
   - Main—Chicken Paillard
   - Dessert—Seasonal Fruit with Macerated Berries

The breakdown of costs (in AUD dollars) for this event is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-alcoholic drinks</td>
<td>$141.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catering</td>
<td>$2,753.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff costs (waiters)</td>
<td>$1,864.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linen &amp; Equipment Hire</td>
<td>$530.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration Charge</td>
<td>$578.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,868.88</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(d) The purpose of this event was to enable the Australian, New Zealand and Pacific delegations attending CSW59 to engage in an open discussion on issues relating to gender equality and women's empowerment, in particular in relation to the global review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which was the priority theme for CSW59.

ATTACHMENT A

CSW59 Pacific Roundtable and Lunch
Monday 9 March 2015—1.15pm-2.45pm
UN Delegates Dining Room, UN Headquarters, New York

Guest List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women and advisor</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Natasha-Stott Despoja, Ambassador for Women and Girls</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.E. Ms Gillian Bird, Australian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the United Nations and staff from Australian mission
Australian Government delegation to CSW59 5
Kiribati delegation 1
Micronesia delegation 1
Nauru delegation 3
New Zealand delegation 4
Palau delegation 4
Papua New Guinea delegation 3
Samoa delegation 3
The Republic of the Marshall Islands delegation 3
Tonga delegation 2
Secretariat of the Pacific Community 1
Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat including Pacific non-government representatives 4
UN Women Pacific representative 1
TOTAL 43

1 This is an annual event that is co-hosted by the heads of delegation from Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFs).
2 Converted from US dollars based on exchange rate as at 9 March 2015
3 No alcohol was served at this event

Indonesia-Australia Partnership on Food Security in the Red Meat and Cattle Sector

(Question No. 2072)

Mr Conroy To ask the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources:

In respect of each meeting of Ministers, senior officials and delegates for the ‘Indonesia-Australia Partnership on Food Security in the red meat and cattle sector’, can he provide the following details: the (a) dates, (b) locations, (c) full itineraries of proceedings, (d) cost of (i) accommodation, (ii) transport, and (iii) social activities, (e) details of meals, including but not limited to the (i) venue, (ii) number of attendees, (iii) cost of food, (iv) cost of drinks, and (v) list of food and drinks provided/ordered, and (f) all other associated costs, including but not limited to miscellaneous items such as (i) souvenirs, (ii) clothing, and (iii) gifts.

Mr Joyce: The Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

On 5 July 2013, the Labor Government through former Prime Minister Rudd announced the Indonesia-Australia Red Meat and Cattle 'Forum' and associated $60 million assistance package at the Indonesia-Australia Annual Leaders' Meeting, which was endorsed by the former Indonesian President, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. There was strong bipartisan support from the Australian Government for the initiative.

The original concept for an Indonesia-Australia Industry/Government Red Meat and Cattle 'Forum' was proposed in the Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) Indonesia strategy, June 2013 developed by the Meat and Livestock Australia-Indonesia Taskforce following disruptions to the trade such as the cessation of live cattle exports in 2011.

Following the Australian federal election of 2013, former Prime Minister, the Hon. Tony Abbott MP, reaffirmed the Australian Government's commitment to deliver the initiative of the 'Forum' and rebranded it as a 'Partnership' based on feedback from the Indonesian government, during his visit to Indonesia (30 September to 1 October 2013).
The Partnership initiative responds to calls from the Australian industry and Indonesian Government for greater investment in the bilateral relationship across the beef and cattle sector and it has had a positive impact on strengthening our agricultural cooperation, trade, investment and services relationship.

In November 2014, Indonesia’s new President Joko Widodo wrote to former Prime Minister Abbott confirming his support for the Partnership.

The Partnership has met three times on 17 April 2014 (Jakarta, Indonesia), 6-8 August 2014 (Brisbane, Australia) and most recently on 21 August 2015 (Sydney, Australia). The Partnership continues to have strong support from both the Australian and Indonesian Governments and the Australian beef and live cattle industries. It is seen as an important forum to strengthen the government to government, business to business and industry to industry relationship with Indonesia and to advocate for reliable and consistent trade in beef and live cattle between the two countries.

The costs expended by the Agriculture and Water Resources portfolio for the Partnership meetings are detailed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTNERSHIP MEETING COSTS</th>
<th>1st meeting</th>
<th>2nd meeting</th>
<th>3rd meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>17 April 2014</td>
<td>6-8 August 2014</td>
<td>21 August 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Jakarta, Indonesia (Four Seasons Hotel)</td>
<td>Brisbane, Australia (Hilton Hotel)</td>
<td>Sydney, Australia (Pier One Hotel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Itinerary</td>
<td>See Attachment 1</td>
<td>See Attachment 2</td>
<td>See Attachment 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of people (Australia)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of people (Indonesia)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of accommodation</td>
<td>$3,920</td>
<td>$13,515</td>
<td>$11,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of transport (flights)</td>
<td>$27,000</td>
<td>$11,804</td>
<td>$26,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of social activities</td>
<td>Nil (funded by Indonesia)</td>
<td>$1,279 (bus transport for field visit to Australian Country Choice Group Abattoir)</td>
<td>$1,070 - bus transport for field visit to abattoir Est 688: JBS Brooklyn, Melbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of meeting package</td>
<td>Nil (funded by Indonesia)</td>
<td>$4,830 – Includes meeting room hire, lunch, morning and afternoon tea.</td>
<td>$5,560 – Includes meeting room hire, lunch, morning and afternoon tea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of meals</td>
<td>Nil (funded by Indonesia)</td>
<td>$14,397 – see costing details on page 3 and additional details in Attachment 3</td>
<td>$5,080 – See full details on page 3 and additional details in Attachment 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifts</td>
<td>$120</td>
<td>$140</td>
<td>$157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other costs - busses</td>
<td>Nil (funded by Indonesia)</td>
<td>$2,780</td>
<td>$2,870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other cost - catering</td>
<td>Nil (funded by Indonesia)</td>
<td>$1,248</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other cost - translators</td>
<td>Nil (funded by Indonesia)</td>
<td>$3,245</td>
<td>$5,720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other cost - conference package</td>
<td>Nil (funded by Indonesia)</td>
<td>$4,145</td>
<td>$5,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other costs – IT, multimedia</td>
<td>Nil (funded by Indonesia)</td>
<td>$636</td>
<td>$3,043</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
Other costs - reimbursements
Total

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$2,535</td>
<td>$2,523</td>
<td>$107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$33,575</td>
<td>$60,542</td>
<td>$66,636</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ADDITIONAL DETAILS: MEALS AND DRINKS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st meeting</th>
<th>Location of meal</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number of attendees</th>
<th>Cost of meal</th>
<th>Cost of Drink</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jakarta, Indonesia</td>
<td>Nil cost - Hosted by the Indonesian Government</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2nd meeting</th>
<th>Location of meal</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number of attendees</th>
<th>Cost of meal</th>
<th>Cost of Drink</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane, Australia</td>
<td>Moda Restaurant</td>
<td>Meeting of the Partnership Co-chairs and Secretariat Lunch</td>
<td>05/08/2014</td>
<td>4 3 7</td>
<td>$380</td>
<td>$70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cha Char Restaurant</td>
<td></td>
<td>06/08/2014</td>
<td>11 25 36</td>
<td>$2,580</td>
<td>$72 nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moda Restaurant</td>
<td>Ministerial Dinner</td>
<td>07/08/2014</td>
<td>16 44 60</td>
<td>$5,185</td>
<td>$86 $2,135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hilton Hotel</td>
<td>Investment industry and senior delegation meeting breakfast</td>
<td>08/08/2014</td>
<td>15 12 27</td>
<td>$810</td>
<td>$30 nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Royale Qld Steakhouse</td>
<td>Ministerial and senior delegates lunch Partnership lunch</td>
<td>08/08/2014</td>
<td>Delegates were split over two venues</td>
<td>33 33</td>
<td>$2,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stockman's Bar and Grill</td>
<td></td>
<td>08/08/2014</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>$687</td>
<td>$25 nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3rd meeting</th>
<th>Location of meal</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number of attendees</th>
<th>Cost of meal</th>
<th>Cost of Drink</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sydney, Australia</td>
<td>Pier One hotel</td>
<td>Ministerial Dinner</td>
<td>20/08/2015</td>
<td>19 21 40</td>
<td>$4,200</td>
<td>$880</td>
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<td>$14,397</td>
<td>$4,200</td>
<td>$880</td>
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<td>$5,080</td>
<td>$19,477</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### ATTACHMENT 1

1st Indonesia-Australia Partnership on Food Security in Red Meat and Cattle Sector
(Thursday, 17 April 2014 - Jakarta, Indonesia)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08.30 – 09.00</td>
<td>Registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.00 - 09.15</td>
<td>Remarks and introduction of Indonesian Co-Chair &amp; Partnership Members by Mr. Himawan Hariyoga, Deputy Chairman of Indonesia Investment Coordinating Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.15 – 09.30</td>
<td>Remarks and introduction of Australian Co-Chair &amp; Partnership Members by Mr. Greg Moriarty, Ambassador to Indonesia, Australia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### QUESTIONS IN WRITING
09.30 – 09.40  Adoption of Agenda
09.40 – 10.40  Confirmation of the Terms of Reference (co-chairs to lead)
10.40 – 11.00  Coffee Break
11.00 – 12.00  Early harvest activities (co-chairs to lead):
                 Discussion on protocol of project submission, review, approval and implementation
                 Technical assistance for Indonesian farmers and capacity building program for
                 Indonesian young farmers and scholars in Australia
                 Mapping out Australia and Indonesia's end-to-end value chain of the red meat and
cattle industry
                 Identification of logistical projects related to the red meat and cattle sector,
                 including cattle terminals and vessels
                 BULLET Pilot project on integrated red meat and livestock cross border investment
12.00 – 13.15  Lunch
13.15 – 14.15  Overview of scope of $60 million supporting funds (Australia)
                 Official Development Assistance (ODA) framework ($50 million)
                 Non-ODA funding ($10 million)
                 Subsidiary agreement (Australia)
                 Financial support for the early harvest activities
                 BULLET Governance
14.15 – 15.30  Policy dialogue on commercial opportunities in the red meat and cattle sectors of
                 Indonesia and Australia
                 Australian presentation
                 Indonesian presentation
                 BULLET Identification of the issues
15.30 – 16.00  Closing remarks
                 Secretariat report and meeting communiqué
                 BULLET Terms of Reference endorsement (signing)
16.00 – 16.30  Press Conference

ATTACHMENT 2

Indonesia-Australia Partnership on Food Security in Red Meat and Cattle Sector
Second Partnership Meeting Agenda
(August 6-8, 2014 - Brisbane, Australia)

Wednesday 6 August

Field visit – Chairman Siregar to attend

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>07.00 – 10.00</td>
<td>Breakfast (Indonesian delegates only) Hilton Hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.30</td>
<td>Depart Hilton hotel (Partnership delegates to meet in the Hotel foyer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Group 2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>Tour of Woolworths – Indooroopilly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.30</td>
<td>Tour of boutique butcher – Indooroopilly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>Tour of boutique butcher – Indooroopilly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.30</td>
<td>Tour of Woolworths – Indooroopilly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>Depart for lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.00</td>
<td>Lunch (Cha Cha Char Bar &amp; Grill Shop 5/1 Eagle St, Brisbane)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.30</td>
<td>Depart lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>Arrive Australian Country Choice meat processing facility, Cannon Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.00</td>
<td>Depart ACC facility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
Thursday, 4 February 2016   HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

17.30 Arrive at Hilton hotel

*Business networking function (Hosted by Meat and Livestock Australia)*

18.45 Bus Pickup at Hilton hotel to event
19.00 – 21.30 Dinner and networking function (Hamilton Lounge, Ground Floor Brisbane City Hall, King George Square, Brisbane)

**Thursday 7 August – (Hilton Hotel, "Redlands/Lockyer" room, level 5)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>07.30 – 08.45</td>
<td>Indonesia – Australia <em>industry members only</em> breakfast (Hilton hotel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08.30 – 09.00</td>
<td>Registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.00 – 09.15</td>
<td>Welcoming remarks by co-chairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.15 – 09.20</td>
<td>Adoption of agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.20 – 09.30</td>
<td>Agreement to inaugural meeting's minutes and actions arising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.30 – 10.30</td>
<td>Discussion on, and agreement to the Partnership's Strategic Framework document and next steps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.30 – 10.45</td>
<td>Tabling and overview of the Operational Guidance Document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.45 – 11.00</td>
<td><strong>Break</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ministerial Program</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.00 – 11.15</td>
<td>Key note address by Mr. Barnaby Joyce, Minister for Agriculture, Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.15 – 11.30</td>
<td>Key note address by Bapak Mahendra Siregar, Chairman of Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.30 – 11.40</td>
<td>Signing of the Joint Declaration &amp; photo session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.40 – 12.00</td>
<td>Private meeting of Ministers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.40 – 12.00</td>
<td><strong>Break</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.00 – 13.00</td>
<td>Industry policy dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.00 – 13.45</td>
<td><em>Policy dialogue discussion paper</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.45 – 14.45</td>
<td>Discussion on priority areas and additional early harvest projects:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Breeding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Logistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.45 – 15.00</td>
<td><strong>Break</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.00 – 15.15</td>
<td>Ministers report to Heads of Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Report to Heads of Government</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.15 – 15.45</td>
<td>Update on current projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. NTCA Indonesia-Australia Pastoral Industry Student Program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Indonesia-Australia Skills Development Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.35 – 15.55</td>
<td>Presentation on Partnership SharePoint website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.55 – 16.05</td>
<td>Other business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.05 – 16.15</td>
<td>Next meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.15 – 16.30</td>
<td>Closing remarks (meeting communiqué)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Official Dinner (Hosted by Minister Joyce)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.45</td>
<td>Bus pickup to restaurant</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.00 – 20.00</td>
<td>Official dinner (Moda Restaurant)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Friday 8 August**

*Ministerial program -*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>07.30 – 10.00</td>
<td>Investment dialogue breakfast between Chairman Siregar, and Australian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
business leaders *(Invitation only)* – Hilton hotel Room 83, level 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>Depart Hilton hotel for Queensland Royal Show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.30</td>
<td>Join Partnership delegation at Queensland Royal Show</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Partnership Delegation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09.30</td>
<td>Australian Government, Industry delegates and Indonesian Government delegates depart Hilton hotel for Queensland Royal Show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.00 – 10.30</td>
<td>Viewing of Cattle Judging (Chairman Siregar and delegates arrive at 10.30am to join cattle viewing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.30 – 10.45</td>
<td>Viewing of Skype session with CEO Elders Indonesia - Ernest Banes Stand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.45 – 12.00</td>
<td>Three groups: Delegates tour of agricultural pavilion and meat displays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.00 – 12.30</td>
<td>Skype session Ekka Beef Cattle Experience and AACo - Chairman Siregar and Deputy PM Truss attending (Main Arena)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.30 – 14.00</td>
<td>Lunch - Steak House - Chairman Siregar with Deputy PM - Stockmen's Bar and Grill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.00</td>
<td>Depart Queensland Royal Show for Hilton hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.30</td>
<td>Arrive Hilton hotel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ATTACHMENT 3**

5 August 2014

**Partnership co-chairs and secretariat dinner – Moda restaurant**

**Mains**
- Octopus
- Ling Fish
- Grain Fed Sirloin * 4
- Gnocchi
- Duck Breast
- Fries * 2, Bread * 7, Olives * 2

**Drinks**
- House Wine Bottle * 1
- Apple Juice
- Coca cola

6 August 2014

**Cha Cha Char Restaurant Brisbane – Field visit lunch**

**Mains**
- Scotch Fillet, with Horseradish butter, Soubise, gremolata, thyme and dauphine potato.
- Eye fillet with crushed peas Primavera, tarragon, bresola and potato mousse.
- Ricotta tortellini with persillade, red onion relish and smoked mushroom "tea:"

**Drinks package**

---

**QUESTIONS IN WRITING**
non alcoholic

7 August 2014
Ministerial Dinner – Moda restaurant

Entrées
Homemade Ciabatta Bread
Atlantic Salmon Confit Orange BULLET Vanilla Dressing
Mozzarella Salad Heirloom Tomatoes BULLET Olive Dressing
Moda's Entremeses To Share Chicken Croquettes BULLET
Manoletes Chorizo Vegetarian Montadito BULLET Tuna Piquillo Pepper BULLET Duck Liver Parfait

Mains
Grain Fed Sirloin Bravas Potato BULLET Fried Peppers
Free Range Chicken Breast Sweet Potatoes BULLET Field Mushrooms

Desserts
Spanish Crème Caramel
White Chocolate Mousse

Drinks
Drinks package - $35 per person (2.5 hours)
Includes house white and red wine, beer and Soft drinks

Hilton Hotel Brisbane – Partnership meeting lunch
Buffet lunch – Halal
Package includes tea, coffee, soft drinks, morning and afternoon tea.

8 August 2014
Hilton Hotel Brisbane – Industry roundtable breakfast
Buffet and continental breakfast – Halal.
Package includes tea and coffee.

Royale Qld Steakhouse – Ministerial lunch
Lunch Package – Included choice of Rib Fillet / Sirloin Steak.

ATTACHMENT 4
Indonesia-Australia Partnership on Food Security in Red Meat and Cattle Sector

Third Partnership Meeting Agenda
(18 - 21 August 2015 – Sydney, Australia)

Tuesday, 18 August 2015 (Melbourne)
15.00 - Start Co-chairs meeting
17.00 - Finish Park Royal hotel - Melbourne Airport

Wednesday, 19 August 2015 (Melbourne)
14.15 - Start Abattoir field visit (for Chairman Sibarani and selected participants only)
17.00 - Finish Melbourne - JBS Brooklyn, 30 Industry Park Drive, Brooklyn.
Thursday, 20 August 2015 (Sydney)

19.00 - Arrival
Official Dinner (hosted by Minister Barnaby Joyce MP)
19.30 - Start
Pier One Hotel, Sydney, 11 Hickson Road, Walsh Bay, Sydney

Friday, 21 August 2015 (Sydney - Pier One Hotel) – Main Partnership meeting

08:30 – 09.00  1. Arrival and meeting registration
09:00 – 09:10  2. Welcome remarks by the Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP, Minister for Agriculture, Australia
09:10 – 09:20  3. Welcome remarks by Franciscus (Franky) M.A. Sibarani, Chairman of Indonesia Investment Coordinating Board (BKPM)
09:20 – 09:50  4. Closed Session: Bilateral Meeting between the Minister Joyce and Chairman Sibarani.
09.20 – 10.00  Coffee break – For Partnership members
10.00 – 10.20  5. Opening remarks by Co-Chair’s
10.20 – 11.10  6. Report back on activities/projects/working groups
11.10 – 11.30  Morning Tea
11.30 – 12.30  7. Partnership dialogue – ‘Food Security in the beef and cattle sector supply chain’
12:30 – 13:30  Lunch
13:15 – 14:00  Prayer session
14:10 – 15:10  8. Future direction of the Partnership – Development of the Partnership's long-term strategy
15:10 – 15:25  Afternoon Tea
                1. Consideration of the 'Promoting sustainable commercial scale beef cattle breeding in Indonesia'.
                2. Consideration of the Continuation of the Indonesian Skills Development Programme for 2016 and 2017 and agreement to expand the programme to include a short course for senior Indonesian policy officers.
                3. Consideration of a 'Special Visits Programme' for Senior Indonesian Government officials.
                   - Consideration of Option 2 – ‘Development of Standard Operating Procedures in Indonesian Abattoirs’, and
                   - Consideration to further consider option 3 and 4 by fourth Partnership meeting.
16:20 – 16:30  10. Closing - development of joint communiqué and Photo session
17:45 Pick up  Business networking function with Australian Industry
18:30 – 21:00  - Remarks By Indonesia Ambassador to Australia H.E Nadjib Riphat Kesoema
                - Remarks by Chairman of BKPM - H.E Franky Sibarani
                Venue: Sydney Fish Markets, Bank Street, Pyrmont.

ATTACHMENT 5
20 August 2015 – Ministerial Dinner - Pier One Hotel

Entrée
Heirloom tomato, buffalo mozzarella, mizuna
Five spiced prawns, sprout and coriander salad, wonton basket
Alaskan crab, spicy cucumber salsa, papaya salad

Main
Red snapper, sun dried tomato, olive risoni, curry oil
Fillet of beef, truffle mash, spinach with béarnaise sauce
Crispy skin chicken, parsnip mash, asparagus, salsa verdi

**Dessert**
- Pavlova with malibu anglaise
- Mocha creme brulee with almond biscotti
- Apple and berry crumble served with creme Anglaise

**Drinks**
Drinks package on consumption, includes:
- Red and White wines - Bridge S.B, Helm Riesling, Cape Mentelle Shiraz
- Fat Yak beer
- Lemonade, Pepsi, juice

21 August 2015 - Lunch - Pier One Hotel

**Salad**
- Caprese salad w truss tomatoes, olive oil, balsamic reduction and baby basil
- Rocket, pear and walnut salad in vinaigrette dressing

**Mains**
- Asian stir fry
- Grilled salmon fillet w lemon beurre meuniere
- Roast leg of lamb w thyme jus

**Sides**
- Roasted baby potatoes with herb & garlic butter
- Thyme & Rosemary roasted heirloom pumpkin
- Minestrone soup

**Sandwiches**
- Roasted chicken, truss tomatoes and pesto sandwiches
- Grilled vegetable, hummus and rocket wrap

**Platter**
- Antipasto platter with assorted dips & breads
- Cheese platter

**Morning and afternoon tea**
- Onion and sweet potato frittatas
- Tomato and mozzarella and pesto skewers
- Cheese and tomato croissants
- Crudites w cottage cheese, tapenade, tomato relish and chutney
- Scones with jam and double cream
- Carman's muesli bars
- Yogurt and berries
- Yogurt with muesli crunch
- Pavlova shell with fruit and berries
Fresh fruit
Tea and coffee was available throughout the day

**Humanitarian Settlement Services and Complex Case Support programs**
*(Question No. 2073)*

*Ms Rowland* asked the Minister for Social Services, in writing, on 23 November 2015:
What sum did it cost to have Ernst and Young evaluate the Humanitarian Settlement Services and Complex Case Support programs.

*Mr Porter:* The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:
Ernst & Young received a total of $277,776 (GST inclusive) to conduct the evaluation of the Humanitarian Settlement Services and Complex Case Support programmes.

**Perth International Airport**
*(Question No. 2075)*

*Ms MacTiernan* asked the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, in writing, on 23 November 2015:
(1) What is the average staffing number at
   (a) inbound, and
   (b) outbound, immigration counters at Perth International Airport (PIA).
(2) What is the average wait time at (a) inbound, and (b) outbound, immigration counters at PIA.
(3) Can the Minister confirm that queue monitoring takes into account the entire queue at PIA, and is not based on 'cut-off points' in the queue.
(4) Is it a fact that during peak time, often only 4 of 16 outbound immigration counters are staffed at PIA.
(5) When did the Australian Border Force (ABF) initially propose to install outbound SmartGate at PIA, and when is it expected to be installed.
(6) How many staff are on hand to assist with inbound SmartGate at PIA.
(7) What sum of revenue was raised from the Passenger Movement Charge at PIA in (a) 2013-14, and (b) 2014-15.
(8) What steps is the ABF taking to address queues at PIA.

*Mr Dutton:* The answer to the honourable member's question is:
(1) The number of staff deployed to different areas of the airport at any point in the 24 hour period depends on a variety of factors including; flight scheduling, flight loading, flights landing off schedule, compaction of flights, number of ABF officers scheduled for duty and planned training.
   a. The inbound Border Force control point has between 1-6 officers, with an average of 4 officers allocated during the 24/7 operational period. This can change subject to the factors outlined above.
   b. The outbound Border Force control point has between 1-6 officers, with an average of 3 officers allocated during the 24/7 operational period. This can change subject to the factors outlined above.
(2) Average wait time statistics are measured differently in relation to inwards and outwards ABF control points. In September 2015 statistics on passenger at Perth Airport were as follows:
   a. Passenger facilitation rate at inwards saw 96.02% of passengers processed within 30 minutes from the time the passenger joined the queue;
b. Passenger facilitation rate at outwards saw passengers processed on average in 3 minutes 40 seconds from the time the passenger joined the queue.

(3) Queue monitoring includes the time a passenger joins a queue and continues until they are processed through the Border Force control point.

(4) A number of factors determine how many officers are deployed to various functions at Perth Airport, including the Outwards Control Point during peak periods. Factors that impact officer deployment include: operational priorities, flight scheduling, flight loading, flights landing off schedule, compaction of flights, number of officers scheduled for duty, officers attending VIP or off terminal clearance processing and officer training requirements.

(5) Outbound electronic gates (eGates) at Perth Airport were originally due for installation in November 2015. The revised date for installation is now April 2016.

(6) The ABF at Perth Airport do not allocate staff to assist with inbound SmartGate as a routine activity. Perth Airport Pty Ltd (PAPL) has approximately 30 volunteers working 24/7 and 10 Customer Service representatives who assist travellers with using SmartGate.

(7) It is not possible to identify the amount of Passenger Movement Charge (PMC) collected by carriers which relate to specific departure locations. The overall PMC revenue figures are 846.6m for 2013-14 and 881.3m for 2014-15.

(8) A number of measures have been implemented to reduce queues including the more frequent use of a second exit point, training additional staff to process passengers from across the WA Regional Command and investigation of a 'Red / Green' channel option with PAPL and Department of Agriculture.

Operation Fides
(Question No. 2076)

Ms MacTiernan To ask the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources:

In respect of the investigation Operation Fides that commenced in December 2013, (a) has the investigation into biotech company Serana WA Pty Ltd (Serana) now concluded; if not, why not, (b) has there been any recommendation to prosecute Serana, (c) has Operation Fides been concluded in general, and (d) what costs have been incurred since 1 May 2015 in relation to this investigation.

Mr Joyce: The Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

(a) The investigation into Serana (WA) remains ongoing. A brief of evidence has been submitted to the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions. Further information was received by the department on 22 October 2015, during the course of wider investigations. Elements of that new information requires further investigation. Given the nature of the new information it is not appropriate to comment on it.

(b) A brief of evidence regarding Serana (WA), which was submitted to the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions on 9 April 2015, is currently under assessment by the CDPP.

(c) Operation Fides is an ongoing complex criminal investigation. The investigation involves a number of persons and entities. As at 4 December 2015, the investigation has not concluded.

(d) As at 4 December 2015 the total costs of activities undertaken by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources for Operation Fides since May 2015 are as follows:

- Airfare costs for a total of 10 return flights to destinations around Australia totalled $2,947.
- Accommodation costs for a total of 16 domestic trips to locations around Australia totalled $6,574.
• Car hire costs for one vehicle totalled $258.
• Staff salary costs are estimated at $126,301.
• Analytical testing of serum held in quarantine totalled $17,051.
• Storage costs of serum held in quarantine totalled $450.

Serana (WA) Pty Ltd
(Question No. 2077)

Ms MacTiernan To ask the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources:

In respect of the brief of evidence submitted to the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions (CDPP) on the investigation into Serana WA Pty Ltd (Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee, *Estimates*, 25 May 2015, page 123), (a) did the CDPP recommend prosecution, and (b) has any other brief of evidence been sought by the CDPP.

Mr Joyce: The Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

(a) The brief of evidence in relation Serana (WA) Pty Ltd was submitted to the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions on 9 April 2015 and is currently under assessment.

(b) No.

Department of Agriculture and Water Resources: Costs associated with the New Zealand Bilateral Engagement
(Question No. 2078)

Mr Conroy To ask the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources:

Further to his answer to question in writing No. 1436 (House *Hansard*, 15 October 2015, pages 11470 to 11476), in respect of the $1,178 cost to his department for the New Zealand Bilateral Engagement—Plant, Dinner on 8 September 2014, (a) for what purpose was it held, (b) how many people attended, (c) who attended, (d) what was the venue, (e) can a copy of the menu be provided, (f) can an invoice or itemised list of (i) food, (ii) drinks, and (iii) other costs, be provided, (g) for what purpose were the 'other costs' (totalling $116), and (h) what was the outcome.

Mr Joyce: The Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

(a) Routine bilateral discussions between officials from the New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries and the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (then the Department of Agriculture) on plant health and technical market access issues.

(b) Ten.

(c) Five officials from the New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries and five from the department.

(d) The Courgette Restaurant, Canberra City.

(e) A standard restaurant menu was used.

(f) An itemised list of costs is provided below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Total costs ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cider</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wine</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
(g) The other costs covered water and venue fees.

(h) The purpose of the dinner was to improve and build on the important and well established working relationship between officials from the New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries and the department in a less formal environment.

Department of Agriculture and Water Resources: Costs associated with the Coordination Committee meeting of the Regional Plan of Action to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices

(Question No. 2079)

Mr Conroy To ask the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources:

Further to his answer to question in writing No. 1436 (House Hansard, 15 October 2015, pages 11470 to 11476), in respect of the $20,306 cost to his department for the Coordination Committee meeting of the Regional Plan of Action to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices on 4 and 5 November 2014, (a) for what purpose was it held, (b) how many people attended, and of these, how many were from his (i) department, and (ii) ministerial office, (c) did he attend, (d) what was the venue, (e) can a copy of the itinerary be provided, (f) can an invoice or itemised list of (i) food, (ii) drinks, and (iii) other costs, be provided, (g) for what purpose were 'other costs' (totalling $13,927), (h) what is the total of all costs associated with this meeting, including but not limited to (i) travel, (ii) accommodation, (iii) social activities, and (iv) allowances, and (i) what was the outcome.

Mr Joyce: The Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

a) The Coordination Committee for the Regional Plan of Action (RPOA) to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices including Combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing in South East Asia meets annually, and is hosted by member countries on a rotating basis. The RPOA Coordination Committee meets to agree upon a forward workplan for the next year, outlining collaborative work to be completed by member countries on matters related to promoting responsible fisheries governance and combating IUU fishing in our region. The Committee also discusses progress made by each RPOA member country during the past year.

b) 35 people attended this meeting
   i. Three from the department, plus four from the Australian Fisheries Management Authority
   ii. One from the Parliamentary Secretary's office who attended the first day of the meeting

c) No. However, Senator the Hon. Richard Colbeck, the then Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture, attended the first day of the meeting.

d) The Rydges Esplanade Cairns, in Queensland, Australia.

e) A copy of the agenda for the meeting is included at Attachment A.

f) The following includes an itemised list of the costs of:
   i. Food – Totalling $6,265, includes:
      i. Official Dinner Tuesday 4 November: 50 x $84 per person $4,200
      ii. Official Dinner Wednesday 5 November: 35 x $59 per person $2,065
   ii. Drinks - Total cost of $114
   iii. The breakdown of the 'other costs' (totalling $13,927) is:
      i. Venue hire: $476
The purpose of the 'other costs' were, with reference to answers at (f iii):

i. To hire the conference centre at the Rydges Cairns to hold the two day meeting.
ii. To hire AV equipment for the duration of the meeting.
iii. To provide delegates with food during the meeting.
iv. The purpose of this field trip was to for delegates to learn how Australia does multiple use marine planning. The trip went out on the reef to view it in the context of ecotourism benefits from managing the marine environment for fisheries and other economic benefits while protecting world class ecological and environmental assets. Talks were provided by officials who were expert in the subject matter. It is an expectation by RPOA member countries that the meeting host country provides an informative field trip to the member delegates.
v. To provide delegates with transport to and from the Cairns Airport.

h) The total cost associated was $25,955 made up of the costs outlined under part (f) of this response and:

i. $2,476 for travel, including flights, taxis, booking fees and parking for the three departmental attendees
ii. $1,731 for accommodation for the three departmental attendees
iii. There were no social activities expenses for this meeting
iv. $1,314 for travel allowances for the three departmental attendees
v. $128 for other administration costs associated with the meeting

i) The outcome of the Coordination Committee meeting for the Regional Plan of Action (RPOA) to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices including Combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing in South East Asia was the successful continuation of Australia's commitment to regional cooperation to promote sustainable fishing practices and to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing. RPOA member countries host this meeting on a rotating basis. Specific outcomes of the meeting include:

i. Agreement to the rules and procedures to establish and implement an 'RPOA Vessel Watch List'. The RPOA Vessel Watch List is mainly to combat IUU fishing by RPOA countries in RPOA participating countries' waters. Participating countries also agreed to continue denying port entry to vessels on regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) IUU vessel lists.
ii. Countries agreed to review their ship registers to ensure that any RFMO IUU listed vessel on their registers is deregistered.
iii. Agreement to continue technical training, capacity building and legislative review and reform.
iv. Countries also agreed, consistent with their respective domestic arrangements and legal frameworks, to continue to progress with ratification or implementation of international and regional fisheries instruments including progress with implementing the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures.
COMBATING ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED (IUU) FISHING IN THE SOUTHEAST ASIA REGION

Rydges Esplanade Resort, Cairns, Australia
4 - 6 November 2014

DRAFT AGENDA AND TIMETABLE

3 November 2014 (Monday)
Arrival of delegates and hotel check-in

4 November 2014 (Tuesday)
0830 – 0900 Registration
0900 - 1000 Opening Session
  Opening address: 15 minutes
  Senator the Hon. Richard Colbeck
  Parliamentary Secretary to the Australian Government Minister for Agriculture
1000 - 1030 Group Photo and Coffee Break

1030 -1130 Agenda 1: Introduction and Adoption of the Agenda
  1.1 Background of the meeting – RPOA Secretariat
  1.2 Regional outlook and priorities - discussion

1130 – 1300 Agenda 2: Presentation of Reports
  2.1 Reports of Key messages and outcomes:
     a. RPOA Secretariat
     b. Country reports

Lunch

1400-1530 Agenda 2: Presentation of Reports (Continued)
  2.2 RPOA MCS Sub-Regional Groups:
     a. Arafura – Timor Seas
     b. Gulf of Thailand
     c. Southern and Eastern South China Sea and Sulu-Sulawesi Seas

Coffee Break

1530-1700 Agenda 2: Presentation of Reports (Continued)
  2.3 RPOA Advisory Bodies/Partners:
     a. SEAFDEC
     b. APFIC-FAO
     c. Worldfish Centre
     d. Infofish
  2.4 Observers: Coral Triangle Initiative, Others (TBC)

Close of session
1900 - 2200 Official Dinner

5 November 2014 (Wednesday)
0900-1030 Agenda 3: RPOA Issues: for consideration/endorsement
3.1 Rules of Procedure for 3rd Parties
3.2 RPOA IUU Vessel Watch List
3.3 The 'Genuine Link' – the vessel and the flag State

1030 - 1100 Coffee break
1100-1300 Agenda 4: 2013 - 2014 RPOA Work Plan Progress and Further Priorities

Agenda 5: Development of the 2014 – 2015 RPOA Work Plan
1300 - 1400 Lunch (and commencement of Summary Report by Secretariat)
1400 - 1630 Agenda 6: Other business

Agenda 7: Finalization and summary of 2014 - 2015 Work plan and Coordination Committee Report

Agenda 8: Next Meeting
Agenda 9: Address by Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) - protected area conservation, zoning and multiple use.

1700 Meeting close

6 November 2014 (Thursday)

Field Trip
Day Reef tour to be accompanied by GBRMPA officers - focus on protected area conservation and multiple use

7 November 2014 (Friday)

Departure of delegates

Department of Agriculture and Water Resources: Costs associated with Director-General of the International Organisation of Vine and Wine dinner (Question No. 2080)

Mr Conroy To ask the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources:

Further to his answer to question in writing No. 1436 (House Hansard, 15 October 2015, pages 11470 to 11476 ), in respect of the $800 cost to his department for dinner with the Director-General of the International Organisation of Vine and Wine on 1 October 2014, (a) for what purpose was it held, (b) how many people attended, (c) who attended, (d) what was the venue, (e) can a copy of the menu be provided, (f) can an invoice or itemised list of (i) food, (ii) drinks, and (iii) other costs, be provided, and (g) what was the outcome.

Mr Joyce: The Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

(a) To strengthen Australian government and industry ties with the Director-General of the International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV).

(b) Ten.

(c) Mr Jean-Marie Aurand, International Organisation of Vine and Wine
Jonathan Breach, Accolade Wines
James Omond, Omond and Co lawyers
Simon Berry, Wine Grape Growers Australia
Peter Hayes, past-President, International Organisation of Vine and Wine

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
Tony Battaglene, Winemakers' Federation of Australia
Kate Harvey, Australian Grape and Wine Authority
Creina Stockley, Australian Wine Research Institute
Travis Power, Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
John Power, Department of Agriculture and Water Resources.

(d) Jolleys Boathouse Restaurant.

(e) No.

(f) (i) $800.
   (ii) Nil.
   (g) Nil.

(g) A strengthened relationship with the Director-General, including improving his understanding of:

- the state of the Australian wine industry
- the importance for all jurisdictions, including Australia, in getting the best value for money from their OIV investment
- Australia's engagement in the OIV.

The Director-General provided information on the OIV and its reform process.

Department of Agriculture and Water Resources: United States Bilateral Engagement
(Question No. 2081)

Mr Conroy To ask the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources:

Further to his answer to question in writing No. 1436 (House Hansard, 15 October 2015, pages 11470 to 11476), in respect of the $554 cost to his department for United States Bilateral Engagement—Plant, Dinner on 10 December 2014, (a) for what purpose was it held, (b) how many people attended, (c) who attended, (d) what was the venue, (e) can a copy of the menu be provided, (f) can an invoice or itemised list of (i) food, (ii) drinks, and (iii) other costs, be provided, (g) for what purpose were the 'other costs' (totalling $17), and (h) what was the outcome.

Mr Joyce: The Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

(a) Routine bilateral discussions between officials from the United States Department of Agriculture and the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (then the Department of Agriculture) on plant health and technical market access issues.

(b) Eight.

(c) Three officials from the United States Department of Agriculture, two from the Foreign Agriculture Service based at the United States Embassy in Canberra and three from the department.

(d) The Rockwall Bar and Grill, Hobart, Tasmania.

(e) A standard restaurant menu was used.

(f) An itemised list of costs is provided below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Total costs ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinks</td>
<td>107.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other costs</td>
<td>17.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>554</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
(g) The other costs were for coffee.

(h) The purpose of the dinner was to improve and build on the important and well established working relationship between officials from the United States Department of Agriculture and the department in a less formal environment.

**Department of Agriculture and Water Resources: Formal Dinner China**

(Question No. 2082)

**Mr Conroy** To ask the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources:

Further to his answer to question in writing No. 1436 (House *Hansard*, 15 October 2015, pages 11470 to 11476), in respect of the $2,100 cost to his department for the Formal Dinner China-Australia Dairy Talks on 11 December 2014, (a) for what purpose was it held, (b) how many people attended, (c) who attended, (d) what was the venue, (e) can a copy of the menu be provided, (f) can an invoice or itemised list of (i) food, (ii) drinks, and (iii) other costs, be provided, and (g) what was the outcome.

**Mr Joyce:** The Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

a) The dinner is a formality in a diplomatic visit of Chinese officials representing government, the Chinese dairy industry and Chinese research institutions. The aim of the dinner is to welcome the delegation to Australia and introduce them to Australian dairy industry leaders.

b) Twenty people attended the dinner.

c) The delegation members who attended the dinner were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names of guests (including Commonwealth employees)</th>
<th>Title/designation</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Department of Agriculture Delegation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Peter Ottesen</td>
<td>Assistant Secretary, Agricultural Industries Branch, Agricultural Policy Division</td>
<td>Department of Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Angela O'Sullivan</td>
<td>Director, Wool &amp; Dairy Policy, Agricultural Industries Branch, Agricultural Policy Division</td>
<td>Department of Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sue Kennedy</td>
<td>Assistant Director A/g, Wool &amp; Dairy Policy, Agricultural Industries Branch, Agricultural Policy Division</td>
<td>Department of Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Matthew Koval</td>
<td>Assistant Secretary, Agricultural Industries Taskforce, Agricultural Policy Division</td>
<td>Department of Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Adam Balcerak</td>
<td>Incoming Beijing Agricultural Counsellor</td>
<td>Department of Agriculture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Australian Attendees</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Charlie McElhone</td>
<td>General Manager, Trade and Strategy Group</td>
<td>Dairy Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Sarah Zu</td>
<td>International Market Manager</td>
<td>Dairy Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Noel Campbell</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Australian Dairy Farmers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Department/Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr WANG Feng</td>
<td>Deputy Director General (Director, Dairy Management Office)</td>
<td>Department of Animal Husbandry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms MA Ying</td>
<td>Director, Dairy Division, (Deputy Director, Dairy Management Office)</td>
<td>Department of Animal Husbandy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr JIANG Jiang</td>
<td>Program Officer, American and Oceania Affairs Division</td>
<td>Department of International Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr LI Shengli</td>
<td>Professor, Animal Science and Technology College (and Chief Scientist of National Dairy Industry System)</td>
<td>China Agriculture University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr ZHANG Shengli</td>
<td>Professor, Animal Science and Technology College</td>
<td>China Agriculture University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr ZHENG Nan</td>
<td>Assistant Researcher</td>
<td>Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr WANG Yuting</td>
<td>Agricultural Information Institute</td>
<td>Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr XU Guangyi</td>
<td>Vice President,</td>
<td>China Huishan Dairy Holdings Co., Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr YANG Jiwu</td>
<td>General Manager, Strategic Development Department</td>
<td>Yili Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr YANG Sihang</td>
<td>Strategy and Investment Director</td>
<td>Bright Dairy and Food Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr CHEN Lijun</td>
<td>Deputy General Manager</td>
<td>Beijing Sanyuan Food Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Charles Chin</td>
<td>Interpreter</td>
<td>Chin Communications</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

d) The venue was The Red Emperor Restaurant, Southbank, Melbourne.

e) A copy of the menu is not available.

f) Invoice is attached. The dinner cost $105 per person which covered a banquet meal including drinks. An itemised invoice is not available.

g) The outcome of the meeting was an exchange of information on Australian and Chinese dairy research and development, industry farming practices, and government priorities relating to dairy investment and trade.

**Department of Immigration and Border Protection: Papua New Guinea Government Working Lunch**  
(Question No. 2083)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, in writing, on 24 November 2015:

Further to his answer to question in writing No. 1474 (House Hansard, 22 October 2015, page 12331), in respect of the $571.33 cost for the dinner hosted by him following a meeting with the Papua New Guinean Minister for Foreign Affairs in February 2015,
(a) for what purpose was it held,
(b) how many people attended,
(c) who attended,
(d) what was the venue,
(e) can a copy of the menu be provided,
(f) can an invoice or itemised list of (i) food, (ii) drinks, and (iii) other costs, be provided, and
(g) what was the outcome.

Mr Dutton: The answer to the honourable member’s question is:
(a) A working lunch (Incorrectly noted as a dinner in PQON 1474) was held with the Australian High Commissioner and senior Australian staff in Papua New Guinea, as part of an introductory visit to meet with senior officials of the PNG Government.
(b) 10 people attended the lunch.
(c) The following people attended lunch:

**Australian Delegation**
- Minister for Immigration and Border Protection
- Commander Operation Sovereign Borders Joint Agency Task Force
- Acting Deputy Secretary Immigration Status Resolution Group, Department of Immigration and Border Protection
- Ambassador for People Smuggling Issues for Australia, DFAT
- Senior Adviser to the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection

**Australian High Commission**
- High Commissioner
- Defence Adviser
- Acting Chief Migration Officer
- First Secretary Australian High Commission
- AFP Liaison Officer

(d) The lunch was held at Airways Hotel, Aviator Conference Room, Port Moresby.
(e) Not provided.
(f) See attached invoices (Appendix A).
(g) This visit provided the opportunity for engagement with the Australian High Commission and Government of PNG, important for the relationship with PNG in achieving successful outcomes from Operation Sovereign Borders.

Copies of Appendix A can be obtained from the House of Representatives Table Office

**Department of Immigration and Border Protection: Sri Lankan Government Dinner**

(Question No. 2084)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, in writing, on 24 November 2015:

Further to his answer in writing to question No. 1474 (House Hansard, 22 October 2015, page 12331), in respect of the $1094.42 cost for the dinner hosted by him following a meeting with the Sri Lankan Prime Minister and other key Ministers in May 2015,
(a) for what purpose was it held,
(b) how many people attended,
(c) who attended,
(d) what was the venue,
(e) can a copy of the menu be provided,
(f) can an invoice or itemised list of (i) food, (ii) drinks, and (iii) other costs, be provided, and
(g) what was the outcome.

Mr Dutton: The answer to the honourable member’s question is:

(a) The purpose of the dinner was to meet key Sri Lankan Government interlocutors on counter people smuggling cooperation. It provided an opportunity to thank these interlocutors for their ongoing support and excellent efforts to counter people smuggling. The dinner also provided an opportunity to gain insights into their work and the priorities of the Sri Lankan government.
(b) 23 people attended the dinner.
(c) The following people attended the dinner:

**Sri Lankan Interlocutors**
- Secretary Ministry of Public Order and Christian Affairs.
- Minister of Justice.
- State Minister of Defence.
- Commander of the Sri Lanka Navy.
- Chief of Staff of the Sri Lanka Navy.
- A representative from Chief National Intelligence.
- Deputy Inspector-General of the Criminal Investigation Department, Sri Lanka Police Service.
- Controller-General of Immigration and Emigration.
- President of Resettlement Authority.

**Australian Delegation**
- Minister for Immigration and Border Protection.
- Commander, Joint Agency Taskforce, Operation Sovereign Borders.
- Senior Advisor to Minister Dutton.
- Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Australian Customs and Border Protection Service.

**Australian High Commission**
- Australian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka.
- First Assistant Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
- Minister-Counsellor, Department of Immigration and Border Protection.
- Six non SES representatives from the Australian High Commission

(d) The dinner was held at the Australian High Commissioner’s residence, Colombo, Sri Lanka.
(e) It was an Indian buffet (selection of salad, hot dishes, rice, condiments and dessert). Invoices are attached.
(f) See attached A, invoices.
(g) There were a number of useful outcomes. The dinner provided an opportunity to discuss how our two countries could better work together to counter people smuggling. The dinner also helped to build relationships with the Australian Government’s key Sri Lankan interlocutors on counter people smuggling cooperation, including with new appointees following Sri Lanka’s parliamentary election in August.

*Copies of Appendix A can be obtained from the House of Representatives Table Office*
Department of Immigration and Border Protection: Catering and Hospitality
(Question No 2085)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, in writing, on 24
November 2015:

Further to his answer to question in writing No. 1444 (House Hansard, 22 October 2015, pages
12325 to 12331), in respect of the $1,698.12 cost for the official dinner with representatives from other
Five Country Conference missions held in Washington DC, United States of America, on 18 August
2014,

(a) for what purpose was it held,
(b) how many people attended,
(c) who attended,
(d) what was the venue,
(e) can a copy of the menu be provided,
(f) can an invoice or itemised list of (i) food, (ii) drinks, and (iii) other costs, be provided, and
(g) what was the outcome.

Mr Dutton: The answer to the honourable member's question is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) for what purpose was it held</td>
<td>The dinner was held to obtain updates on United States, New Zealand,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Canada and United Kingdom immigration issues; and discuss Visa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Application Cost share possibilities, law enforcement and custom issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) how many people attended</td>
<td>11 attendees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) who attended,</td>
<td>Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regional Director Americas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principal Migration Officer Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Counsellor (the then) Australian Customs and Border Protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-DIBP (8 attendees) were from the following agencies: United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Department of State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Embassy of New Zealand Citizenship and Immigration Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>United Kingdom Visas and Immigration Commander – Australian Federal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Zealand Ministry of Innovation, Business and Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) what was the venue</td>
<td>Vidalia Restaurant, Washington DC, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) can a copy of the menu be</td>
<td>Yes, see attached.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provided</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) can an invoice or itemised</td>
<td>Yes, see attached receipt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>list of (i) food, (ii) drinks,</td>
<td>Total cost: 1533.40 USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and (iii) other costs, be</td>
<td>Of which</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provided and</td>
<td>Alcohol cost: 242 USD Food cost: 825 USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other beverages: 3.75 USD Room fee: 100 USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tax and Tip: 362.65 USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Note that a service charge of 20% and tax of 10% was applied to the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dinner, as is customary in the United States and as stipulated by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the restaurant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Minister for Immigration and Border Protection advised the cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of the official dinner was Australian $1,698.12. The invoice for the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>event is</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
in US dollars. The exchange rate at the time of this event was 1AUD = 0.903 USD which explains the difference in the cost advised by the Minister and the amount stated in the invoice.

(g) what was the outcome. The dinner contributed to Australia's continuing engagement with the United States, New Zealand, Canada and the United Kingdom on immigration, law enforcement and customs issues.

Attachment can be obtained from the Table Office

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
Department of Immigration and Border Protection: Catering and Hospitality
(Question No 2086)
Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, in writing, on 24 November 2015:
Further to his answer to question in writing No. 1444 (House Hansard, 22 October 2015, pages 12325 to 12331), in respect of the $3,151.19 cost for stakeholder relationships with various United States officials held in Washington DC, United States of America, on 2 December 2014,
(a) what was the (i) nature, and (ii) purpose, of this function,
(b) how many people attended,
(c) what were the (i) names, and (ii) roles, of those who attended,
(d) what was the venue,
(e) can a copy of the menu be provided,
(f) can an invoice or itemised list of (i) food, (ii) drinks, and (iii) other costs, be provided, and
(g) what was the outcome.

Mr Dutton: The answer to the honourable member's question is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) for what purpose was it held</td>
<td>The dinner is held each year in Washington DC to thank US Government, academic, embassy and think-tank contacts for their assistance throughout the year. The dinner is a long-standing event co-hosted between the Embassy of Canada and Embassy of Australia (Department of Immigration and Border Protection and the former Australian Customs and Border Protection Service).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) how many people attended</td>
<td>5 attendees from Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) 187 Non-DIBP attendees including 9 locally engaged staff. Please see attached list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) who attended,</td>
<td>DIBP: Regional Director Principal Migration Officer Counsellor (the then) Australian Customs and Border Protection 2 Senior Analysts (the then) Australian Customs and Border Protection 187 Non-DIBP attendees including 9 locally engaged employees (Please see attached list).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) what was the venue</td>
<td>Embassy of Australia, 1601 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington DC, 20036 USA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
**Total Cost to DIBP: 3264.16 USD**

*Of which:*
- Food costs: 1350 USD
- Alcohol: 671 USD
- Other costs:
  - Staffing: 519.5 USD
  - Entertainment: 300 USD
  - Equipment: 299.91 USD
  - Decoration: 86.25 USD
  - Delivery: 37.5 USD

50% of the event cost as stated in the invoice was covered by the Embassy of Canada.

The Minister for Immigration and Border Protection reported the cost of the official dinner for stakeholders was AUD $3151.19. This did not include a cost for entertainment of approximately AUD 333.33 or 300 USD (at the exchange rate of 1AUD = 0.903) as the entertainment cost was not known at that time of the Minister's report.

The total cost for the event is approximately 3484.52 AUD or 3264.16 USD (at the exchange rate of 1AUD = 0.903).

(g) what was the outcome.

The dinner contributed to strengthened relationships with counterparts from the United States, Canada and other foreign governments in Washington DC.

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**Department of Immigration and Border Protection: Catering and Hospitality**

(Question No 2087)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, in writing, on 24 November 2015:

Further to his answer to question in writing No. 1444 (House Hansard, 22 October 2015, pages 12325 to 12331), in respect of the $4,946.54 cost for stakeholder relationships with various London Government officials held in London, United Kingdom, on 16 December 2014,

(a) what was the (i) nature, and (ii) purpose, of this function,

(b) how many people attended,

(c) what were the (i) names, and (ii) roles, of those who attended,

(d) what was the venue,

(e) can a copy of the menu be provided,

(f) can an invoice or itemised list of (i) food, (ii) drinks, and (iii) other costs, be provided and

(g) what was the outcome.

Mr Dutton: The answer to the honourable member's question is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) what was the (i) nature, and (ii) purpose, of this function</td>
<td>The Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) hosted an end of year reception at the Australian High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Commission for key internal and external stakeholders in London, including Minister-Counsellors from other embassies, UK Home Office colleagues and other international partners. The purpose of the reception was for DIBP London to thank partners for their support and collaboration throughout the year, and to strengthen and continue these key relationships in the new year.

(b) how many people attended

There were 51 attendees.

(c) what were the (i) names, and (ii) roles, of those who attended,

51 people attended the event. 63 had initially responded and the event was catered accordingly. There is no final list of attendees. There were 10 DIBP employees in attendance:

- Regional Director Europe
- Principal Migration Officer Integrity
- Chief Migration Officer
- 2 Senior Migration Officers
- 5 Locally Engaged Staff

Further to this there were approximately 14 employees of other Australian government agencies at post (including state and territory agencies) and approximately 27 attendees from a range of external organisations including foreign embassies, UK Government departments, foreign government agencies and non-government organisations.

(d) what was the venue

Downer Room, Australia High Commission, London.

(e) can a copy of the menu be provided

Please see Attachment A for a copy of the menu.

(f) can an invoice or itemised list of (i) food, (ii) drinks, and (iii) other costs, be provided, and

(i) Please see Attachment B for an invoice of the catering costs in British Pounds.

(ii) Please see Attachment C for an invoice of additional alcoholic beverages in British Pounds.

(iii) No other costs.

(g) what was the outcome

The reception assisted in strengthening existing relationships, developing connections and identifying areas of common interest with key international partners.

**Attachments can be obtained from the Table Office**

**Department of Immigration and Border Protection: Catering and Hospitality (Question No 2088)**

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, in writing, on 24 November 2015:

Further to his answer to question in writing No. 1444 (House Hansard, 22 October 2015, pages 12325 to 12331), in respect of the $8,130.60 cost for stakeholder relationships with officials from the Government of Nauru and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, held in Nauru on 18 February 2015,

(a) what was the (i) nature, and (ii) purpose, of this function,

(b) how many people attended,

(c) what were the (i) names, and (ii) roles, of those who attended,

(d) what was the venue,

(e) can a copy of the menu be provided,

(f) can an invoice or itemised list of (i) food, (ii) drinks, and (iii) other costs, be provided, and
(g) what was the outcome.

Mr Dutton: The answer to the honourable member's question is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) what was the (i) nature, and (ii) purpose, of this function</td>
<td>Official dinner was hosted with key government of Nauru (GoN) Ministers and officials, and DFAT representatives, in order to improve working relationships with Nauru. The dinner was an opportunity to acknowledge the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection's first visit to Nauru and meet with senior officials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) how many people attended</td>
<td>88 external stakeholders and 21 officers from the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) were confirmed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) what were the (i) names, and (ii) roles, of those who attended,</td>
<td>Please see Attachment A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) what was the venue</td>
<td>The Bay Restaurant, Nauru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) can a copy of the menu be provided</td>
<td>Due to the number of people that attended, a buffet was provided consisting of local Nauruan cuisine, this included three different pork dishes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) can an invoice or itemised list of (i) food, (ii) drinks, and (iii)</td>
<td>Please see Attachment B.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) what was the outcome</td>
<td>The relationship between the Minister and all key stakeholders was firmly established enabling more productive future engagement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) attendees

- Deputy Secretary, Support Group
- Assistant Secretary, Nauru
- Programme Coordinator, Nauru
- Director, Nauru Operations Coordination Section
- Operations Lead, Nauru
- Community Liaison Officer, Nauru
- Infrastructure Lead, Nauru
- Service Delivery Lead, Nauru
- Settlement Lead, Nauru
- Community Liaison Officer, Nauru
- 11 x DIBP operational officers, Nauru

Non DIBP Attendees - Australian Government Officials

- Minister for Immigration and Border Protection
- Commander, Joint Agency Taskforce
- Senior Media Advisor, Minister for Immigration and Border Protection
- Australian High Commissioner to Nauru
- Shadow Minister for Immigration and Border Protection

Australian High Commission and the Australian Federal Police
2 x Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade officials, Nauru
1 x Australian Federal Police official, Nauru
5 x Air crew

**Government of Nauru**
- The President of Nauru and one additional invitee
- The Speaker of Parliament and additional invitee
- The Minister for Justice and one additional invitee
- Clerk of Parliament and one additional invitee
- Minister for Transport and Health and one additional invitee
- Minister for Education and one additional invitee
- Minister for Commerce, Industry and Environment and one additional invitee
- Minister for Nauru Royalties Trust
- Representative of the Caucus - Aiwo and one additional invitee
- Representative of the Caucus - Ubenide and one additional invitee
- Representative of the Caucus - Meneng and one additional invitee
- Representative of the Caucus - Ewa/Anetan and one additional invitee
- Member for Anabar/Ljuw/Anibare and one additional invitee
- Member for Ewa/Anetan and one additional invitee
- Member for Ubenide and one additional invitee
- Chief Secretary and one additional invitee
- Presidential Counsel and one additional invitee
- Acting Secretary to Cabinet
- Secretary to Cabinet and one additional invitee
- Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Trade and one additional invitee
- Secretary for Justice and Border Control and one additional invitee
- Secretary for Transport and one additional invitee
- Secretary for Education and one additional invitee
- Secretary for Health and one additional invitee
- Secretary for Home Affairs
- Director of Police and one additional invitee
- Senior Government Lawyer
- Operations Manager Camp 1
- Deputy Operations Manager Camp 1
- Operations Manager Camp 2
- Deputy Operations Manager Camp 2
- Operations Manager Camp 3
- Deputy Operations Manager Camp 3
- Settlement Manager
Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, in writing, on 24 November 2015:

Further to his answer to question in writing No. 1444 (House Hansard, 22 October 2015, pages 12325 to 12331), in respect of the $1,113.00 cost for stakeholder relationships with the Cambodian delegation, held in Nauru on 21 March 2015,

(a) what was the (i) nature, and (ii) purpose, of this function,
(b) how many people attended,
(c) what were the (i) names, and (ii) roles, of those who attended,
(d) what was the venue,
(e) can a copy of the menu be provided,
(f) can an invoice or itemised list of (i) food, (ii) drinks, and (iii) other costs, be provided, and
(g) what was the outcome.

Mr Dutton: The answer to the honourable member's question is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) what was the (i) nature, and (ii) purpose, of this function</td>
<td>The dinner hosted on Nauru was for a delegation of Cambodian officials who travelled to Nauru to provide refugees with information on life/living in Cambodia and options for settling in Cambodia permanently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) how many people attended</td>
<td>Six Government of Cambodia officials, one IOM staff member from Phnom Penh, one Nauru government official and four DIBP officers attended.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) what were the (i) names, and (ii) roles, of those who attended</td>
<td>Government of Cambodia Head of Office, General Department of Immigration, Department of Refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) what was the venue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) can a copy of the menu be provided</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) can an invoice or itemised list of (i) food, (ii) drinks, and (iii)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other costs, be provided</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) what was the outcome</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Department of Immigration and Border Protection: Catering and Hospitality

(Question No 2089)
Deputy of Office, General Department of Immigration, Department of Refugees

*International Organization for Migration*

Department of Immigration and Border Protection

Director Third Country Settlement

Programme Coordinator

Assistant Director Third Country Settlement

Settlement Lead Cambodia

*Government of Nauru*

Secretary for Justice and Border Control

The Bay Restaurant, Nauru

Fish Tuna Curry, Chicken Curry, Beef Stir Fry, Chicken Cashew Nut, Spring Rolls, Steamed Rice, Salad, Roti, Dessert

(i) Food = $780

(ii) Drinks = $333

The delegation visited Nauru to familiarize them with the country and to meet with officials of the Government of Nauru. The Department's role is to facilitate the relationship between the two countries in Nauru. There was positive engagement between the Government of Cambodia and the Government of Nauru, with each government showing strong commitment and support to the Cambodia Settlement Programme to benefit refugees.

**Department of Immigration and Border Protection: Catering and Hospitality**

(Question No 2090)

**Mr Conroy** asked the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, in writing, on 24 November 2015:

Further to his answer in writing to question No. 1444 (House Hansard, 22 October 2015, pages 12325 to 12331), in respect of the $1,108.71 cost for stakeholder relationships with United Nations representatives, held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on 5 May 2015,

(a) what was the (i) nature, and (ii) purpose, of this function,

(b) how many people attended,

(c) what were the (i) names, and (ii) roles, of those who attended,

(d) what was the venue,

(e) can a copy of the menu be provided,

(f) can an invoice or itemised list of (i) food, (ii) drinks, and (iii) other costs, be provided, and

(g) what was the outcome.

**Mr Dutton:** The answer to the honourable member's question is:

(a) The purpose of the lunch was to engage with United Nations officials, Non-Government Organisations and other diplomatic colleagues and, discuss some of the challenges Sri Lanka is currently facing.

(b) 16 people attended the lunch.
(c) The following people attended the lunch:

**Diplomatic, United Nations and Others**

**Australian Delegation**
Minister for Immigration and Border Protection. Commander, Joint Agency Taskforce, Operation Sovereign Borders. Senior Advisor to Minister Dutton. Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Australian Customs and Border Protection Service. Australian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka. Minister-Counsellor, Department of Immigration and Border Protection and Four non-SES representatives from the Australian High Commission

(d) The lunch was held at Paradise Road Tintagel Colombo, 65 Rosemead Place, Colombo.

(e) The menu comprised:

**Entree**
Provencale tomato tart or Chilled cucumber and avocado soup with prawn or vegetable salsa.

**Main**
Roasted butternut risotto or Pan roasted salmon and cauliflower puree or Double lamb cutlets with beetroot mash.

**Dessert**
Double choc cheesecake or Lemon sabayon tart.

(f) See attachment A, invoice.

(g) The lunch provided an opportunity to engage with the United Nations, NGOs and other diplomatic representatives on some of the challenges Sri Lanka faces in relation to the movement of people, including other countries’ experiences with returns. The lunch also provided the opportunity to increase participants’ understanding of Operation Sovereign Borders policy and Regional Resettlement arrangements and discuss Sri Lanka’s continued and positive democratic progress following the successful conduct of elections.

*Attachments can be obtained from the Table Office*

**Department of Immigration and Border Protection: Catering and Hospitality**

(Question No 2091)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, in writing, on 24 November 2015:

Further to his answer to question in writing No. 1444 (House Hansard, 22 October 2015, pages 12325 to 12331), in respect of the $3,134.00 cost for the official dinner with representatives from the
Australian Crime Commission, Australian Federal Police, Western Australia Police and Australian Customs and Border Protection Service, held in Perth, Western Australia, on 6 August 2014,

(a) for what purpose was it held,
(b) how many people attended,
(c) who attended,
(d) what was the venue,
(e) can a copy of the menu be provided,
(f) can an invoice or itemised list of (i) food, (ii) drinks, and (iii) other costs, be provided, and
(g) what was the outcome.

**Mr Dutton:** The answer to the honourable member's question is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) for what purpose was it held</td>
<td>Following the success of joint operational work in Western Australia, a dinner was held to celebrate the outcomes achieved and further promote state and Commonwealth relationships. The event also provided for stronger networking and leadership development. Representatives from Western Australia Police, Australian Federal Police, Australian Crime Commission and Department of Immigration &amp; Border Protection were in attendance. The hospitality with key stakeholder partners was approved prior to the event in accordance with Departmental policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) how many people attended</td>
<td>31 people attended the function. The booking was required to be confirmed two weeks in advance of the date of the function. This requirement is confirmed in the attached Terms and Conditions. At that time it was expected that 36 people would be attending. On the night 31 people attended.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) who attended</td>
<td>Attendees included 27 officers from the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, one (1) representative from the Australian Crime Commission, two (2) representatives from the Australian Federal Police and one (1) representative from WA Police.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) what was the venue</td>
<td>Matilda Bay on the River, 3 Hackett Drive Crawley, Western Australia 6009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) can a copy of the menu be provided</td>
<td>Entrée: Mount Barker crumbed chicken, Asian slaw, honey soy drizzle Mains: Cone Bay barramundi, crushed potatoes, shaved fennel, orange and rocket salad Scotch fillet, field mushroom, crisp prosciutto with potato croquette, roasted garlic tomato jus Dessert: Sticky date pudding, Bourbon baked pear with butterscotch sauce. There was also 1 vegetarian, 1 gluten free and 1 lactose free meals provided for dietary requirements of the attendees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) can an invoice or itemised list of</td>
<td>A set menu from the venue was chosen. The Commonwealth did</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, in writing, on 24 November 2015:

Further to his answer to question in writing No. 1444 (House Hansard, 22 October 2015, pages 12325 to 12331), in respect of the $4,489.20 cost for stakeholder relationships with various Indonesian Government officials, held in Sydney and Canberra on 15 September 2014,

(a) what was the (i) nature, and (ii) purpose, of this function,
(b) how many people attended,
(c) what were the (i) names, and (ii) roles, of those who attended,
(d) what was the venue,
(e) can a copy of the menu be provided,
(f) can an invoice or itemised list of (i) food, (ii) drinks, and (iii) other costs, be provided, and
(g) what was the outcome.

Mr Dutton: The answer to the honourable member's question is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) what was the (i) nature, and (ii) purpose, of this function</td>
<td>On 15–18 September 2014, the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) hosted the 18th Australia–Indonesia Immigration Cooperation Working Group (ICWG). The ICWG is the primary forum for senior level engagement between DIBP and the Indonesian Directorate General of Immigration (DGI). Official hospitality costs associated with the ICWG totalled $4,489.20, including an official lunch ($1,484), an official dinner ($2,316) and official gifts to the DGI delegation ($689.20).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) how many people attended</td>
<td>Official lunch: 19 people Official dinner: 19 people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| c) what were the (i) names, and (ii) roles, of those who attended, | Official lunch: DIBP attendees (3):
- Regional Director, Southeast Asia, DIBP
- Chief Migration Officer, Australian Embassy, Jakarta Assistant Director (Indonesia), Southeast Asia Section, DIBP
- Non-DIBP attendees (16): 8 Indonesian DGI officials 8 Indonesian consular officials

**Official dinner:** DIBP attendees (8):
- Secretary, DIBP
- Deputy Secretary, Policy and Programme Management Group, DIBP
- First Assistant Secretary, Risk Fraud and Integrity Division, DIBP
- Assistant Secretary, Border Security Policy Branch, DIBP |
Assistant Secretary, International Engagement Branch, DIBP
Director, Southeast Asia Section, DIBP Regional Director, Southeast Asia, DIBP
Chief Migration Officer, Australian Embassy, Jakarta Non-DIBP
attendees (11):
8 Indonesian DGI officials
1 Indonesian consular official
2 representatives from the International Organization for Migration

(d) what was the venue
Official lunch: Le Sands Pavillion, Brighton-Le-Sands, NSW
Official dinner: The Boat House by the Lake, Barton, ACT

(e) can a copy of the menu be provided
The menu for the official lunch at Le Sands Pavillion is at Attachment 1.
The menu for the official dinner at The Boat House by the Lake is at Attachment 2.

(f) can an invoice or itemised list of (i) food, (ii) drinks, and (iii) other costs, be provided

Official lunch:
The total cost of the official lunch was $1,484.
An itemised list of costs is not available. No alcohol was consumed at this function.

Official dinner:
Food $1,785
Drink $306
Room hire $225
Total $2,316

Official gifts:
Head of agency gift $202.50
8x individual gifts $486.70
Total $689.20

(g) what was the outcome
The 18th ICWG resulted in bilateral agreement to a range of outcomes, including:
continued cooperation on addressing irregular migration and related issues in the region;
agreement to continued discussions regarding technical and operational cooperation; and
BULLET agreement to continue close cooperation on training and development.

Attachments can be obtained from the Table Office

Department of Immigration and Border Protection: Catering and Hospitality
(Question No 2095)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, in writing, on 24 November 2015:

Further to his answer to question in writing No. 1444 (House Hansard, 22 October 2015, pages 12325 to 12331), in respect of the $4,091.47 cost for stakeholder relationships with the Burmese Delegation, held in Canberra and Sydney on 25 November 2014,
(a) what was the (i) nature, and (ii) purpose, of this function,
(b) how many people attended,
(c) what were the (i) names, and (ii) roles, of those who attended,
(d) what was the venue,
(e) can a copy of the menu be provided,
(f) can an invoice or itemised list of (i) food, (ii) drinks, and (iii) other costs, be provided, and
(g) what was the outcome.

Mr Dutton: The answer to the honourable member's question is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) what was the (i) nature, and (ii) purpose, of this function</td>
<td>At the invitation of the Hon Scott Morrison MP, the then Minister for Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP), U Khin Yi, the then Burmese Minister for Immigration and Population, visited Australia from 25 - 29 November 2014. The Hon Scott Morrison MP and Minister U Khin Yi signed a Memorandum of Understanding relating to Australia's assistance with Burma's border immigration management plan. The visit also provided an opportunity to undertake bilateral discussions on immigration matters, particularly in relation to border security and people smuggling issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) how many people attended</td>
<td>Attendees varied depending on the event (details provided below)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| c) what were the (i) names, and (ii) roles, of those who attended, | **Tuesday 25 November 2014 – Lunch**  
Department of Immigration and Border Protection  
Counsellor (Immigration), Australian Embassy Bangkok  
Non-Departmental  
Minister of Immigration and Population  
Director – General, Ministry of Immigration and Population  
**Wednesday 26 November 2014 – Lunch**  
Department of Immigration and Border Protection  
Deputy Secretary, Policy and Programme Management Group  
First Assistant Secretary ( Incoming), International Division  
First Assistant Secretary, Migration and Citizenship Policy Division  
Counsellor (Immigration), Australian Embassy Bangkok  
Non-Departmental  
Minister of Immigration and Population  
Director – General, Ministry of Immigration and Population  
Director – Ministry of Immigration and Population  
Interpreter  
**Wednesday 26 November 2014 – Dinner**  
Department of Immigration and Border Protection  
Secretary, Department of Immigration and Border Protection  
Deputy Secretary, Client Services Group  
Counsellor (Immigration), Australian Embassy Bangkok  
Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Australian Customs and Border Protection Service  
Non-Departmental  
Minister of Immigration and Population  
Director – General, Ministry of Immigration and Population  
Director – Ministry of Immigration and Population  
Interpreter  
**Thursday 27 November 2014 – Lunch**  
Department of Immigration and Border Protection |
Assistant Secretary, International Engagement Branch
Director, International Engagement Branch,
Logistics Officer, International Engagement Branch
Counsellor (Immigration), Australian Embassy Bangkok
Non-Departmental
Minister of Immigration and Population
Director – General, Ministry of Immigration and Population
Director – Ministry of Immigration and Population
Interpreter

**Thursday 27 November 2014 – Dinner**
Department of Immigration and Border Protection
Counsellor (Immigration), Australian Embassy Bangkok
Policy Officer, International Engagement Branch
Non-Departmental
Minister of Immigration and Population
Director – General, Ministry of Immigration and Population
Ministry of Immigration and Population

**Friday 28 November 2014 – Lunch**
Department of Immigration and Border Protection
The Hon. Scott Morrison MP
Adviser to the Hon. Scott Morrison MP
Media Adviser to the Hon. Scott Morrison MP
Assistant Director, International Engagement Branch
Counsellor (Immigration), Australian Embassy Bangkok
Non-Departmental
Burmese Ambassador to Australia
Minister of Immigration and Population
Director – General, Ministry of Immigration and Population
Director – Ministry of Immigration and Population
Interpreter
Journalist, The Australian

(d) what was the venue

- Tuesday 25 November 2014 – Lunch at Promenade Café, Hyatt Hotel
- Canberra
- Wednesday 26 November 2014 – Lunch held at Ellacure Restaurant, Canberra
- Wednesday 26 November 2014 – Malamay Restaurant, Canberra
- Thursday 27 November 2014 – Lunch at Wild Duck Restaurant, Kingston Canberra
- Thursday 27 November 2014 – Captain Cook Cruise, Sydney Harbour dinner cruise
- Friday 28 November 2014 – Waitan Restaurant Sydney

(e) can a copy of the menu be provided

A copy of the following menus have been attached:

- Ellacure
- Malamay
- Wild Duck
- Captain Cook Cruise
- BULLET Waitan Restaurant

(f) can an invoice or itemised list of (i) food, (ii) drinks, and (iii) other costs, be provided

A copy of the following itemised invoices have been attached:

- Captain Cook Cruise
- Waitan Restaurant
Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, in writing, on 24 November 2015:

Further to his answer to question in writing No. 1444 (House Hansard, 22 October 2015, pages 12325 to 12331), in respect of the $2,080.00 cost for stakeholder relationships with the Cambodia Delegation, held in Canberra on 8 December 2014,

(a) what was the (i) nature, and (ii) purpose, of this function,
(b) how many people attended,
(c) what were the (i) names, and (ii) roles, of those who attended,
(d) what was the venue,
(e) can a copy of the menu be provided,
(f) can an invoice or itemised list of (i) food, (ii) drinks, and (iii) other costs, be provided, and
(g) what was the outcome.

Mr Dutton: The answer to the honourable member's question is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) what was the (i) nature, and (ii) purpose, of this function</td>
<td>Four official hospitality events were provided to Cambodian General Department of Immigration (GDI) officials as part of their study visit on Australia’s border management systems and policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) how many people attended</td>
<td>1. Lunch – 8 Dec – Chong Co</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 DIBP Officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 GDI Officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Lunch – 9 Dec – Can Tho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 DIBP Officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 GDI Officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Dinner – 9 Dec – Ottoman Cuisine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outcomes of the visit include:
- Signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the two countries, outlining Australia's commitment to work with the Burmese Ministry of Immigration and Population on Burma’s border immigration management plan, developed with the Department of Immigration and Border Protection's assistance;
- A greater understanding of Australia's border management capability from a policy, operational and technology perspective;
- Confirmation of Australia's ongoing support to Burma's reform agenda; and
- BULLET Commitment by both countries to work with other Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) countries over the next decade to continue to improve the integrity of the borders in the region.
(c) what were the (i) names, and (ii) roles, of those who attended,

5 DIBP Officials
6 GDI Officials

4. Lunch – 10 Dec – Malaysian Chapter
5 DIBP Officials
6 GDI Officials

1. Lunch – 8 Dec – Chong Co
Director, International Border Projects, DIBP
Assistant Director, International Border Projects, DIBP
First Secretary(Immigration) Australian Embassy Phnom Penh, DIBP
Business Analyst, International Border Projects DIBP

Non-DIBP:
Director Non-Immigration and Technology Department, GDI
Assistant to Director – General, GDI
Deputy Director of Department of Border Checkpoint No. 2, GDI
Deputy Director of Department of Border Checkpoint No. 1, GDI
Deputy Director of Non-Immigration and Technology Department, GDI

2. Lunch – 9 Dec – CanTho
Director, International Border Projects, DIBP
Assistant Director, International Border Projects, DIBP
First Secretary(Immigration) Australian Embassy Phnom Penh, DIBP
Second Secretary(Immigration) Australian Embassy Phnom Penh, DIBP
Business Analyst, International Border Projects DIBP

Non-DIBP:
Director Non-Immigration and Technology Department, GDI
Assistant to Director – General, GDI
Deputy Director of Department of Border Checkpoint No. 2, GDI
Deputy Director of Department of Border Checkpoint No. 1, GDI
Checkpoint No.1, GDI
Deputy Director of Department of Border Checkpoint No. 1, GDI
Deputy Director of Non-Immigration and Technology Department, GDI

3. Dinner – 9 Dec – Ottoman Cuisine
Deputy Secretary, Policy and Programme Management Group, DIBP
Acting First Assistant Secretary, International Division, DIBP
Director, International Border Projects, DIBP
Assistant Director, International Border Projects, DIBP
First Secretary (Immigration) Australian Embassy Phnom Penh, DIBP

Non-DIBP:
Director Non-Immigration and Technology Department, GDI
Assistant to Director – General, GDI
Deputy Director of Department of Border Checkpoint No. 2, GDI
Deputy Director of Department of Border Checkpoint No.1, GDI
Deputy Director of Department of Border Checkpoint No. 1, GDI
Deputy Director of Non-Immigration and Technology Department, GDI

4. Lunch – 10 Dec – Malaysian Chapter
Director, International Border Projects, DIBP
Assistant Director, International Border Projects, DIBP
First Secretary (Immigration) Australian Embassy Phnom Penh, DIBP
Business Analyst, International Border Projects DIBP
Policy Officer, International Division, DIBP

Non-DIBP:
Director Non-Immigration and Technology Department, GDI
Assistant to Director – General, GDI
Deputy Director of Department of Border Checkpoint No. 2, GDI
Deputy Director of Department of Border
(d) what was the venue

1. Lunch – 8 Dec – Chong Co, Belconnen ACT
2. Lunch – 9 Dec – Can Tho, Belconnen, ACT
3. Dinner – 9 Dec – Ottoman Cuisine, Barton, ACT
4. Lunch – 10 Dec – Malaysian Chapter, Belconnen, ACT

(e) can a copy of the menu be provided

Menus from the time of the function were not retained. Current menus do not reflect those used at the time of function.

(f) can an invoice or itemised list of (i) food, (ii) drinks, and (iii) other costs, be provided, and

Invoices are attached. Itemised list is included where possible.

(g) what was the outcome

The visit provided Cambodian General Department of Immigration officials an overview of Australia’s strong border management policies and will assist Cambodia in the development of a border management strategic plan.
Official Hospitality related to a visit by a Delegation of Cambodian Officials from the General Department of Immigration, to Nauru via Australia. The proposed delegation will provide the Governments of Australia, Cambodia and Nauru the opportunity to strengthen tri-lateral relations.

(b) how many people attended,
12th January 2015 – 2 DIBP and 6 non-DIBP staff
13th January 2015 – 3 DIBP and 6 non DIBP staff
15th January 2015 – 22 DIBP and 52 non-DIBP staff
16th January 2015 – 9 DIBP and 23 non-DIBP staff

(c) what were the (i) names, and (ii) roles, of those who attended,
12th January 2015
2 x DIBP Officers (Minister Counsellor and State Director Queensland)
2 x IOM (Chief of Mission, Australia and the Pacific and IOM Canberra)
4 x Government of Cambodia (Director of Refugee Department, Deputy Head of Refugee Department General Department of Immigration, Deputy Chief of Refugee Officer of General Department of Refugee, Chief of Section of Computer Crime Investigation General Department of Immigration)

13th January 2015
3 x DIBP Officers (Minister Counsellor and 2 x Northern Territory Regional Office executive)
ACBPS Regional Commander Central
IOM Chief of Mission, Cambodia
4 x Government of Cambodia delegation (Director of Refugee Department, Deputy Head of Refugee Department General Department of Immigration, Deputy Chief of Refugee Officer of General Department of Refugee, Chief of Section of Computer Crime Investigation General Department of Immigration)

15th January 2015
22 x DIBP
Deputy Secretary
Nauru Operations Officers
FAS, Community Programmes & Children Division
Minister Counsellor
5 x Australian Government High Commission
Australian High Commissioner to Nauru
DFAT
DFAT Aid
AFP Liaison Officer
4 x Government of Cambodia delegation
Director of Refugee Department
Deputy Head of Refugee Department General Department of Immigration
Deputy Chief of Refugee Officer of General Department of Refugee
Chief of Section of Computer Crime Investigation General Department of Immigration
3 x IOM
IOM Chief of Mission, Cambodia
IOM Chief of Mission, Australia and the Pacific
IOM Canberra
3 x Government of Australia Delegation
15 x Government of Nauru
Secretary for Justice & Border Control
Deputy Operations Manager Camp 1
Operations Manager Camp 2
Deputy Operations Manager Camp 2
Operations Manager Camp 3
Deputy Operations Manager Camp 3
Settlement Manager
Deputy Settlement Manager
4 x Settlement Team
Director of Police
Inspector Intelligence Unit and Community Liaison Officer
22 x Service providers and business stakeholders
Transfield Contract Manager
Transfield Operations Manager
Transfield Catering Manager
Transfield Logistics Manager
Transfield RPC2 Site Manager
Transfield RPC3 Site Manager
IHMS Medical Centre Service Manager Offshore
IHMS Site Manager
IHMS Health Services Manager
Wilson Security Manager
Wilson Security Liaison Manager
SCA Operations Manager
SCA Admin Support Manager
SCA Program Quality Manager
SCA HR Manager
Jacobs SKM
Canstruct
Connect Settlement Services Director
Connect Senior Case Manager
Connect Settlement Services
Connect Settlement Services
CEO Nauru Rehabilitation Corporation
16th January 2015
9 x DIBP
Deputy Secretary
FAS, Community Programmes & Children Division
Minister Counsellor
6 x Nauru Operations Officers
4 x Government of Cambodia delegation
Director of Refugee Department
Deputy Head of Refugee Department General Department of Immigration
Deputy Chief of Refugee Officer of General Department of Refugee
Chief of Section of Computer Crime Investigation General Department of Immigration
3 x IOM
IOM Chief of Mission, Cambodia
IOM Chief of Mission, Australia and the Pacific
IOM Canberra
3 x Government of Australia Delegation
1 x Government of Nauru
GoN Settlement Manager
12 x Service Providers
Transfield Contract Manager
Transfield Operations Manager
IHMS Medical Centre Service Manager Offshore
IHMS Site Manager
2 x IHMS Health Services Manager
Wilsons Security Manager
Wilsons Security Resource Manager
Save the Children (SCA) Operations Manager
SCA Admin Support Manager
Connect Settlement Services Director
Connect Senior Case Manager
(d) what was the (i) venue, and (ii) itinerary,
12 January - Jellyfish Restaurant, Brisbane commencing at 19:00hours
13 January - Char Restaurant, Darwin commencing at 19:00hours
15 January - Bay Restaurant, Nauru commencing at 19:30hours
16 January - Anibare Restaurant, Nauru commencing at 19:30hours
(e) can a copy of the menu for all meals be provided,
Bay Restaurant, Nauru – buffet meal provided consisting of roast meats and salads
Anibare Restaurant, Nauru – BBQ meal provided consisting of BBQ meats and salads
(f) can an invoice or itemised list of (i) food, (ii) drinks, and (iii) other costs, be provided,
12 January 2015 - Brisbane
   i) $904.10 (8 persons at $113 per head)
   ii) $197.20
13 January 2015 - Darwin
   i) $781.60 (9 persons at $86.84 per head)
   ii) $192.50
15 and 16 January 2015 - Nauru
   i) $9,355.18 (106 persons at $88.25 per head)
   ii) $3,586.60
(g) what is the total of all costs associated with this meeting, including but not limited to (i)
accommodation, (ii) air travel, (iii) ground travel, and (iv) other,
   i) Accommodation = $4,228.00 (including Cambodia delegation costs of $3,194.00)
   ii) Air travel = $60,155.83 (including Cambodia delegation costs of $42,125.44)
   iii) Ground travel = $4,788.56
   iv) Other = $150.00
(h) what was the outcome.
The visit strengthened tri-lateral relations between the Governments of Australia, Cambodia and
Nauru, and further cemented Cambodia's commitment to resettling Nauru-determined refugees in
Cambodia.

Department of Immigration and Border Protection: Catering and Hospitality
(Question No 2098)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, in writing, on 24
November 2015:

Further to his answer to question in writing No. 1444 (House Hansard, 22 October 2015, pages
12325 to 12331), in respect of the $2,492.60 cost for stakeholder relationships with various ethnic
community and multicultural interest representatives, held in Perth, Western Australia, on 20 March
2015,
(a) what was the (i) nature, and (ii) purpose, of this function,
(b) how many people attended,
(c) what were the (i) names, and (ii) roles, of those who attended,
(d) what was the venue,
(e) can a copy of the menu be provided,
(f) can an invoice or itemised list of (i) food, (ii) drinks, and (iii) other costs, be provided, and
(g) what was the outcome.

Mr Dutton: The answer to the honourable member's question is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) what was the (i) nature, and (ii) purpose, of this function</td>
<td>Ethnic Communities and Multicultural Interest Stakeholders WA, stakeholder function. The event was co-hosted to showcase the cooperative working relationships of State and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b) how many people attended
107

c) what were the (i) names, and (ii) roles, of those who attended,

Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP):
- State Director WA
- Assistant Director, Ethnic Liaison Network Coordinator
- Executive Stakeholder Manager
- Ethnic Liaison Officer
- Director, Case Management
- Director, Yongah Hill Immigration Detention Centre
- Director, Refugee & Humanitarian Visa Programme
- Director, Permanent Visa Programme
- Case Manager
- Visa officer

Australian Customs and Border Protection Service:
- Regional Commander WA
- Chief of Staff
- Director, Maritime Operations
- Director, Operations and Planning
- Director, Aviation

Non-DIBP:
- 50 Ethnic community leaders (see attached spreadsheet)
- 31 State/Fed Government representatives (see attached spreadsheet)

(d) what was the venue
836 Wellington Street, West Perth, DIBP WA State Office

(e) can a copy of the menu be provided
No, as the order was taken over the phone by Domain catering staff and it was specified that the order was to cater for approximately 120 people.

(f) can an invoice or itemised list of (i) food, (ii) drinks, and (iii) other costs, be provided, and
Invoice attached, not itemised.

(g) what was the outcome
The outcome was that the function provided an opportunity for communities and agencies to meet.
Ethnic community leaders provide assistance to the department in disseminating material that can include:
- Policy changes to visa and citizenship programmes;
- Living Safely Together campaign material;
- Can I bring it back material;
- Key information regarding travel such as Hajj Pilgrimage and passenger facilitation processes at the border; and
- Assisting the department to meet its Access and Equity obligations, ensuring that our information is accessible to CaLD communities.
A strengthened relationship with the communities, helping to ensure the development of these relationships for future open dialogue.
Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, in writing, on 24 November 2015:

Further to his answer to question in writing No. 1444 (House Hansard, 22 October 2015, pages 12325 to 12331), in respect of the $9,507.00 cost for the World Customs Organisation official dinner, held in Victoria on 5 February 2015,

(a) what was the purpose of this function,
(b) how many people attended,
(c) what were the (i) names, and (ii) roles, of those who attended,
(d) what was the venue,
(e) can a copy of the menu be provided,
(f) can an invoice or itemised list of (i) food, (ii) drinks, and (iii) other costs, be provided, and
(g) what was the outcome.

Mr Dutton: The answer to the honourable member’s question is:

a) The purpose of this function was to host a dinner for officials from Asia Pacific regional customs administrations.

b) 87 people attended.

c) See Attachment A. Only the organisations and positions are shown.

d) The Hotel Windsor, 111 Spring St, Melbourne, Victoria 3000.

e) The menu was a choice of the following:

Entrée:
Smoked salmon, cucumber, radish and crème fraiche salad, sesame and puffed rice

Crisp veal breast, salad of roast carrots, hazelnut cream and crisp sage.

Main:
Fillet of beef, potato and turnip gratin, Worcestershire glazed mushrooms, thyme sauce
Roast chicken breast, agro dolce carrots, Tuscan cabbage and jus gras.

Dessert:
Windsor Tasting Plate: Hazelnut chocolate praline, passionfruit coconut, raspberry lime slice, orange terrine.

f) On review, an error had been made and did not include a deposit paid on 14 October 2014. The deposit of $1,500 was not included in the total cost of this event. The actual cost reported in QON should have been $11,007 (GST inclusive). See Attachment B for a breakdown of drinks and food including the deposit.

g) Officials from Regional Customs Administrations attended this dinner ahead of the Regional Heads of Customs Administrations Conference on 6 February 2015 in Melbourne. The dinner provided
valuable networking opportunities for WCO Asia Pacific Regional members in advance of the conference.

*Attachments can be obtained from the Table Office*

**Department of Immigration and Border Protection: Catering and Hospitality**
*(Question No 2100)*

**Mr Conroy** asked the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, in writing, on 24 November 2015:

Follow up to PQON 1444 - ACBPS Jakarta Post:

Further to his answer to question in writing No. 1444 (House Hansard, 22 October 2015, pages 12325 to 12331), in respect of the $2,122.58 cost for the Commemorate ACBPS Jakarta Post event—10 years in Indonesia event, held on 11 June 2015,

(a) what was the (i) nature, and (ii) purpose, of this event,
(b) how many people attended,
(c) what were the (i) names, and (ii) roles, of those who attended,
(d) what was the venue,
(e) can a copy of the menu be provided,
(f) can an invoice or itemised list of (i) food, (ii) drinks, and (iii) other costs, be provided, and
(g) what was the outcome.

**Mr Dutton:** The answer to the honourable member's question is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) what was the (i) nature, and (ii) purpose, of this event</td>
<td>The lunch was held to commemorate 10 years of an Australian Customs and Border Protection Service (ACBPS) presence at Jakarta Post with key stakeholders, including the Indonesia Coast Guard (BAKAMLA), the Directorate General of Customs and Excise, the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries and Australian Embassy colleagues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) how many people attended</td>
<td>27 people attended.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| (c) what were the (i) names, and (ii) roles, of those who attended       | 1 - Deputy Director of Regional Cooperation - Directorate General of Customs & Excise  
2 - US Immigration and Customs Enforcement HSI Assistance Attaché - U.S. Embassy Jakarta  
3 - Deputy Director of Bilateral Cooperation - Directorate General of Customs & Excise  
4 - Head of Australia and Pacific Affairs Section - Directorate General of Customs & Excise  
5 - Staff, Directorate of International Affairs - Directorate General of Customs & Excise  
6 - Staff, Directorate of International Affairs - Directorate General of Customs & Excise  
7 - Staff, Directorate of International Affairs - Directorate General of Customs & Excise  
8 - Staff, General Affairs - Indonesia Coast Guard  
9 - Staff, General Affairs - Indonesia Coast Guard  
10 - Customs Attaché - Embassy of Malaysia, Jakarta  
11 - Minister Counsellor Political - DFAT, Australian Embassy Jakarta    |
(d) what was the venue
Shangri-La Residence Verandah Lounge, Kota BNI, JL Jend Sudirman Kav. 1, Jakarta 10220, Indonesia.

(e) can a copy of the menu be provided
See itemised invoices of food, drink and other costs at Attachment 1.

(f) can an invoice or itemised list of (i) food, (ii) drinks, and (iii) other costs, be provided
See itemised invoices of food, drink and other costs at Attachment 1.

(g) what was the outcome
The event provided an opportunity to build people-to-people links and strengthen relationships with key Indonesian counterpart agencies. Minister Counsellor ACBPS Jakarta thanked Indonesian agencies for their ongoing cooperation over the years and provided an update on the integration of the Department of Immigration and Border Protection.

Attachments can be obtained from the Table Office

Department of Immigration and Border Protection: Catering and Hospitality
(Question No 2101)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, in writing, on 24 November 2015:

Further to his answer to question in writing No. 1444 (House Hansard, 22 October 2015, pages 12325 to 12331), in respect of the $38,415.00 cost for the Customs History Book Reception held in Canberra, Australian Capital Territory, on 25 June 2015,

(a) what was the purpose of this event,

(b) how many people attended,

(c) what were the (i) names, and (ii) roles, of those who attended, (d) what was the venue, (e) can a copy of the menu be provided, (f) can an invoice or itemised list of (i) food, (ii) drinks, and (iii) other costs, be provided, and (g) what was the outcome.

Mr Dutton The answer to the honourable member's question is:
(a) As the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service (ACBPS) would cease to exist as a standalone agency from 1 July 2015, the event was arranged to celebrate the history of the customs function, and acknowledge the work of its officers throughout its history. This was also the formal launch of the ACBPS history book, *From Federation to Australian Border Force*, and associated microsite.

(b) The event included catering for 400 people.

(c) (i) (ii) Those attending the event were primarily ACBPS staff from all levels across the agency, along with Senior Executive Service staff from ACBPS and the Department of Immigration and Border Protection. A number of retired customs officers, dignitaries and industry representatives also attended.

(d) The National Arboretum.

(e) There was no set menu; the two-hour catering package included a variety of canapes and drinks (including domestic beer and wine).

(f) (i) $11,800 (inc GST); (ii) $12,800 (inc GST); (iii) Staging/AV services $7584.50; venue hire was $1450; car park hire $750; design, printing and delivery of holding slide and banners $4444.31; bus charter $1100; photography $1210; packaging of merchandise $1676; fee for guest speaker, historian David Day $687.50 (all inc GST).

Total cost of all goods and services in relation to this event was $43,654.31 (inc GST). Note this is the final cost in relation to this event; further invoices were received and paid after the tabling of question in writing No. 1444.

(g) During this event, the ACBPS history book and microsite was launched.

**Department of Defence: Darwin Port advice**

**(Question No. 2104)**

Mr Zappia asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 24 November 2015:

What advice did the Minister’s department provide to the Government about the proposed lease of Darwin Port, who was that advice provided to and when was it provided.

Answer

Ms Julie Bishop: The Minister for Defence has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

The Treasury has the lead on matters relating to the Foreign Investment Review Board applications and decisions. Defence and other agencies, provide advice to the Treasury on foreign investment applications that are referred to it by Treasury.

The Northern Territory Government requested that Landbridge be considered under the Foreign Investment Review Board. Defence undertook an assessment of Landbridge as part of the initial Foreign Investment Review Board consideration until the Treasury confirmed that Foreign Investment Review Board approval was not necessary.

Defence's requirements to access the commercial Port of Darwin were agreed in a Deed of License that was concluded in May 2015. The Deed, agreed between Defence and the Northern Territory Government on Defence access to the Port of Darwin, protected Defence's interests irrespective of which company's bid was successful.

Based on the detailed examination and the Deed of License, Defence did not have security concerns with Landbridge operating the commercial Port of Darwin under a lease from the Northern Territory Government. The Treasury were aware of this advice.
Port of Darwin: Lease
(Question No. 2105)

Mr Zappia asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 24 November 2015:

Was the lease of the Port of Darwin discussed by Cabinet or the National Security Committee of the Cabinet prior to the lease being approved.

Ms Julie Bishop: The Minister for Defence has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

In the Department of Defence's Budget Estimates hearing on 21 October 2015, the Secretary of Defence, Mr Dennis Richardson, stated "in fact, the National Security Committee was aware of it". The matter was discussed at an NSC meeting on 6 October 2015, as outlined by Mr Richardson in his appearance before the Senate Economics Reference Committee on 15 December 2015.

Minister for Defence: Port of Darwin
(Question No. 2106)

Mr Zappia asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 24 November 2015:

What was the Minister's role in the lease of the Port of Darwin and the associated process.

Ms Julie Bishop: The Minister for Defence has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

The Treasurer has the lead for the regulation of foreign investment.

Department of Immigration: Syrian Refugees
(Question No 2109)

Mr Christensen asked the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, in writing, on 25 November 2015:

In respect of the security screening process of the 12,000 Syrian refugees that the Government has undertaken to accept,

(a) who will conduct the screening process,

(b) what exact (i) procedures, (ii) questions, and (iii) checks, will be conducted as part of the security screening process,

(c) what assurances is the Government providing to the Australian people that security screening of refugees will be effective, and

(d) what determination will be made if an individual's background is unknown or uncertain.

Mr Dutton: The answer to the honourable member's question is:

(a) My Department in coordination with relevant agencies is undertaking the security assessment checking.

(b) Rigorous security checks are conducted prior to arrival in Australia at a number of key visa processing points. This includes the collection and checking of biometric data such as facial images (for all applicants including minors) and fingerprints (applicants 15 years of age and above). The Department of Immigration and Border Protection works closely with relevant Australian agencies and international partners in conducting security checks, including the checking of biometric data. For all offshore humanitarian applicants, these checks are supplemented by an interview with Australian
departmental officers where claims for resettlement and identity are assessed. For operational reasons and the integrity of our security checking, it would be inappropriate to provide further detail.

(c) The Government has in place a range of national and international security checking measures so that security screening is as effective as possible. The Government takes our national security extremely seriously and has made clear from the outset that security and character checks of the additional 12,000 humanitarian entrants will not be compromised.

(d) Security checking procedures include processes to manage cases where an individual’s background is unknown or uncertain. Again, for operational reasons and the integrity of our security checking, it would be inappropriate to provide more detail on these processes.

**Department of Immigration and Border Protection: Asylum Seekers**

(Question No 2110)

**Mr Christensen** asked the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, in writing, on 25 November 2015:

In respect of reports of fake Syrian passports being seized,

(a) is the Government aware of any evidence of falsified Syrian background papers being purchased from Syrian officials, and

(b) what measures has the Government implemented for the security screening process to counter fake Syrian background.

**Mr Dutton:** The answer to the honourable member’s question is:

(a) While the Government is aware of media reporting relating to this issue, as at 14 December 2015, the Government is not aware of the purchase of any falsified Syrian background papers from Syrian officials.

(b) Rigorous security checks are conducted prior to arrival in Australia at a number of key visa processing points. This includes the collection and checking of biometric data such as facial images (for all applicants including minors) and fingerprints (applicants 15 years of age and above). The Department of Immigration and Border Protection works closely with relevant Australian agencies and international partners in conducting security checks, including the checking of biometric data. For all offshore humanitarian applicants, these checks are supplemented by an interview with Australian departmental officers where claims for resettlement and identity are assessed. For operational reasons and the integrity of our security checking, it would be inappropriate to provide further detail.

**Serco Bendigo**

(Question No. 2111)

**Ms Chesters** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Education and Training, in writing, on 25 November 2015:

In respect of the loss of approximately 60 contact centre services jobs at Serco in Bendigo due to the insourcing of the contract to the Commonwealth, will (a) the Minister's department be employing an additional 60 staff to perform this role, (b) any new departmental jobs created as result of the insourcing be situated in Bendigo, and (c) the workers laid off by Serco due to the insourcing be given first opportunity to accept any additional departmental jobs.

**Mr Hartsuyker:** The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

The department's contract with SERCO has run for five years and the department has exercised each of its two options to extend.

SERCO was advised in November 2014 of the department's intention to progressively insource its contact centre work prior to the current contract ending in January 2016.
There are no new departmental jobs planned as a result of the contract ending.

Pesticides
(Question No. 2112)

**Ms Parke:** To ask the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources:

Is it lawful for Australian Government authorities to spray pesticides on public land in urban areas such as footpaths, laneways, medians, shopping precincts, parks, river foreshores, playing fields, sports fields, school grounds, childcare centres and bushland reserves, etc; if so, under which law(s) is this permitted.

**Mr Joyce:** The Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

Australian Government agencies are required to use pesticides in accordance with the state or territory law that applies to the place at which the pesticide is being used. The state and territory governments are responsible for regulating the use of pesticides. This includes ensuring that these chemicals are used legally and that users are appropriately trained and licensed.

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) is the independent, national regulator that has responsibility for regulation of pesticides up to the point of retail sale. It approves how pesticides can be used, including: frequency of use, concentration to apply, application methods, occupational health and safety directions and other requirements for applying the chemical. State and territory governments are then responsible for ensuring that pesticides are used in accordance with the uses that have been approved by the APVMA.

Pesticides
(Question No. 2113)

**Ms Parke** To ask the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources:

Will the Minister consider initiating a Royal Commission as called for in the 2014 federal petition *Call for a Royal Commission into the Use of Pesticides and Harm to Public Health*, in light of the (a) recent report of Adelaide City Council's decision to test all of its 11 playgrounds for Benzene contamination, (b) evidence of pesticide contamination found in Perth playgrounds and parks, (c) lack of testing for residues of commonly used pesticides in human breast milk and urine, as well as in soil and foliage samples, and (d) *World Cancer Report 2014* (International Agency for Research on Cancer) listing the most commonly used herbicide Glyphosate (used in Roundup) as a Class 2 A probable carcinogen; if not, will the Minister release any comparative risk assessments undertaken to justify the risk to public health and the environment from the routine spraying of pesticides for the control of weeds or grass on public land in urban areas.

**Mr Joyce:** The Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

No. The government's official response to a call for a Royal Commission into the use of pesticides and harm to public health is on the Standing Committee on Petition's website


**Department of Immigration and Border Protection: Asylum Seekers**
(Question No 2114)

**Ms Burke** asked the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, in writing, on 26 November 2015:
1) In respect of the report By Hook or By Crook: Australia's Abuse of Asylum Seekers at Sea (Amnesty International 2015), is it a fact that in May 2015 Australian officials working as part of Operation Sovereign Borders intercepted a New Zealand bound vessel of 6 Indonesian crew and 65 asylum seekers, and paid the crew $US32,000 to return the asylum seekers to Indonesia; if so,
   a) was this action in breach of international law, and
   b) under what authority were these Australian officials acting.
2) Did Australian officials transfer some of these asylum seekers to an Australian Border Force vessel; if so,
   a) were these asylum seekers, which included three children and one pregnant woman, kept in inhumane conditions, and
   b) were personal medications taken from these asylum seekers by Australian Border Force personnel, and all requests for access to them denied.
3) Is it a fact that some of the asylum seekers and Indonesian crew were put on two less seaworthy boats to Indonesia, initially being escorted by Australian vessels, despite having inadequate fuel and provisions.

Mr Dutton: The answer to the honourable member's question is:
Australian officials operate in accordance with Australian domestic law and our international obligations.

Personnel involved in border protection operations conduct their roles with the highest levels of professionalism, integrity and personal courage.

The allegations of mistreatment raised in the report are taken seriously and are being assessed.

The priority of the Australian Government is, and always will be, safety of life at sea for all personnel involved.

Department of Immigration and Border Protection: Maritime Crew Visa
(Question No 2115)

Ms MacTiernan asked the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, in writing, on 26 November 2015:

In respect of the Maritime Crew visa (subclass 988), (a) how many were granted by the Minister's department in
   (i) 2004-05,
   (ii) 2005-06,
   (iii) 2006-07,
   (iv) 2007-08,
   (v) 2008-09,
   (vi) 2009-10,
   (vii) 2010-11,
   (viii) 2011-12,
   (ix) 2012-13,
   (x) 2013-14, and
   (xi) 2014-15, and
(b) how many have been granted to date in 2015-16.

Mr Dutton: The answer to the honourable member's question is:
**Subclass 988 Maritime Crew visas granted between 2004-05 and 2015-16 to 31 October 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>350,668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>174,783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>183,145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>248,139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>223,755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>250,567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>265,331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>261,117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16 to 31/10/15</td>
<td>93,092</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2015 (BE9017.01)*

*Note 1: Subclass 988 was introduced on 1 July 2007.*

**Department of Immigration and Border Protection: Temporary Work Visa (Question No 2116)**

**Ms MacTiernan** asked the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, in writing, on 26 November 2015:

In respect of the Temporary Work (Short Stay Activity) visa (subclass 400),

(a) how many were granted by the Minister's department in

(i) 2004-05,
(ii) 2005-06,
(iii) 2006-07,
(iv) 2007-08,
(v) 2008-09,
(vi) 2009-10,
(vii) 2010-11,
(viii) 2011-12,
(ix) 2012-13,
(x) 2013-14, and
(xi) 2014-15, and

(b) how many have been granted to date in 2015-16.

**Mr Dutton:** The answer to the honourable member's question is:

**Subclass 400 Temporary Work (Short Stay Activity) visas granted between 2004-05 and 2015-16 to 31 October 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visa Subclass</th>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>400 Temporary Work (Short Stay Activity)</td>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
(Question No. 2117)

Mr Danby asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the 30 November 2015:

(1) Is it a fact that Iran agreed in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), to reduce the centrifuges at Natanz from over 16,000 to 5,060 IR-1 machines.

(2) Is it a fact that, according to the JCPOA, this measure is to be completed to the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA's) satisfaction in order for sanctions to be removed or suspended.

(3) What progress has the IAEA reported.

Ms Julie Bishop: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:


Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
(Question No. 2118)

Mr Danby asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the 30 November 2015:

(1) Is it a fact that Iran agreed in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), to reduce the number of IR-1 machines centrifuges at Fordow to 1,000 and convert the facility to one for radioisotope production.

(2) Is it a fact that, according to the JCPOA, this measure is to be completed to the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA's) satisfaction in order for sanctions to be removed or suspended.

(3) What progress has the IAEA reported.

Ms Julie Bishop: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

(1) See http://www.un.org/en/sc/inc/pages/pdf/pow/RES2231E.pdf Iran is required to maintain no more than 1044 IR-1 centrifuge machines at Fordow, and convert the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant into a nuclear physics and technology centre.


Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action  
(Question No. 2119)

Mr Danby asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the 30 November 2015:

(1) Is it a fact that Iran agreed in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), to conclude testing on advanced centrifuges machines and remove all advanced centrifuges except one IR-4, IR-5, IR-6, and IR-8 machine for testing with uranium.

(2) Is it a fact that, according to the JCPOA, this measure is to be completed to the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA's) satisfaction in order for sanctions to be removed or suspended.

(3) What progress has the IAEA reported.

Ms Julie Bishop: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

(1) Please see the UN website.

(2) Please see the UN website.

(3) Please see the IAEA website.

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action  
(Question No. 2120)

Mr Danby asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the 30 November 2015:

(1) Is it a fact that Iran agreed in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), to store all dismantled centrifuges under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) seal.

(2) Is it a fact that, according to the JCPOA, this measure is to be completed to the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA's) satisfaction in order for sanctions to be removed or suspended.

(3) What progress has the IAEA reported.

Ms Julie Bishop: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

(1) Please see the UN website.

(2) Please see the UN website.

(3) Please see the IAEA website.

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action  
(Question No. 2121)

Mr Danby asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the 30 November 2015 —

(1) Is it a fact that Iran agreed in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), to reduce the stockpile of enriched uranium to less than 300 kilograms (which would require exporting over 9,000 kilograms of enriched uranium to third countries).

(2) Is it a fact that, according to the JCPOA, this measure is to be completed to the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA's) satisfaction in order for sanctions to be removed or suspended.

(3) What progress has the IAEA reported.

Ms Julie Bishop: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

(1) Please see the UN website.

(2) Please see the UN website.

(3) Please see the IAEA website.
Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action  
(Question No. 2122)

Mr Danby asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the 30 November 2015:
(1) Is it a fact that Iran agreed in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), to remove the core of the Arak reactor and disable it.
(2) Is it a fact that, according to the JCPOA, this measure is to be completed to the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA's) satisfaction in order for sanctions to be removed or suspended.
(3) What progress has the IAEA reported.

Ms Julie Bishop: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:
(1) Please see the UN website.
(2) Please see the UN website.
(3) Please see the IAEA website.

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action  
(Question No. 2123)

Mr Danby asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the 30 November 2015:
(1) Is it a fact that Iran agreed in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), to institute the necessary transparency and monitoring mechanisms to implement the additional protocol of the non-proliferation treaty and the continuous surveillance of key facilities.
(2) Is it a fact that, according to the JCPOA, this measure is to be completed to the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA's) satisfaction in order for sanctions to be removed or suspended.
(3) What progress has the IAEA reported.

Ms Julie Bishop: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:
(1) Please see the UN website.
(2) Please see the UN website.
(3) Please see the IAEA website.