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SITTING DAYS—2016

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FORTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT
SECOND SESSION—FIRST 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. Darren Chester 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. Barnaby Thomas Gerard Joyce MP
Deputy Leader—Senator the Hon Fiona Nash
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>Wicks, Mrs Lucy Elizabeth</td>
<td>Robertson, NSW</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilkie, Mr Andrew Damien</td>
<td>Denison, TAS</td>
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Members of the House of Representatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Party</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Williams, Mr Matthew</td>
<td>Hindmarsh, SA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilson, Mr Richard James</td>
<td>O'Connor, WA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wood, Mr Jason Peter</td>
<td>La Trobe, VIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wyatt, Mr Kenneth George, AM</td>
<td>Hasluck, WA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zappia, Mr Antonio</td>
<td>Makin, SA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimmerman, Mr Trent</td>
<td>North Sydney, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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

Heads of Parliamentary Departments
Clerk of the Senate—R Laing
Clerk of the House of Representatives—D Elder
Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—R Stefanic
Parliamentary Budget Officer—P Bowen
# Turnbull Ministry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Minister</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prime Minister</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Indigenous Affairs</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Women</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cabinet Secretary</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Arthur Sinodinos AO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service</em></td>
<td>The Hon Michaelia Cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Counter-Terrorism</em></td>
<td>The Hon Michael Keenan MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon James McGrath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Minister for Cities and Digital Transformation</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Angus Taylor MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Cabinet Secretary</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Dr Peter Hendy MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Barnaby Joyce MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources</em></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Anne Ruston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister</em></td>
<td>The Hon Keith Pitt MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Foreign Affairs</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Julie Bishop MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Trade and Investment</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Steve Ciobo MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for International Development and the Pacific</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Tourism and International Education</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Minister Assisting the Minister for Trade and Investment</em></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attorney-General</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon George Brandis QC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(Vice-President of the Executive Council)</em></td>
<td>The Hon Michael Keenan MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(Leader of the Government in the Senate)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Justice</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Michael Keenan MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Treasurer</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Scott Morrison MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Small Business</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Kelly O’Dwyer MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Treasurer</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Kelly O’Dwyer MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Assistant Minister to the Treasurer</em></td>
<td>The Hon Alex Hawke MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Finance</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Mathias Cormann</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>(Deputy Leader of Government in the Senate)</em></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Mathias Cormann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Special Minister of State</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Dr Peter Hendy MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Minister for Finance</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Regional Development</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Fiona Nash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Infrastructure and Transport</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Darren Chester MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(Deputy Leader of the House)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Major Projects, Territories and Local Government</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Paul Fletcher MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Christopher Pyne MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>(Leader of the House)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Resources, Energy and Northern Australia</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Josh Frydenberg MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Northern Australia</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Matt Canavan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Assistant Minister for Science</em></td>
<td>The Hon Karen Andrews MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Assistant Minister for Innovation</em></td>
<td>The Hon Wyatt Roy MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Immigration and Border Protection</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Peter Dutton MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Assistant Minister for Immigration</em></td>
<td>Senator the Hon James McGrath</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for the Environment</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Greg Hunt MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Health</td>
<td>The Hon Sussan Ley MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Aged Care</td>
<td>The Hon Sussan Ley MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Sport</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Rural Health</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Fiona Nash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care</td>
<td>The Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Marise Payne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Veterans’ Affairs</td>
<td>The Hon Dan Tehan MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC</td>
<td>The Hon Dan Tehan MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence Materiel</td>
<td>The Hon Dan Tehan MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Defence</td>
<td>The Hon Michael McCormack MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Communications</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Manager of Government Business in the Senate)</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for the Arts</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Fiona Nash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Regional Communications</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Fiona Nash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Employment</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Social Services</td>
<td>The Hon Christian Porter MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Human Services</td>
<td>The Hon Alan Tudge MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Disability Services</td>
<td>The Hon Jane Prentice MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs</td>
<td>The Hon Craig Laundy MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Education and Training</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Vocational Education and Skills</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Scott Ryan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Tourism and International Education</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck</td>
</tr>
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Each box represents a portfolio. Cabinet Ministers are shown in bold type. As a general rule, there is one department in each portfolio. However, there is a Department of Human Services in the Social Services portfolio and a Department of Veterans’ Affairs in the Defence portfolio. The title of a department does not necessarily reflect the title of a minister in all cases. Assistant Ministers in italics are designated as Parliamentary Secretaries under the Ministers of State Act 1952.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Shadow Minister</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leader of the Opposition</td>
<td>Hon. Bill Shorten MP</td>
</tr>
<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>Senor Hon. Michael Danby MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Opposition</td>
<td>Senor Hon. Ed Husic MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary Assisting with Digital Innovation and Startups</td>
<td>Terri Butler MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Manager of Opposition Business (Senate)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Opposition</td>
<td>Senor Sam Dastyari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Leader of the Opposition</td>
<td>Hon. Tanya Pliberseki MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Development</td>
<td>Hon. Matt Thistlethwaite MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader of the Opposition in the Senate</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Penny Wong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Trade and Investment</td>
<td>Dr Jim Chalmers MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Defence</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Defence</td>
<td>Hon. David Feeney MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Veterans’ Affairs</td>
<td>Hon. David Feeney MP</td>
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<td>Hon. David Feeney MP</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Hon. Mark Butler MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment, Climate Change and Water</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Industry</td>
<td>Senor the Hon. Kim Carr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Vocational Education</td>
<td>Hon. Sharon Bird MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Higher Education</td>
<td>Hon. Amanda Rishworth MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Manufacturing</td>
<td>Nick Champion MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Communications</td>
<td>Hon. Jason Clare MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Attorney-General</td>
<td>Hon. Mark Dreyfus QC MP</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Hon. David Feeney MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary to the Shadow Attorney-General</td>
<td>Graham Perrett MP</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Education</td>
<td>Hon. Kate Ellis MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Early Childhood</td>
<td>Hon. Amanda Rishworth MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Education</td>
<td>Julie Owens MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Early Childhood Education</td>
<td>Senator Sam Dastyari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for School Education and Youth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry</td>
<td>Hon. Joel Fitzgibbon MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Rural Affairs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Resources</td>
<td>Hon. Gary Gray AO MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Health</td>
<td>Hon. Catherine King MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Ageing</td>
<td>Hon. Shayne Neumann MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Mental Health</td>
<td>Senator Katy Gallagher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Sport</td>
<td>Dr Jim Chalmers MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Health</td>
<td>Stephen Jones MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Health</td>
<td>Tony Zappia MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Aged Care</td>
<td>Senator Helen Polley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Families and Payments</td>
<td>Hon. Jenny Macklin MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Disability Reform</td>
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</tr>
<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Carers</td>
<td>Senator Claire Moore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Communities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<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 Family Violence</td>
<td>Terri Butler MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Immigration and Border Protection</td>
<td>Hon. Richard Marles MP</td>
</tr>
<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>

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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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Indigenous Affairs</td>
<td>Hon. Shayne Neumann MP</td>
</tr>
<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>
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The SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Smith) took the chair at 09:00, made an acknowledgement of country and read prayers.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

Ms MACKLIN (Jagajaga) (09:01): Mr Speaker, I wish to make a personal explanation.

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

Ms MACKLIN: I do, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The member for Jagajaga may proceed.

Ms MACKLIN: I claim to have been misrepresented in the parliament yesterday by the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister for Social Services, the Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, the member for Ryan and the member for Solomon, who all wrongly accused me of using the term 'rounding error'. I make it very clear to the House that this is completely false. I never said any such thing. They all made it up and they should all come in here and apologise to the House for misleading this parliament.

The SPEAKER: The member for Jagajaga will resume her seat. She has made her personal explanation.

Mr BOWEN (McMahon) (09:02): Mr Speaker, I wish to make a personal explanation.

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

Mr BOWEN: I certainly do, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The member for McMahon may proceed.

Mr BOWEN: Yesterday the following government members claimed that I used the term 'rounding error': the Treasurer, the member for Mitchell and Senator Scott Ryan. That is a complete fabrication. I said nothing even vaguely like that. Those members should withdraw.

The SPEAKER: I thank the member for McMahon.

COMMITTEES

Selection Committee

Report

The SPEAKER (09:03): I present report No. 42 of the Selection Committee relating to consideration of committee and delegation business and private members' business on Monday, 9 May 2016. The report will be printed in the Hansard for today and the committee's determinations will appear on tomorrow's Notice Paper. Copies of the report have been placed on the table.

The report read as follows—

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

1. The committee met in private session on Tuesday, 3 May 2016.
2. The committee determined the order of precedence and times to be allotted for consideration of private Members' business on Monday, 9 May 2016, as follows:
Items for House of Representatives Chamber (10.10 am to 12 noon)

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ BUSINESS

Notices

1 MR ENTSCH: To present a Bill for an Act to amend the law relating to marriage, and for related purposes. (Marriage Legislation Amendment Bill 2016)

(Notice given 3 May 2016).

Time allotted—10 minutes.

Speech time limits—

Mr Entsch—10 minutes.

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

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

Orders of the day

1 Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Consumer Lease Exclusion) Bill 2015: Consideration of Senate's message (from 2 May 2016):

Time allotted—10 minutes.

Speech time limits—

Ms Macklin—5 minutes.

Next Member speaking—5 minutes.

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

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

2 High Speed Rail Planning Authority Bill 2016 (Mr Albanese): Second reading—Resumption of debate (from 2 May 2016):

Time allotted—10 minutes.

Speech time limits—

All Members—5 minutes each.

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

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

3 Renew Australia Bill 2016 (Mr Bandt): Second reading—Resumption of debate (from 2 May 2016):

Time allotted—10 minutes.

Speech time limits—

All Members—5 minutes each.

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

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

4 Gambling Harm Reduction (Protecting Problem Gamblers and Other Measures) Bill 2016 (Mr Wilkie): Second reading—Resumption of debate (from 2 May 2016):

Time allotted—10 minutes.

Speech time limits—

All Members—5 minutes each.

[Minimum number of proposed Members speaking = 2 x 5 mins]
The Committee determined that consideration of this should continue on a future day.


Time allotted—10 minutes.

Speech time limits—

All Members—5 minutes each.

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

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


Time allotted—10 minutes.

Speech time limits—

All Members—5 minutes each.

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

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

7 Assyrian people: Resumption of debate (from 2 May 2016) on the motion of Mr Bowen—That this House:

(1) recognises that the Assyrian people, who are Christian by religion, are an original and Indigenous people of Iraq and Syria;

(2) is concerned by the ethnic, religious and cultural cleansing of the Assyrian people by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the systematic killings of Assyrian people and destruction of ancient Assyrian cities, churches and artefacts;

(3) acknowledges the targeted killings and kidnappings of Assyrian clergy and ISIL's destruction of a recorded 45 Assyrian churches between June and July 2014;

(4) acknowledges the forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of Assyrians since the invasion by ISIL in Iraq and Syria, notably in Mosul and the Nineveh Plains in Iraq and the Khabour region in Syria (Hassaka province);

(5) declares that ISIL's treatment of the Assyrian people is a gross violation of human rights under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

(6) notes that on 24 March 2015, the Iraqi Council of Ministers, under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister, Haider Al-Abadi, issued a unanimous declaration condemning the crimes committed by ISIL (Daash) against civilians, Kurds, Christians, Yazidis and Shabak as crimes of genocide;

(7) further notes that the United States State Department and the European Parliament has recently recognised ISIL atrocities as genocide;

(8) associates with the recent remarks of United States Secretary of State John Kerry, describing ISIL as 'genocidal by self-proclamation, by ideology, and by actions';

(9) urges the United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide to make recommendations through the Secretary-General to the Security Council to recognise, prevent and halt crimes committed by ISIL;

(10) recognises and condemns the:

(a) ongoing genocidal conduct of ISIL against Indigenous minorities in Iraq, including the Assyrian peoples on religious, cultural and ethnic grounds;
(b) forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of Assyrians and other minority communities following the ISIL takeover of north-western Iraq;
(c) systematic killing, taking of hostages and human trafficking of minorities; and
(d) destruction of ancient Assyrian cities and holy places;
(11) reaffirms the rights of Christian and other minorities of Iraq to live in peace and freedom and calls for all steps to be taken to ensure that members of the affected communities can live in freedom in Iraq;
(12) notes the aspirations of the Assyrian people for the establishment of an autonomous region in the Nineveh Plains and welcomes the in principle agreement of the Iraqi Government to this; and
(13) calls for the rights of Assyrian Christians to be respected in the post ISIL makeup of Iraq and Syria.

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

Speech time limits—
All Members—5 minutes each.

[Minimum number of proposed Members speaking = 8 x 5 mins]
The Committee determined that consideration of this should continue on a future day.

Items for Federation Chamber (11 am to 1.30 pm)

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ BUSINESS

Orders of the day

1 Employment and workplace relations: Resumption of debate (from 2 May 2016) on the motion of Ms L. M. Chesters—That this House:
(1) notes the Government’s multiple attacks on the pay, rights and conditions of workers, including but not limited to:
(a) advocating for a reduction in penalty rates;
(b) issuing temporary licences, which resulted in Australian seafarers being sacked;
(c) abolishing the Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal;
(d) pursuing legislation that would ensure workers on construction sites have less rights than ‘ice’ dealers;
(e) the attempted reintroduction of unfair individual contracts;
(f) the failure to address widespread and system exploitation of workers; and
(g) the unfair, ideological bargaining policy which forces agencies to strip rights and conditions from enterprise agreements and offer cuts to pay in real terms;
(2) condemns the Government for its employment and workplace relations agenda; and
(3) calls on the Government to abandon its attacks on the pay, rights and conditions of workers in Australia.

Time allotted—40 minutes.
Speech time limits—
All Members—5 minutes each.

[Minimum number of proposed Members speaking = 8 x 5 mins]
The Committee determined that consideration of this should continue on a future day.

2 Steel industry: Resumption of debate (from 2 May 2016) on the motion of Mr Champion—That this House:
(1) notes with concern that one of Australia's major steel manufacturers, Arrium, has recently been placed into administration, highlighting the risk to Whyalla's economy and our national steelmaking capabilities;

(2) recognises the multiple pressures currently being experienced by the Australian steel industry, including the impact of a global over supply of steel;

(3) further notes the worrying evidence presented to the Senate Economics References Committee's inquiry into the future of Australia's steel industry, on the widespread importation and use of structural steel that does not meet Australian standards and presents a threat to public safety;

(4) notes the plan announced by Labor to support Australia's strategically significant metals manufacturing industries, particularly the steel industry, by:
   (a) ensuring Australian standards are upheld in Government funded projects and supporting local steel producers in meeting certification standards;
   (b) seeking to maximise the use of locally produced steel in Australian Government funded projects and put in place regular reporting of usage levels;
   (c) halving the thresholds for projects required to have an Australian Industry Participation Plan from $500 million down to $250 million for private projects, and from $20 million to $10 million for public projects;
   (d) doubling funding for the Australian Industry Participation (AIP) Authority and appointing an AIP Board;
   (e) ensuring Australia's anti-dumping system has the right powers and penalties in place;
   (f) creating a national Steel Supplier Advocate; and
   (g) establishing a tripartite Metals Manufacturing Investment Council to work closely with the Government to deliver these measures;

(5) condemns the Government's failure to take a comprehensive approach to securing the future of Australia's steel industry; and

(6) calls on the Government to take serious action to support Australia's strategically significant metals manufacturing industries, particularly the steel industry.

Time allotted—30 minutes.

Speech time limits—
   All Members—5 minutes each.

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

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

3 School funding: Resumption of debate (from 2 May 2016) on the motion of Ms Ryan—That this House:

(1) notes that:
   (a) the Government has:
      (i) implemented the biggest ever cut to Australian schools, ripping $30 billion out of our classrooms over the next decade; and
      (ii) failed to fund the vital fifth and sixth years of the Gonski reforms, locking Australian students into inequality and an uncertain future; and
   (b) Labor's Your Child. Our Future plan:
      (i) for Australian schools will ensure that every student in every school has the resources they need to achieve their best; and
(ii) will reverse the Government's cuts and fund the needs based Gonski reforms on time and in full—a $4.5 billion commitment in 2018 and 2019 alone;
(2) acknowledges the hard work and dedication of educators and teaching staff around the country, and the need to support them to meet their students' needs; and
(3) calls on the Government to use the budget to reverse their school cuts, fund the Gonski reforms on time and in full, and adopt Labor's Your Child. Our Future plan, so that every student can reach their potential.

Time allotted—30 minutes.

Speech time limits—
All Members—5 minutes each.

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

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

4 Universal healthcare: Resumption of debate (from 2 May 2016) on the motion of Ms Claydon—This House condemns the Government for its repeated attempts to undermine universal healthcare and drive up costs for patients, as evidenced by:

(1) its repeated attempts to introduce an upfront payment for visits to a general practitioner, including:
   (a) a $7 co-payment;
   (b) a $5 co-payment;
   (c) a $20 co-payment; and
   (d) the four year freeze on Medicare rebates;
(2) tearing up of the long term hospital funding deal agreed by all states and territories and endorsed by the Coalition in the 2013 election;
(3) the $650 million in cuts to Medicare rebates for pathology and diagnostic imaging which will force up the cost of scans and tests for patients;
(4) the $800 million in cuts to the health flexible funds which will force the closure of health organisations, including those providing support for drug and alcohol addiction, mental health and cancer support;
(5) abandoning the National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health and abolishing the Australian National Preventive Health Agency;
(6) abolishing the Health and Hospitals Fund, cutting $1 billion reserved for essential health infrastructure;
(7) cutting more than $500 million in public dental programs and moving to scrap the Child Dental Benefits Scheme used by one million Australian children; and
(8) the Government's continuing plans to:
   (a) raise the price of prescriptions by $5 for general patients and 80 cents for health care card holders; and
   (b) cut the Medicare Safety Net.

Time allotted—30 minutes.

Speech time limits—
All Members—5 minutes each.

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

The Committee determined that consideration of this should continue on a future day.
5 Australia and our region: Resumption of debate (from 2 May 2016) on the motion of Ms Plibersek—That this House recognises:

(1) the importance of effective political and diplomatic relationships and economic exchange between Australia and our region; and

(2) a responsible and internationally engaged Australian Government is required to meet the challenges and seize the opportunities of a changing world.

Time allotted—remaining private Members’ business time prior to 1:30 pm

Speech time limits—

All Members—5 minutes each.

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

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

THE HON A. D. H. SMITH MP
Speaker of the House of Representatives
4 May 2016

Public Works Committee Report

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (09:04): On behalf of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, I present the committee’s reports 4, 5 and 6 for 2016.

Reports made parliamentary papers in accordance with standing order 39(e).

Mr PERRETT: by leave—Report 4 addresses four projects referred to the committee in February and March 2016.

The first project is the fit-out of new leased premises for the Australian Taxation Office in Gosford, NSW. The estimated cost of the project is $20.8 million.

The ATO will lease the new building in Gosford consisting of approximately 7,350 square metres and occupying around 27 per cent of the site of the former Gosford School of Arts and the Gosford primary school. The new building will be constructed by Doma, with the ATO responsible for the internal fit-out only.

At the public hearing the ATO reassured the committee that the tender process for the project had been rigorous. The ATO also outlined some of the benefits for the local community, including the creation of jobs during construction and fit-out works and employment opportunities for around 600 staff delivering ATO services when the offices are operational.

The committee notes that the ATO has a reputation of leadership and excellence in property portfolio management. It has a sound track record in delivering projects on time and within budget, as illustrated by fit-out works in Dandenong, Box Hill, Melbourne Docklands, Albury and Wollongong to name just a few.

The committee is satisfied that the project has merit in terms of need, scope and cost and recommends that it proceed.

Two of the proposed projects considered by the committee in report 4 are to be delivered by the Department of Defence.
The first Defence project is the upgrade to the Puckapunyal Military Area high voltage power supply.

The committee heard that the existing electrical distribution network at Puckapunyal has been developed in a piecemeal fashion over many years. In the event of a partial system failure, the network does not provide an alternate power supply route, and some parts of the network have now reached end of life. Also, looking forward to 2028, Defence has predicted that the demand for electrical power will exceed the available power. The estimated cost of the project is $32.7 million.

The second Defence project is the AIR5428 Phase 1 – Pilot Training System Facilities. The main objective of the project is to deliver fit-for-purpose facilities to support a new pilot training system. The works will be conducted at RAAF bases in East Sale, Pearce, Gin Gin, Edinburgh and Williamtown. The estimated cost of the project is $329.8 million.

The committee is satisfied that both these Defence projects have merit in terms of need, scope and cost and has recommended that both projects proceed.

The committee made two additional recommendations for the AIR5428 Phase 1 – Pilot Training System Facilities project, requiring the Department of Defence to:

- provide updates in relation to contamination levels detected at any sites associated with the project, and
- provide an update on the outcomes of the Australian Noise Exposure Forecast conducted at RAAF Base East Sale.

The final project in report 4 addresses the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation waste management facilities’ extension and upgrade.

Increasing domestic and international demand for the nuclear medicines produced at ANSTO, as well as the need to decommission end-of-life nuclear facilities, mean that ANSTO’s available waste storage will be at capacity in early 2017. This is well before the new National Radioactive Waste Management Facility is expected to be completed in the year 2020.

The proposed works will provide additional temporary storage of both low- and intermediate-level solid waste at ANSTO’s Lucas Heights campus. The estimated cost of the project is $22.3 million.

Submissions from the Australian Conservation Foundation and from the Medical Association for Prevention of War and the Public Health Association of Australia supported the allocation of funds for extended interim storage capacity at Lucas Heights pending site selection for the new national facility.

The committee is satisfied that the project has merit in terms of need, scope and cost and recommends that it proceed.

In addition, the committee requires that ANSTO provides it with an update on any regulatory requirements, as sought by the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency and the Australian Safeguards and Non-Proliferation Office, which may affect the scope or cost of the project.

I commend report 4 of 2016 to the House.
Report 5 of 2016 addresses the proposed fit-out of new leased premises for the Australian Federal Police at 45 Commercial Road, Newstead, Queensland. This project was referred to the committee in March 2016.

The lease for the AFP's Queensland state headquarters at 203 Wharf Street expires on 31 March 2017 and will not be renewed. The AFP intends to fit out newly leased premises at Commercial Road, Newstead at an estimated cost of $25 million. At the public hearing the committee queried the stages of the procurement process that led to the final selection of the Commercial Road premises. The committee was told that the process has started in May 2013. By May 2014 the AFP had shortlisted six of the 14 proposals received. This shortlist was further reduced to two options, and in September 2014 the Commercial Road site building was selected as the preferred site. In 2015 the project was halted to reassess risks associated with a heightened security environment. Additional mitigations to the works were required, including the construction of bollards, and treatments to the building perimeter and facade. These mitigations escalated the estimated costs of security treatments from $1.2 million up to $9.11 million, representing a 650% cost increase. The committee was told that building security considerations had not been given significant attention until the later stages of the procurement process. The committee considers that earlier consideration of security needs could have led to a different outcome in terms of selection of the preferred building, and may have reduced the security measures cost escalation.

As lease approval has been finalised, the committee understands continuing with the Commercial Road premises, albeit with enhanced security, is the most appropriate way forward. The committee is satisfied that the project has merit in terms of need, scope and cost, and recommends that the project proceed. The public hearing had a lot of focus on the security concerns of the committee; nevertheless, that is our recommendation. The committee requires that the AFP review and amend as necessary its procurement processes to ensure the early identification and assessment of security requirements. The review should include consideration of site selection processes to ensure that it is not unnecessarily constrained.

I commend Report 5 of 2016 to the House.

Report 6 of 2016 addresses the C17 Maintenance Facility, Aircraft Apron and Associated Infrastructure Project at RAAF Base Amberley, Queensland which was referred to the committee in March 2016. 36 Squadron is located at Amberley and is responsible for operating eight C17A aircraft. These heavy airlift aircraft assist with strategic air transport, military operations and humanitarian efforts—as we saw in Fiji—conducted both domestically and throughout our region.

The Department of Defence is seeking approval to supply new facilities at RAAF Base Amberley in order to support the C17A aircraft. The estimated cost of the project is $219.4 million. Defence advised that Amberley's existing heavy aircraft maintenance facilities, which are currently shared supporting both the C17A and KC30A refuelling aircraft, are insufficient. Acquisition of additional aircraft will place further pressure on existing facilities. New facilities, including a new maintenance hangar, aircraft apron, explosive ordnance and countermeasure facilities will improve efficiency. The committee is satisfied that the project has merit in terms of need, scope and cost and recommends that it proceed.

I commend Report 6 of 2016 to the House.
In closing, I thank first the secretariat for the great work that they do supporting public works committee. I also acknowledge the work of the chair, Senator Dean Smith; and the deputy chair, his WA colleague the member for Moore, Ian Goodenough, who does great work in this committee; I should particularly mention him, and also my Labor colleagues Senator Alex Gallacher; Joanne Ryan, the member for Lalor; and Sharon Claydon, the member for Newcastle. They always turn up, and they always do their job, quietly looking over the work of government—and I am sure we will rest in peace if that is what is written on our political tombstones.

The SPEAKER: I thank the member for Moreton. I can say to the House that I know the member for Moreton takes his committee role seriously. It was a pleasure recently to have the member for Moreton accompany me on a delegation to the New Zealand parliament.

Mr Perrett: You did not throw me out once, Mr Speaker!

The SPEAKER: I did not throw you off the delegation once, that is true.

Standing Committee on the Environment

Report

Mr JOHN COBB (Calare) (09:14): On behalf of the Standing Committee on the Environment, I present the committee's report, incorporating dissenting reports, on its inquiry into the Register of Environmental Organisations, together with the minutes of proceedings.

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

Mr JOHN COBB: by leave—We are all aware of the important contribution that not-for-profit organisations make in communities across Australia. Many of these groups rely on financial support from the public to survive, and in many cases these donations are tax deductible.

To ensure that these groups continue to enjoy the support of the community, so they can get on with their important work, it is essential that the public has confidence that tax concessions are granted appropriately and that tax-deductible donations are used in line with community expectations.

For this reason, the Environment Committee has been inquiring into the Register of Environmental Organisations, which is a government scheme to enable not-for-profit environmental organisations to receive tax-deductible donations.

The committee adopted the inquiry in March of last year, under the leadership of the former chair, and now Assistant Minister to the Treasurer, the honourable member for Mitchell.

The committee received 685 submissions, including submissions from around 200 environmental organisations. The committee also received thousands of form letters and other correspondence about the inquiry.

Due to the strong public interest in the inquiry, the committee travelled to communities around the country to hear about the environmental work being carried out by organisations on the register.

The committee held 12 public hearings, where it heard from a number of environmental groups, industry representatives, government agencies and interested members of the public.
The committee is grateful to all of these organisations and individuals for taking the time to meet with the committee and contribute evidence to the inquiry.

The committee also had the privilege of seeing first-hand some of the great work being done by environmental organisations and their volunteers on the ground.

To ensure that tax-concessions continue to support this important work, the committee has made a number of recommendations in its report.

It was clear from the evidence given to the committee that the current administration of tax concessions is inefficient and involves unnecessary duplication.

The committee also heard community concerns about the nature of the activities undertaken by a small number of environmental organisations, and about a lack of oversight of these activities by the Department of the Environment.

To make the system more straightforward, and to improve accountability, the committee has recommended that tax concessions for environmental organisations be administered by the Australian Taxation Office.

These organisations would also be required to register with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission.

Furthermore, while the committee acknowledges that the vast majority of environmental groups are doing the right thing, in response to genuine community concerns, the committee has recommended sanctions for groups involved in illegal activity.

The committee is confident that these recommendations would lead to a system that is simpler for environmental organisations to navigate. Most importantly, these changes would ensure that environmental organisations are accountable to their donors and the public.

The inquiry also received a range of evidence about the activities undertaken by environmental groups. The committee came to the conclusion that environmental work is most effective when it is informed by a good understanding of conditions on the ground.

Therefore, the committee has recommended that environmental organisations be required to allocate 25 per cent of tax-deductible donations to on-ground environmental work.

In this way, the public can be assured that tax concessions are used to support organisations doing practical work to improve the natural environment in communities across Australia.

Once again, on behalf of the committee, I thank the organisations and individuals who participated in the inquiry.

I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of my colleagues on the committee. Although we did not always agree on all of the issues, I thank all members of the committee for their constructive approach to the inquiry.

I commend the report to the House.

Mr GILES (Scullin) (09:19): by leave—I rise to make some brief remarks in relation to the report on the inquiry in the Register of Environmental Organisations. I would like to start by acknowledging the contribution of the chair. It was a pleasure to work with him on this important inquiry. I also acknowledge the great contribution of all the members of the secretariat. As the chair’s contribution made clear, this was a very extensive inquiry that presented some logistical challenges as well as some other challenges, and the work of the
secretariat was invaluable and of the highest professional standard. This was an inquiry, as the chair indicated, that attracted great interest. I also thank all the organisations and individuals who made submissions to the inquiry, of which there were a very great number, and, in particular, those who presented evidence at the public hearings and also at the private briefings.

This inquiry, in large part, dealt with some inefficiencies, some duplicative matters and, indeed, some politicisation of the administration of the tax deductibility of registered environmental organisations. In respect of recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8 and 9 there is agreement from all members of the committee about progressing reforms in order to remove those inefficiencies, duplicative arrangements and, generally, to tidy up the operation of this important instrument that goes to significant public interest.

A dissenting report was prepared. The Labor members of the committee—Tony Zappia, the member for Makin, who was the deputy chair of the committee for a significant contribution of the inquiry, the member for Newcastle, the member for Port Adelaide and the member for Isaacs and I noted our dissent to two significant recommendations—recommendations 5 and 6. In our firm view these recommendations ignore the weight of evidence presented to the committee. The support of the majority of the committee for these recommendations, which move the administration of tax deductibility from a purpose test in respect of environmental organisations, but not other organisations, to a test which effectively requires government to look to the activities of those organisations and which requires those organisations to invest considerable bureaucratic and administrative resources to managing their interaction with government, is unsupported by the evidence. There is no warrant, in our view, for environmental organisations to be singled out.

What we see here is a preference for ideology and deference to vested interests in place of evidence. These have significant consequences, which is why a dissenting report was submitted. It goes not only to the operation of this register and not only to how tax deductibility is applied generally; it goes, fundamentally, to how a civil society functions. We are deeply concerned that the adoption of these recommendations, in particular recommendation 5, would send two adverse signals: firstly, to treat environmental organisations differently and adversely from other not-for-profit actors in civil society; and, secondly, for government to seek to constrain the democratic functioning of civil society in limiting the capacity of groups to advocate in favour of environmental outcomes against government decisions and against the exercise of corporate power.

Labor members of the committee noted that there was no warrant for recommendation 5 in the evidence. There was no particular request for the proposal and, as the majority report indicates, there would be significant uncertainty in applying the approach that is recommended, in that the marker of activity in place of purpose environmental remediation is uncertain and would require significant definitional assistance. This of itself would impose a significant burden on organisations and on government that would require the allocation of significant resources. I note that the previous inquiry of this committee looked to reduce the burden of so-called green tape. It is, to say the least, extremely ironic that in this inquiry the government members have proposed to do exactly the opposite—to impose an additional administrative burden on government and non-government actors.
Labor members have dissented from this report because it would be administratively unworkable, is antidemocratic and is fundamentally unwarranted.

**Mr JOHN COBB** (Calare) (09:24): I move:
That the House take note of the report.

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with standing order 39(c), the debate is adjourned. The resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

**Reference to Federation Chamber**

**Mr JOHN COBB** (Calare) (09:25): I move:
That the order of the day be referred to the Federation Chamber for debate.
Question agreed to.

**Standing Committee on Agriculture and Industry**

**Report**

**Mr RAMSEY** (Grey) (09:25): On behalf of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Industry, I present the committee's report entitled *Farming Smarter: Inquiry into agricultural innovation* together with the minutes of proceedings.

In accordance with standing order 39(e) the report was made a Parliamentary Paper.

**Mr RAMSEY:** by leave—Australia has always been a world leader in agricultural innovation. Our farmers, supported by researchers, industry groups and other stakeholders, remain at the global forefront of the invention and adoption of technologies. This enthusiasm for change has helped Australian agriculture to retain its competitive edge over other producers.

Technological advances will be even more important to Australian agriculture in the future. The sector is part of a broader boom in innovation across the Australian economy, which is presenting exciting opportunities for farm businesses. Meanwhile, new technologies will help the sector to tackle challenges such as growing competition in the region, resource scarcity, and the like.

The agriculture sector must be able to make the most of this boom in order to support productivity growth and to maintain its competitiveness. At the core of the innovation boom are individual farm businesses that make decisions to adopt new technologies. If the government wishes to support innovation and growth, it must support these businesses in technology adoption.

It was in this light that the committee conducted its inquiry into emerging agricultural technologies, key barriers to their adoption, and what the government can do to reduce these barriers.

First and foremost, the committee was pleased to hear of the vast scope and potential of emerging technologies in agriculture. Agricultural innovation is drawing on a wide range of disciplines, such as agricultural science, chemistry, engineering and information technology. From these diverse roots, the innovation system is developing technologies which run the gamut from monitoring individual animal behaviour, to improving drought resistance in crops, to providing big data analysis on a range of decisions about farm inputs. Importantly, the new technologies set to emerge in the agricultural sector will be set apart from those that
have come before. They will perform ever more complex tasks across more and more types of farms; they will collect and share greater volumes of data to support the decision-making; and they will be more integrated across farms and all along the supply chains.

Through the course of this inquiry, it became clear that these complex new technologies will bring their own challenges to farm businesses seeking to adopt them. Some of the barriers to successful adoption stem from the demands that the new digital technologies will place on internet, cloud and other physical infrastructure. In other situations, some regulations may unfairly impede the free use of new technologies, particularly in light of the size of the Australian market.

Another difficult set of barriers to adoption arise from the demand for more people with more advanced skills to shepherd technologies through the innovation system and into the hands of the end user. There needs to be more collaboration between the various organisations involved in the R and D process. There also needs to be a surge in skilled researchers and workers to support the sector.

The government has already taken strong steps to support innovators in tackling the agricultural sector's challenges. For example, the ongoing rollout of the National Broadband Network will support farm businesses to take up the opportunities presented by emerging digital technologies. In addition, the Cooperative Research Centres are widely seen as very strong mechanisms for collaborative research on issues of cross-sectoral importance.

The committee's recommendations have also supported the tailoring of existing programs to the needs of the sector as it undergoes technological transformation.

Some regulations, such as those affecting unmanned aerial vehicles, may be clarified or adjusted to help farm businesses to exploit the full potential of new technologies. In another case, the committee recommended tailoring STEM education strategies to open students' eyes to the exciting potential of careers in agriculture.

These recommendations of the committee have focussed on ensuring that the government is responsive to the needs of farm businesses seeking to adopt innovation. The committee has also recommended ways to support other stakeholders to do the same, for example by the development of a national working group to coordinate our world-leading efforts in agricultural innovation. The sector must move towards a more fluid, collaborative approach to innovation to ensure that it can make the most of the exciting future of technology in agriculture.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank all who have contributed their valuable time and wisdom throughout the course of the inquiry. I also thank my committee colleagues for their enthusiasm, time and efforts, and of course I thank the hardworking secretariat who helped us through this inquiry. They really sped things up so the committee, like many committees at the moment, could meet the time lines of this parliament, finish our report and present it to the parliament today before, inevitably it seems, it will be prorogued sometime soon.

I commend the report to the House.

Ms O'NEIL (Hotham) (09:31): by leave—We are hearing a lot in Australia at the moment about the importance of innovation and the ideas boom. I know I am amongst millions of Australians who love to hear these exciting stories about young entrepreneurs who start with
nothing and have a big idea and end up with a billion-dollar tech company. But the reality of the economy is that a lot of innovation happens in businesses that already exist, and there are huge economic gains that we can make as a country by just adopting the technology that exists in businesses right across our economy.

One of the sectors that does not get a lot of focus in the innovation discussion is agriculture. This is a really important point because we know that as Australia winds down from the mining boom the so-called dining boom is an area where we might be able to see a lot of jobs and productivity growth. There are a lot of important things that will help us make this industry a critical part of Australia's economy. We have this global reputation for clean and green foods, and the reality is that for hundreds of years this country has been very good at producing food and other agricultural goods. One of the challenges facing the sector is that, when we look at the data, productivity growth in the sector has slowed. That means that we are not getting better at farming as fast as we were in the past. If we are going to see this industry flourish to its full potential, we are going to need to do something about that. That is why the Minister for Agriculture asked the member for Grey, as chair of the committee, to look into how we can promote innovation in our agricultural sector.

The committee was asked to look at three big things. The first was efficiency practices in agriculture, the second was new technologies that farmers might be able to adopt and the third was barriers to those new technologies. I heard so many incredibly exciting things through the course of this inquiry and I just want to outline some of the things that I think are going to be really interesting to people who are as intrigued by this sector as I am. We heard that scanners are being used in the wine industry that remotely scan along the front of grapevines and are able to test plant quality and soil quality, and through that water and pesticides can be distributed remotely according to the quality of the plants. We heard on enormous cattle farms the great potential for the use of drones to help manage large properties. We heard about the potential for autonomous vehicles—trucks that do not have drivers and machinery that is able to be remotely programmed or computer programmed to till soil without anyone being present. We heard a lot about exciting developments in genomics—things like breeding plants that will be more appropriate for different climates. That could mean that we can farm parts of this country that have not been able to be farmed to date.

A fifth point concerns some exciting things with the use of big data, which really means that we will be able to collect information on farming practices and outcomes on hundreds of thousands of farms across the country and use that information to help farmers build best practice. In the old days we heard a lot of farmers talk about how they used to share information about best practices. It tended to be down at the pub talking after a day's work or over the fence. But this is a completely new way of doing things, where we could have really solid fact-based information about what is working for farmers in different parts of the country and targeted approaches to spreading those best practices. There was absolutely no one on this committee who was not blown away by the huge potential for innovation in agriculture, and there are certainly a lot of exciting things happening in the sector.

We heard some pretty concerning things about barriers that are preventing farmers from taking on these new technologies at the moment. I just want to mention two of them that really stood out in the hearings that we held. The first is about world-class telecommunications facilities. I am pretty confident that that was the consistent takeaway of
everyone working on a farming business who appeared before this committee. The reality is that despite all of the exciting things that we heard about farmers are just not going to be able to adopt them without telecommunications that fit the bill.

We heard about people that have no mobile phone coverage on large parts of their property. We talk about the exciting potential of big data, but the reality for these farmers is that they cannot even make a phone call from one end of the farm to the other. We heard about farmers who have to get up in the middle of the night to download invoices because that is the only time that they have the bandwidth able to do it. Again, the idea of bringing on these very high-tech solutions that are going to require massive amounts of upload and download is a fantasy for these farmers.

Finding more workable ways to fix these problems is absolutely urgent. The member for Grey talked about some of the steps forward that have been made. It is a bit disappointing that the government has made the decision to walk away from some of the most significant aspects of the National Broadband Network. It would not have given every farmer in Australia 100 megabits per second, but there were real ways that farming telecommunications would have been achieved that we probably will not see under the new model.

I want to say something about the importance of human capital, because, while much of the discussion of the committee focused on the actual technology, what we really need here are people who understand it, can see how it can be used in their farms and are able to introduce it. We heard a lot about the fact that there are a lot of young people who are coming into farming and trying to establish themselves on the land and, in particular, about the critical role that women play on farm businesses these days. We heard wonderful testimony about the transition that women in farm life have made from being the wife of the farmer to today being real business partners. One of the things that I took from this is that there is huge potential here for us to make much better use of those women. There is some evidence that young people and women—those two big groups—are really good adopters of new technology, and if we can harness their enthusiasm for doing things a bit differently then we might be able to see our way through some of these problems.

There is a lot more that is very fascinating in this report. Can I say to the parliament, to the committee: of all the reports I have participated in as a member of parliament so far I think this is the most inherently fascinating and the most readable. I really encourage people at home who are interested in this area of innovation in farming to download the report and have a look.

In closing can I thank the member for Grey, who has done a fantastic job chairing this committee through this 44th Parliament, and the other committee members. I want to say a special thank you to the committee staff: the secretary, Peggy Danaee, and Anthony Overs, Renee Toy, Sarah Codrington, Ashley Stephens, Georgina Horsburgh, who were all ably assisted by Morana Kavgic and Kathleen Blunden. As the member for Grey noted, they really stepped their foot on the accelerator to get this finished in time and they have produced a wonderful report. We are very grateful for their support and their hard work.

Mr Wilson (O'Connor) (09:38): by leave—Australian farmers are without doubt the most innovative in the world. I may have to argue with some of the members here today, but I think the farmers of O'Connor are probably the leaders in innovation, whether they be on the south coast from Bremer Bay to Esperance or in the marginal farming areas in the eastern part.
of the electorate or whether they be the amazing horticulturalists in Manjimup—they all do an amazing job of adapting to the environment and the markets, and I applaud them for that.

With the opening of new markets in South-East Asia I believe the biggest challenge for agriculture is going to be supplying enough product and adapting our marketing and production methods to meet those new markets. I want to commend this report to everybody in my electorate involved in agriculture. I ask them to read it. There are 16 very worthwhile, very sensible recommendations, and I think it is a major contribution to agricultural innovation across my electorate.

I want to take the opportunity to thank the committee, particularly the chair, the member for Grey, the deputy chair, the member for Hotham, and all the members who took part. I think everyone was very engaged in the inquiry. It is a very interesting report, and I very much enjoyed being part of it. I want to take the opportunity to thank the committee, particularly the chair, the member for Grey, and the deputy chair, the member for Hotham; and all the members who took part. I think everyone was very engaged in it. It was a very interesting inquiry, and I very much enjoyed being part of it. Also to those people who came and gave evidence, the individuals and the organisations: it was a big effort with a lot of travel involved, so thank you very much to them. And finally, of course, to the secretariat—Anthony and his team, who are here in the House today—thank you very much for your hard work.

Ms McGOWAN (Indi) (09:40): by leave—Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to add my words of support for the report, and to acknowledge the chair and the fantastic job he has done, and to the secretariat: really well done.

I would like to just highlight one aspect of the report that I was so proud to be involved in. The committee came to North East Victoria, to Wodonga, and we had the chance to have hearings in Wodonga, and also to go and make a site visit to the Kiewa Valley, where we learnt about the Alpine Valleys Dairy Pathways Project. And we saw, in real practical terms, how innovation takes place in a community context—we had industry working with manufacturing, working with local government, working with schools, working with the farmers, working with the men and working with the women, and working with the local media. We were able to demonstrate that if you actually get all of the players working together, innovation is created and transformed, and becomes part of the fabric of that community in a very cost-effective, efficient and extraordinarily rapid way. So in acknowledging the work that has gone into this report, I would particularly like to thank the farmers of North East Victoria for the fantastic work they have done in modelling how we can take innovation and have it picked up, on the ground, in under two years.

Like my colleagues, I would recommend this report to all people involved in agriculture, and particularly to the research organisations. It has many recommendations about how we can get that connectivity between research organisations, farmers and community groups, and really work it. Thank you very much for the opportunity to be part of it. I would like to congratulate the member for Grey, Mr Ramsey, on your fantastic work, your leadership and the support that you have given to us. It was a real pleasure to be involved in the project, so thank you.

Mr RAMSEY (Grey) (09:41): I move:

That the House take note of the report.
The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Mitchell): In accordance with standing order 39(c), the debate is adjourned. The resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Reference to Federation Chamber

Mr RAMSEY (Grey) (09:42): I move:

That the order of the day be referred to the Federation Chamber for debate.

Question agreed to.

DELEGATION REPORTS

Parliamentary Delegation to the United States of America

Mr RAMSEY (Grey) (09:42): I present the report of the Australian Parliamentary Delegation to the United States of America from 20 September to 2 October 2015. I ask leave of the House to make a short statement in connection with that report.

Leave granted.

Mr RAMSEY: The delegation, as I said, took place between 20 September and 2 October last year. It was led by me; the member for Franklin, Julie Collins, was the deputy leader; and we were accompanied by the member for Hasluck, the Hon. Ken Wyatt—whose time, I must say, was actually cut short a little because he was promoted while we were away and had to return to Australia to his higher duties—the member for Greenway, Michelle Rowland, and Senator for the Australian Capital Territory, Zed Seselja. I thank them very much for their cooperation and support throughout the delegation. It was a very enlightening time for us.

The overall objective of parliamentary visits is to further enhance bilateral relations, to develop deeper ties between our countries, to build the capacity of the parliamentary institution, and to promote democratic values through interaction and engagement with other parliaments and parliamentarians. The parliamentary visit format was designed to allow us to explore and examine particular issues in greater depth, and to meet with dignitaries, officials, non-government organisations and members of the public, and to conduct site inspections. The Parliament's international program has a strong focus on Australia's immediate region, and the parliamentary delegations typically visit the United States, a key ally, at least once per parliament. The visit provided opportunities for us to explore issues in which there are shared interests, and to examine the detail of political, economic and social developments in America. Before this delegation's visit, an official Australian parliamentary delegation attending assemblies and conferences had last visited the US in 2011.

I will briefly move to a couple of highlights of the visit. I would like to thank the consulates in San Francisco and Los Angeles and the embassy in Washington for their cooperation. They went to a lot of effort to make sure the delegation ran seamlessly and that it ticked off on all the things members of the delegation had interest in. A particular highlight for me was a visit to the SolarReserve facility in Nevada, a 110-megawatt solar installation using molten salt's storage capacity and offering 24-hour-per-day renewable solar electricity. Other highlights included a visit to Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in Livermore, near San Francisco, a government-provided laboratory where private organisations undertake research; and a visit to Northrop Grumman in Washington, where, amongst other things, we
had a look at the new James Webb Space Telescope, which is the next generation of Hubble, if you like. It was fascinating to see the precision this new telescope will have.

In Washington we had a focus on the US election, which of course was very topical and still is, and met with a number of people there to discuss particularly the ramifications of any of the outcomes for Australia and the free trade agreements between the US and, at that stage, the Pacific rim nations as well. I would like to thank very much the now retired ambassador to the US, Kim Beazley, who was very helpful when it came to understanding the US political system, which we all know has been a great passion of Mr Beazley's over a long time.

We visited the Simi Valley and the Reagan library. It was on a Sunday, and the delegation thought it well worth their while to go. It was a highlight. We were given access not only to the Reagan library and all the things that are in it but also to President and Mrs Reagan's private facilities, the place where they entertained guests and their offices. We had visits to a number of universities and education facilities, with a special focus on how they promote the STEM learning streams within their facilities. We had a good look at some dynamic start-up companies in San Francisco, in Airbnb and Yelp.

Overall, the thing that impressed the delegation was the absolute dynamism of the US economy generally but the private sector in particular. They have a much higher appetite, it seems, for risk and adventure than we do here in Australia. I think there is a far higher acceptance that an individual or a company may invest in a technology or an idea or a system and then find that it does not work, and that does not necessarily become a hanging offence for the individual—the chief executive or whoever it was—who drove that innovation in the first place. They accept that not every innovation will be successful. Perhaps we have a little to learn in Australia in that area.

If you look at the value of this delegation for those who were on it, it greatly increased our knowledge not only of the US—and our understanding of the Australian system by comparison—but of the world generally. It can only make better parliamentarians of us, inasmuch as we build relationships for the future. All of us had our notebooks out the whole way round, making sure we kept this or that particular business card, because we can then return to those people and return that kind of information and intelligence to the Australian public. All in all, it was a very great success. I thank all those who contributed to making it that success, but I make particular note of Mark Fitt, who was our chaperone through the whole program, who did a wonderful job. The organisation was faultless and allowed us, as members of parliament, to concentrate on the issues that we were there to concentrate on.

COMMITTEES

Social Policy and Legal Affairs Committee

Report

Mr CHRISTENSEN (Dawson—The Nationals Deputy Whip) (09:50): On behalf of the Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs, I present the committee's report, entitled Surrogacy Matters: Inquiry into regulatory and legislative aspects of international and domestic surrogacy arrangements, together with the minutes of proceedings.

Report made a parliamentary paper in accordance with standing order 39(e).
Mr CHRISTENSEN: by leave—For many Australians, having children and founding a family is an important and natural part of their lives. However, for some this dream does not come easily and, when other avenues have been exhausted, options for surrogacy are considered.

Surrogacy raises challenging and complex ethical and legal issues. High-profile offshore surrogacy cases involving Australians have highlighted these ethical issues, the possibilities for exploitation and the importance of ensuring that the best interests of the child are protected.

In Australia, surrogacy is regulated through state and territory legislation. While engaging in commercial surrogacy remains illegal in all Australian jurisdictions, many permit altruistic surrogacy arrangements, although regulatory requirements vary across borders. For intending families, this may frustrate their efforts to find a suitable surrogate and result in inconsistent approaches that at times lack the full suite of protections and checks for all parties.

The inquiry has revealed that many Australians are pursuing offshore surrogacy arrangements because of the difficulties of negotiating altruistic arrangements in Australia. In making recommendations, the committee considered carefully the differing perspectives presented by a range of government organisations, senior judicial officers, academics, industry, interest and religious groups. First and foremost, the committee recommends that the practice of commercial surrogacy remain illegal in Australia because of the significant potential for exploitation.

The committee supports options for altruistic surrogacy in Australia and recommends the development of a nationally consistent legal framework. The committee recommends that the Australian Law Reform Commission be tasked with developing a model national law to regulate altruistic surrogacy, with particular consideration to be given to the best interests of the child, the surrogate's ability to make free and informed decisions, ensuring the surrogate is protected from exploitation and legal clarity about the resulting parent-child relationships. We ask that the Law Reform Commission also consider issues including counselling, background checks and independent legal advice for all parties, the transfer of parental responsibility, reimbursement for the surrogate and the need for a closed register of surrogates and intended parents. Following this, agreement on a national approach can then be sought from all states and territories.

We also considered the issue of those who may engage in offshore surrogacy arrangements and recommended that such arrangements be rigorously scrutinised. The committee recommended that practices in key surrogacy destination countries be assessed to ensure that they are consistent with the principles of the proposed national law. Where Australians have sought a passport for a child to return to Australia, the committee has recommended that an assessment to ensure that no Australian or international laws on surrogacy have been breached and that screening should be undertaken by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection. I note that the minister is at the table and he will love this recommendation: we ask that the Minister for Immigration be given the power to make determinations in relation to the welfare of the child where breaches have been found to have occurred. Congratulations, Peter, our recommendation would have you be guardian to a whole heap of surrogate children.
In concluding, I would like to thank all of the individuals and organisations that provided submissions and testified before us. I want to pay my respects to the many families who provided the most intimate of stories, outlining their many experiences with all aspects of surrogacy. These accounts formed the core of the committee's deliberations and have provided an insight that could not otherwise have been gained.

Before I commend the report to the House formally, I do want to give my thanks to my other committee members, in particular the deputy chair, the member for Newcastle, who has been there for every inquiry we have done, and I want to pay my respects to the active members of the committee, most notably the member for Moreton, the member for Griffith and the member for Macquarie. I also want to thank members of the secretariat, led by Dr Anna Dacre but ably assisted by her colleagues. We have Muz Ali listening in the advisers box; he has done a hell of a lot of work for this report. We also have Peter Pullen and Jess Hargreaves, and they have done a tremendous amount of heavy lifting, in particular with this report, which we have truncated to fit with what we think might be the timing of parliament. We have been able to get this done in a very short amount of time, and it is a report that is very big on quality in terms of the recommendations.

This committee has been able to deliver seven reports to this parliament, focusing on a range of issues whether it be crimes at sea, Australian South Sea Islanders, child support or this very deep and intensive issue of surrogacy arrangements. We have worked very well as a committee. Who would have thought the member for Newcastle chucking a hard-core, right wing, ultraconservative culture warrior into the role of chair of the Social Policy and Legal Affairs Committee, with an Emily's List deputy chair and a couple of other Emily's List people and the Labor left convenor, the member for Moreton, would actually produce these results, but it has. We have worked very well. I thank them, I thank the secretariat, I thank you for your indulgence, Mr Deputy Speaker, and I commend the report to the House.

Ms CLAYDON (Newcastle) (09:57): by leave—I thank the Chair of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs, the member for Dawson, for his comments and for tabling this report into the regulatory and legislative aspects of international and domestic surrogacy arrangements. As the chair commented, we are an unlikely couple in this parliament and we have probably spent far more time together during this parliament than anyone would have imagined. It has led to robust and frank discussions around the table and I think the committee has been able to table some very good reports to the parliament.

As deputy chair, I would like to make a few additional comments and I will try to pick up on some of the areas that the chair did not touch on. This inquiry has traversed some really difficult terrain over the last 12 months. The inquiry was born from a sole recommendation of the committee's previous report, which followed a roundtable on surrogacy, tabled in this House in March last year. I too, at the start, give my sincere thanks to the committee secretariat, who have worked so diligently not just on this inquiry but throughout the course of this parliament. We are privileged to have access to people with tremendous research skills and a great depth of knowledge, and they have helped us to pull together the best reports that we possibly can. Given the breadth of the inquiries this committee takes on, the committee has to work tremendously hard to make sure that all of those inquiries, all of the hearings, run as smoothly as they do.
As the chair mentioned, this inquiry received 124 submissions. We held six public hearings here in Canberra. We were able to hear from the key witnesses in this area, which included government organisations, academics, judges, private individuals and families who detailed their lived experience of international and domestic surrogacy arrangements. I especially want to thank those people who gave evidence as intending parents, surrogate mothers, relinquishing mothers, donor conceived children and adoptees. Your willingness to share very personal, intimate details of your lives and those of your families, friends and loved ones was both generous and extraordinary. The committee remains deeply indebted to you for your unique insights.

International and domestic surrogacy arrangements are deeply complex matters that raise important legal and ethical considerations. The diverse nature of the legislative framework that regulates surrogacy in Australia introduces new complexities, while, in my view, all the time failing to keep pace with advances in reproductive technology and the rapidly growing trend of Australians travelling overseas for surrogacy. The need for reform of Australian law is clear, and this report makes recommendations that go at least some way to addressing existing problems.

It is important to note at the outset that this report does not recommend any change to the current prohibition of commercial surrogacy in Australia. While this will reassure some Australians, I know that it will also disappoint many others who gave evidence throughout the inquiry in favour of a well-regulated system of commercial surrogacy in Australia. The Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia, Diana Bryant, for example, argued:

If we want to regulate international surrogacy in some way—that is, regulate who can bring children into Australia and require them to be compliant with certain requirements—then I am inclined to think that we also should have some capacity for commercial surrogacy in Australia; otherwise we are being a little inconsistent.

She added:

I do think it is somewhat hypocritical of us … to say, 'On ethical grounds we don't allow commercial surrogacy' when we allow our citizens to go offshore and engage in commercial surrogacy and bring children back here.

I agree—and I have little doubt that this is an issue that the Australian parliament will be revisiting in the future.

Australia currently accounts for 25 per cent of global commercial surrogacy arrangements. That equates to about 1,000 babies per year, yet we have no legislative framework to properly regulate this practice. This is not, in my view, a sustainable position. When it comes to our domestic arrangements, the disparity in legislative regimes around Australia adds additional layers of complexity, resulting in a range of inequities. That is why the committee has recommended the development of a model national law to facilitate surrogacy arrangements in Australia.

We agree with the Australian Human Rights Commission that any such law must be guided by key principles to ensure that the best interests of the child are protected, the surrogate mother is able to make free and informed decisions without exploitation and that there is clarity around parent-child relationships. Importantly, the committee notes that all legislation in this area must be non-discriminatory. We cannot have surrogacy laws that discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status, marital status or sexuality.
Future laws should also allow for adequate compensation for the birth mother—covering legal, medical and other expenses incurred as a consequence of the surrogacy—with further consideration given to the possibility of additional compensation for the 'burden and risk' faced by the birth mother.

Significantly, the committee also recommends that an audit be undertaken of all surrogacy destination countries to assess the extent to which surrogacy practices in these countries meet the requirements laid out clearly in the report and detailed in recommendation 3, which go to supporting the human rights of children and birth parents so that they remain free of exploitation.

The report also includes important recommendations regarding birth certificates of children born through surrogacy, the provisioning of comprehensive Australian government advice and information on surrogacy arrangements and the development of a regulatory platform for Australian citizens who undertake international commercial surrogacy. There is much work to be done, but this report is indeed a good start. I commend the report to the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Mitchell): Does the member for Dawson wish to move a motion in connection with the report to enable it to be debated on a future occasion?

Mr CHRISTENSEN (Dawson—The Nationals Deputy Whip) (10:05): Now we have heard the yin and the yang, we can have some zen. I move:

That the House take note of the report.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: In accordance with standing order 39, the debate is adjourned. The resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next day of sitting.

Reference to Federation Chamber

Mr CHRISTENSEN (Dawson—The Nationals Deputy Whip) (10:05): I move:

That the order of the day be referred to the Federation Chamber for debate.

Question agreed to.

Joint Standing Committee on Treaties

Report

Mr HARTSUYKER (Cowper) (10:05): On behalf of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties, I present the following reports: Report 161, Treaties tabled on 1 December 2015, 3 December 2015 and 2 February 2016 and Report 162, 20th Anniversary Seminar.

Reports made parliamentary papers in accordance with standing order 39(e).

Mr HARTSUYKER: by leave—Today I present two reports for the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties: Report 161 and Report 162.

Report 161 contains the committee's views on an agreement to strengthen the Niue Treaty, two international shipping codes and a taxation treaty with Germany. Report 162 provides a summary of the seminar held to mark 20 years of the committee's work.

The Niue Treaty was implemented in 1993 to assist Pacific Island nations enforce their fisheries laws and deter breaches. The agreement on strengthening the Niue Treaty is intended to improve the management and development of the fishery resources of the South Pacific region. It will help to ensure sustainability and maximise the social and economic benefits
that sustainability brings. It provides a legal framework for cooperative regional fisheries surveillance and law enforcement activities.

Australia plays a key role in maritime surveillance in the South Pacific and is committed to supporting regional cooperation on maritime security in the region. The proposed agreement will assist Australia to better utilise resources in this area.

The two international shipping codes, the polar water code and the code for ships using low-flashpoint fuels, are further enhancements to the International Maritime Organization's regulations. The polar code addresses the specific risks of operating in polar waters. The IGF provides an international standard for ships using low-flashpoint fuels. Both will increase ship safety and security as well as providing environmental protection measures.

The taxation agreement with Germany updates and modernises our existing agreement, which was implemented in 1975. Australia has used the opportunity to incorporate the OECD/G20 recommendations to prevent base erosion and profit shifting. This agreement puts Australia at the leading edge in this area and provides a precedent for future treaties.

The committee recommends that these four treaties be ratified and binding treaty action be taken.

The second report complements report 160, which I tabled in March. It provides a summary of the one-day seminar that the committee hosted here in Parliament House to mark 20 years since the establishment of JSCOT. During those 20 years, treaties have become increasingly complex. Australians are more connected to the broader world through trade, education and migration. International agreements increasingly affect not only broad issues of state but the actions and responsibilities of individual citizens.

The seminar brought together approximately 80 participants from a diverse range of backgrounds including parliamentarians, academics, public and parliamentary servants, students and representatives from business and other interest groups. The report summarises the presentations, reflects on the committee's work and provides an assessment of its performance. It also provides some thought-provoking ideas on the future direction of the committee's operation. It includes a full transcript of the presentations and useful statistical data.

I am confident that the information included in this report will prove useful to experts, academics and students of the treaty-making process in Australia. On behalf of the committee, I commend both reports to the House. I would also like to commend the support that I have received in the brief time that I have been chair by my deputy chair, the member for Wills, who has been a longstanding member of the committee and a strong advocate for its work.

Mr KELVIN THOMSON (Wills) (10:10): by leave—I, in turn, wish to thank the member for Cowper for his work as Chair of the Treaties Committee and his predecessors Wyatt Roy, the member for Longman, and Angus Taylor, the member for Hume. It has been a pleasure to work with each of those chairs and with the other members of the committee during the life of this parliament as well.

I want to make some specific remarks about the taxation agreement between Australia and Germany. As the chair noted, this agreement aims to update the existing bilateral tax arrangements between Australia and Germany, and achieve, among other objectives, the prevention of base erosion and profit shifting in accordance with the OECD and G20
recommendations regarding this matter. So it is surprising to me that the first-round impact of the agreement is an $85 million revenue loss as a result of reduced tax collections, and that the administration costs for this agreement will be absorbed by existing resources of the ATO rather than beefing it up—as I believe needs to be the case if we are serious about addressing base erosion and profit shifting. When questioned about the second-round impacts of the agreement, Treasury said that tax treaties are about 'removing or reducing tax impediments', 'facilitating greater trade and investment' and 'growing the pie'. Frankly, this is trickle-down economics, and the trouble with trickle-down economics is that it does not work in practice. The agreement is described as an opportunity to set a precedent for future taxation treaties in preventing base erosion and profit shifting, and thus furthering international efforts to minimise tax avoidance. This is a laudable intention, but it is difficult not to feel a little sceptical when this agreement actually shrinks revenue.

In the budget last night, the Turnbull government budgeted to raise just $200 million over the forward estimates—or $650 million if we include the costing they now attribute to last year's measures. I recall that, last year, coalition MPs cheered when the member for Warringah told parliament:
So far the only idea they—
being Labor—
have come up with is to spend $100 million on the ATO to raise $1 billion. Well, next time they will be telling us to spend $1 billion on the ATO to raise $10 billion. That is the problem. All they can think of is spending more and taxing more. They just cannot help themselves.

Yet this budget does precisely that, claiming that a $679 million investment will raise more than five times as much—$3.7 billion. If that is true, it must also be the case that the government's massive cuts to the tax office, axing 4,700 jobs, have cost revenue over the past two years. Promising to restore some of the tax office's funding in this budget is an admission of failure, not a new crackdown on multinationals. It is nowhere near adequate to deal with the size of the multinational tax avoidance problem. It falls well short of Labor's multinational tax package, which raises $1.9 billion over the forward estimates, according to the Parliamentary Budget Office, and $7.2 billion over the decade. Unlike the coalition, Labor will close debt deduction loopholes that allow multinationals to siphon money out of Australia. Under Labor's policy, there will be no arbitrary thin capitalisation threshold. Firms will be subject to a worldwide gearing ratio, meaning they can only deduct debt from their Australian operations up to the overall level of debt held by the multinational group.

There is no doubt in my mind, when we see scandals like the Panama papers, that there have been too many words and not enough action on multinational tax avoidance. Our tax system should not get softer the higher it goes, and how much tax you pay should not be decided by how good a lawyer you have. To give some examples of the avoidance that we have seen recently, Apple paid just over $80 million in Australian tax in 2013 on local revenue of over $6 billion. By comparison, the Australian retailer Harvey Norman paid $89 million in tax on $1.5 billion. They paid more tax on just one-quarter of the revenue. Documents leaked in 2014 showed that over 300 Australian firms had been involved in routing money through Luxembourg and other low-tax jurisdictions to minimise their Australian tax bills. That included AMP, Macquarie Group and Lend Lease. The amount of tax avoided through these schemes potentially reaches into billions of dollars. Seventy-six
multinational corporations pay an average tax rate of only 16.2 per cent—just over half the going company rate and significantly less than your average nurse or construction worker, who pays an effective tax rate of 24 per cent—this is costing us billions of dollars.

Labor’s approach has been developed in consultation with multinational tax practitioners, academics, industry and costed by the independent Parliamentary Budget Office. This approach also draws on the OECD’s global action plans for countering base erosion and profit shifting. To assist with the implementation and refinement of these measures, Labor will form a multinational tax expert panel. Labor will use the expert panel to ensure that these changes work as intended. In addition, Labor will continue to consider multinational tax issues such as increased penalties and powers for dealing with tax avoidance and country-by-country reporting. We will work with our international partners in bilateral tax treaties to consider ways to avoid double no-tax scenarios.

When it comes to tax, everyone should pay their fair share. How can we ask Australians to work hard and pay their tax if we let big multinationals off the hook? Our priority needs to be to shut down loopholes that allow big multinationals to send these profits overseas. We need to crack down on what is appalling corporate free loading!

This is the last treaties report that I will be speaking to. I take this opportunity to thank the other treaties committee members for their hard work and their support over the life of this parliament and previous ones. I take this opportunity also to thank the treaties secretariat for their professional work—Lynley Ducker, Dr Narelle McGlusky, Kevin Bodel, Belynda Zolotto and Cathy Rouland. I thank them and wish them all the best for the future.

Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs

Report

Dr STONE (Murray) (10:17): On behalf of the Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, I present the committee's interim report entitled *First steps for improving educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students* together with the minutes of proceedings.

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

Dr STONE: by leave—Today, I am presenting the interim report of the House Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs inquiry into educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. We felt the findings of our inquiry to this point were too important to leave in abeyance until we hope, the minister of the next parliament reinstates this inquiry.

Too often the statistics cite the failures of Indigenous students when compared with non-Indigenous peers. The NAPLAN results for Indigenous children are often below those of their non-Indigenous counterparts and their rates of further education and employment are below those of their non-Indigenous counterparts. These statistics indicate an education system that is failing many of our Indigenous students rather than the Indigenous students failing the education system. We set out to find out what worked, what had not worked, and what impediments there were to Indigenous students going to school, staying at school, moving on to higher education and taking every opportunity that is available to most Australians in this glorious country.
Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students live in remote communities where there is not secondary school opportunity. So Abstudy, a Commonwealth set of support grants, is needed to financially support these students, especially as some may have to leave home and go to a boarding school or into some other type of residential boarding arrangements. Abstudy is essential if we are to see equality of outcome for our Indigenous students. However, we received extensive evidence of delays, confusion, and an inability to get detailed and complex written forms submitted when families may not have been literate in English, may not have had access to the internet or may not have had some of the support documentation, like birth certificates, to complete the forms and send them through to be processed in time for students to start school at the beginning of the year. We heard evidence continuously—whether it was from communities, from families or from schools—about the problems with processing the complex Abstudy forms.

The committee repeatedly heard from parents that the consequences of these forms not being able to be submitted or to be processed in time were that some children remained in the Torres Strait Islands, for example, for some six months after the commencement of the school term. You can imagine the disappointment of a young Indigenous student in this situation. They have just completed their primary schooling and are ready to go on to secondary enrolment, they need to leave their home—in itself a traumatic thing for the student and their family—but the forms have not been filled in or may not have been processed, and so they are denied access to ongoing education in some cases for up to six months. That is clearly totally unacceptable, particularly for a program that is integral to the government eliminating Indigenous educational disadvantage.

That was one of the driving forces behind us determining to have an interim report placed on the record in this parliament so something can be done immediately about the complexity of the Abstudy forms and the inefficiencies of the process which seem to mean, in some cases, forms are lodged and not processed for up to six months. We want this problem dealt with, and we have recommended that it be dealt with as a highest priority of this or the next government. The breadth of concerns raised in numerous submissions to the committee's inquiry indicated that the whole Abstudy policy as well as the processes of application need urgent review. We also recommend that Abstudy be redesigned and the revised policy be fully implemented by 30 June 2017.

Our report also expresses great concern at the lack of equity in funding to provide for Indigenous girls' education programs, in contrast to boys' access to special programs. We are all very familiar with the excellent Clontarf sports related program, beginning in Western Australia, which has been around for many years. It has delivered many Indigenous boys a new sense of purpose and a new goal of finishing their schooling. It has been an enormous success. Unfortunately, there has not been an equivalent opportunity for girls—until very recently, when a particular program, the Stars Foundation, commenced. But it is in its infancy. It has only just commenced, and it is on a much smaller scale than, for example, a Clontarf program, when considering the numbers it can take and in terms of the funding. We are not recommending that funds be redirected to the girls' program, away from the boys' funded programs. Self-evidently, we would not want to see that happen to the detriment of boys' outcomes. Rather, we are recommending that the remaining funds in the Indigenous
Advancement Strategy be allocated to girls' education programs and that future rounds of grants fund these programs for girls' and for boys' support in equal measure.

Also, in our evidence, we took information about some special Indigenous girls' schools which also accommodate their babies. This is a very important thing—of course, not just for Indigenous girls but for other non-Indigenous Australian teenage girls. We commend that program. For a young girl who has a baby, it is not fair that her education stops and that she has to, for the rest of her life, consider limited opportunities.

The committee also expressed some concern about direct instruction, a particular method of teaching that you will now find in much of Cape York and in some parts of the Northern Territory. Despite significant Commonwealth investment of some $22 million over four years, the effectiveness of this pedagogy, of US-based design, has not been independently evaluated. Nor have outcomes been compared with other forms of instruction in Australia. The committee is of the view that direct instruction should not receive additional funds from the Commonwealth until an independent, comprehensive and longitudinal study, or review, finds the teaching methods to be effective in delivering improved outcomes for the majority of Indigenous students. We believe it is very important for comparisons to be made between this particular form of instruction, called direct instruction, and other alternative ways of instructing Indigenous children from their earliest entry into primary school.

Finally, it is the strong desire of the committee for this inquiry to be resumed in the 45th Parliament. We think the matter is of great consequence and importance to the future of Indigenous Australians. We must have our young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys and girls able to explore every opportunity and have the same choices that other non-Indigenous children have before them. This inquiry is unfinished business. The committee has not yet completed taking all of the evidence. We also know that there are additional recommendations that can be made when more of that evidence is put on the table. Therefore, the report recommends that, following the federal election, the Minister for Indigenous Affairs task the new committee to resume the inquiry so that this important work can be completed and additional recommendations can be brought to the parliament.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all of the students, parents, teachers and organisations that willingly provided submissions and appeared before the committee. We were often travelling in remote places. We were aware that some of the people who came before us had also travelled for many hours and at great inconvenience to themselves to put their information before us. But they saw it as so important. I would also like to thank the Deputy Chair, the member for Lingiari, who is an expert on all of these matters given his electorate, but also given his previous life in education. I want to thank our committee members, all loyal and true, who make those special journeys, often taking many days out of their electorates. I want to thank the secretariat, particularly Dr Anna Dacre, who has done a superb job over many years working with this committee.

Finally, this is my last time, last term, last day, in fact, to stand as Chair of this Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs committee. It has been work that I have greatly valued, teaching me so much more. But, also, it has allowed me to feel that I have contributed perhaps something to the greater good of our Indigenous Australians.

I thank the House and I commend the report.
Mr SNOWDON (Lingiari) (10:27): by leave—Firstly, let me acknowledge the work of Dr Stone as Chair. I say to her that she will go from this place knowing that she has done a great deal of good work, particularly on this committee but more generally—and I know she has had a career that has been very wide ranging. I have been off and on this committee since I first came to this place in the late 1980s. One of the features of it is that it brings together people—as committee members—from diverse backgrounds. I can only think of one occasion when there was a minor difference of opinion over a report. Always we are able to get a consensus position. That, I think, speaks volumes for the motivation of those who are participating on the committee, but also the impact of the evidence that we are seeing before us. It takes a good guiding hand to make sure that we do not slip into poor behaviour, if I might say, in terms of the politics of where we are. I want to thank you most sincerely for your leadership of the committee. Also, I want to thank all those other members of the committee, over the period that you have been involved, for their contributions, as well.

You made an observation then, Dr Stone, about being on this committee. It is worthwhile noting that in this committee at the moment, part way through this report, we have had 15 public hearings in Queensland, South Australia, New South Wales and Canberra, and we have spoken to over 200 witnesses. They came from very diverse backgrounds and advocated very different things.

This committee has over the years has put itself in a position where it must travel and go to places which are quite remote. Going to visit Cape York and Thursday Island, as we have done on this inquiry, allows members to put themselves in a position where they are exposed to the realities of the life of many people, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, living in remote communities to get a better and deeper understanding of the concerns which they have and the needs which demand attention. I think that is evidenced by this committee's recent trips to the cape. We have come back, as you have just mentioned, Dr Stone, with an impression about direct instruction and the need for us to validate what it is actually doing. That is quite important, because it is very contentious. I know there are those who are very strong advocates for direct instruction, but we also know of refugees from direct instruction—they have self-described themselves as 'educators'. I have spoken to educators who are using part of direct instruction in the Northern Territory who are most concerned about it. I know of one community I visited recently where the parents have expressed grave concern. I think these are issues that we need to confront. I do not believe necessarily that importing a model of education like this from the United States and having schools in Australia report to people in the United States is necessarily the best thing. Nevertheless, I think the most appropriate and impartial way to deal with this is to do as we have recommended and have an impartial review. I strongly support the recommendations in that regard.

You also made observations about Abstudy, and I can only endorse them. This has been an issue for many, many years. I know that people who live in remote communities, many of whom will not have English as a first language and who may not have any literacy, are being confronted with the prospect of trying to fill in a very, very lengthy and complicated form—at least it is for them, and I know for others. It means that these kids will not get access to the educational opportunity that we would like to give them, so it is important that we have the review which is recommended in this report.
One of the things which attracted my attention during the course of this inquiry is that we have had evidence about boarding schools but we have not as yet had a lot of evidence about early childhood education. There is a lot of money being invested in taking kids away to go to school. That has merit for some. I think it is an open question as to whether that is the best investment of resources and whether we should be front-loading the investment into early childhood education or not. Instead of putting resources in there we are putting them in post-primary school, into high school, into boarding facilities, but if we have to prioritise our investment we would probably get the best educational outcome over the longer term by putting that money into early childhood education. I believe very strongly that we need to think strategically about where the best fit for the investment is. That is not to denigrate the intention or the motivation of those people who are investing their own time, money and resources into getting kids away to boarding schools or the efforts of some of these boarding schools, but if we have a small number of people going to very prestigious and very costly boarding facilities whilst the remainder of their community are in schools that are substandard is that the best outcome? Without wanting to talk in detail about the budget, it does raise serious questions about how we provide needs based funding to remote schools, how we resource teachers properly and how we hold state and territory governments to account for their investment in public education.

Finally, I want to talk about the issue of equity. As you know Madam Chair, as you still are, currently sitting in the position as the member for Murray, although you are leaving us—I might leave too; it might be a decision which is made for me—the issue of equity is vitally important. I have been an observer of Clontarf since it first came into the Northern Territory. I am a great supporter of the program. I have seen the quality of the mentoring staff in these schools make a real difference to the education experience and opportunity for young boys becoming young men and then transitioning into work and training opportunities. Sadly, until very recently, as you pointed out, we have not had an equivalent program for young women. There is now an equivalent program as you rightly pointed out—the Stars program, which I am a strong advocate for—but oddly it does not get the same attention or funding from the Commonwealth. The model which is used by Clontarf and other similar programs for funding is effectively one-third from the state or territory jurisdiction, one-third from the Commonwealth and one-third from philanthropic corporate or private donors. In the case of Stars the Northern Territory government did what I think was a very intelligent thing. It tendered out a program for girls which allowed people with other organisations to have an opportunity to compete to try to get this work. The Stars Foundation was the successful tenderer. The Northern Territory government to its great credit—I am normally a critic of the Northern Territory government—has funded Stars to operate in seven, soon to be eight, schools looking after 450 young women. The Commonwealth has steadfastly resisted funding the program while at the same time funding boys programs in the same schools. What is happening is that the Stars Foundation is operating programs in schools where Clontarf already exists. The boys programs are being funded by the Commonwealth; the girls programs are not. That is a grave inequity that really undermines the potential sustainability of programs like Stars—there are other girls programs, as well. We know that unless we invest properly in the education of young women we are penalising the next generation.

As a male, I observe my own education, but I do know, and women most particularly know, of course, that as the mothers of the next generation women's education is vital. What
we know is that, sadly, many young Aboriginal women have children at a young age and many do not feel that they have strong choices in their lives. If we can open opportunities for young women by giving them the opportunity to make choices, real choices, about their lives and educate them about their roles as women and potentially as mothers, that could have a grave public health outcome into the future and impact upon the next generation of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, whether they are male or female. If we want to guarantee a strong, long life for the next generation of Aboriginal children, we have to make sure that young Aboriginal women, who will be the mothers of those children, have the opportunities they properly deserve. To do that, we have to provide equity in the way in which we fund these programs to ensure that we are not discriminating against women, as we appear to be at the moment, through the way in which funding is allocated.

I endorse your remarks, Member for Murray, and say to the government that this is an opportunity to say very clearly that you will accept the recommendations of this committee—the two recommendations regarding equity, the recommendation regarding Abstudy and the one regarding direct instruction. I am particularly concerned about the equity issue. If we do not address it, we are condemning future generations of young women to disadvantage, and we should not be doing that. We have it within us to change the way we operate and I strongly implore the minister who is responsible, in this case Senator Scullion, to do the right thing—and he will get our support and wide acclamation if he does.

Finally, let me conclude by again thanking you, Dr Stone, and wishing you well in whatever direction your life takes you in the future. I know you will always be an advocate for these issues and always a friend to us in this place. Thank you very much. I endorse the recommendations of the report and I hope that the next government, whoever it may be, follows up on the final recommendation of this report and continues this inquiry.

DELEGATION REPORTS

Parliamentary Delegation to the 134th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly, Lusaka, Zambia

Mr BRUCE SCOTT (Maranoa—Deputy Speaker) (10:39): I present the report of the Australian delegation to the 134th assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union held in Lusaka, Zambia from 19 to 23 March this year. I ask leave of the House to make a short statement in connection with the report.

Leave granted.

Mr BRUCE SCOTT: I am pleased to present the report of the Australian parliamentary delegation that participated in the 134th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly, held in Lusaka, Zambia from 19 to 23 March this year. It was my privilege to lead the delegation, which also comprised the member for Werriwa, the member for Forrest, and Senators Bernardi and Lines. This was a hardworking and successful delegation, and all members played an active role at the various proceedings of the assembly. The delegation attended formal sessions of the assembly and its governing council and participated in meetings of the Asia-Pacific and Twelve Plus geopolitical groups. Our participation in the geopolitical groups was a good opportunity to raise matters of like-minded colleagues and workshop issues before debate in the plenary session.
During the assembly, I participated in the general debate on the topic of rejuvenating democracy and used this opportunity to explain the measures that the parliament and other organisations, such as the Australian Electoral Commission, are undertaking to ensure that the next generation of Australians is ready to participate in our democratic processes. Another important business item of the assembly involved two sessions of the meeting of women parliamentarians, which Senator Lines was able to attend.

Once again, the delegation participated in the work of the various standing committees. The member for Werriwa attended the four sittings of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security as it debated and drafted a resolution on terrorism. Senator Lines was a panellist at the proceedings of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights as it considered a resolution originally proposed by an earlier Australian delegation, in 2015, on the participation of women in the political process. Once again, the member for Forrest continued her work as a leading member of the steering group for the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade. I particularly wish to report to the House that her role in chairing an extended drafting session on a complex resolution concerning the protection of cultural heritage was roundly applauded by all and that the resolution was adopted by the assembly at its final session.

One of the key benefits of every assembly is the opportunity for delegates to participate in formal and informal discussions and meetings with a wide range of representatives from other parliaments and international organisations. Senator Bernardi and Senator Lines were pleased to meet with the Fijian delegation and receive an update on recovery efforts since parts of that country were devastated by Cyclone Winston in February this year. In addition to our demanding schedule at the IPU, the member for Werriwa and I were able and privileged to visit St Paul's School in the northern part of Lusaka and see firsthand how Australian assistance is making a difference to some of Zambia's poorest children.

The Deputy Clerk of the House accompanied the delegation to attend the meeting of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments, which is held in conjunction with the IPU. Details of this meeting are also included in the report.

The IPU assembly provides an opportunity for delegations to meet colleagues and deal with a wide range of issues of mutual interest at both an informal and a formal level. It is also a unique form of professional development for parliamentarians to foster understanding of different parliamentary models and to strengthen parliament-to-parliament relationships. The 134th assembly did not disappoint in this regard.

On behalf of the Australian travelling party, I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the success of this delegation. In particular, I wish to acknowledge the support provided by the Australian Deputy High Commissioner to Zambia, Mr Joel McGregor, who provided a wide range of practical support and local advice to the delegation while we were in Lusaka. His Canberra based colleagues at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Mr Martin Neuhaus and Mrs Natalie Boyes, also provided detailed and useful briefings to the delegation.

I would also like to extend the delegation's thanks to the staff of the Parliamentary Library for providing comprehensive and timely briefing materials prior to departure and to staff in the International and Parliamentary Relations Office for their support.
Finally, I thank my fellow delegates for their thoughtful participation in the assembly's meetings and their commitment to our program of work, which has led to the high regard in which the Australian delegation is held by a range of people associated with the Inter-Parliamentary Union across the globe. I am also thankful for the support we received from the department prior to leaving, from the secretary to our delegation and in the Senate.

I commend the report to the House.

COMMITTEES

Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Joint Committee

Report

Mr BRUCE SCOTT (Maranoa—Deputy Speaker) (10:46): On behalf of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, I present the committee's report from its inquiry into Australia's trade and investment relationships with countries of the Middle East.

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

Mr BRUCE SCOTT: by leave—The committee welcomed this opportunity to examine Australia's relationship with an important trading region and greatly appreciated the contribution of the 57 submissions we received. The committee heard from a diverse range of 47 organisations and individuals during 22 public hearings, including the diplomatic representatives of eight Middle Eastern countries.

Over the past decade Australia's trade and investment relations have grown with many of the 18 countries that make up the Middle East and North Africa region, stretching from Morocco through to Iran.

In 2015 Australia's two-way merchandise trade with the region, with a combined population of more than 420 million people, was worth nearly $15 billion.

With several of these countries now beset by security issues that make trade nearly impossible, it is Australia's exports to six oil-rich Gulf States that dominate much of our trade with the region. In 2015 Australia's two-way trade with the Gulf Cooperation Council's member nations—Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE—was alone worth more than $12 billion.

This growing trade is why the Australian government has been working to restart free trade negotiations with the GCC nations, which stalled in 2009. The trade subcommittee recommends that if negotiations do not recommence this year then the Australian government should actively pursue bilateral agreements on trade, services and investment with the larger Gulf trading partners, such as the UAE, and also beyond the GCC with emerging nations such as Iran, Morocco, Egypt and Jordan.

Government ministers and officials in the UAE and Kuwait raised their interest in the GCC resuming free trade negotiations with Australia with a delegation of committee members who had travelled to the Middle East in December 2015. The delegation's observations on a range of trade issues are reflected in the body of the report.

Australia's two-way trade with its largest trading partner, the UAE, in 2014-15 was worth more than $6 billion. Australia's trade relationship with Saudi Arabia is worth some $2 billion.
Central to this trade relationship has been an extraordinary growth in flights between Australia and the UAE. Code sharing between Qantas and Emirates as well as Etihad's partnership with Virgin Australia has resulted in more than 150 flights per week between Australia's major cities and Dubai or Abu Dhabi.

This has led to premium cargos of chilled Australian lamb, seafood, cheeses, peaches and pears—and more—filling these airliners' holds with the best Australia has to offer. Emirates carried over 100,000 tonnes of air cargo from Australia last year alone, and Etihad more than 30,000 tonnes, much of it fresh produce.

But barriers to trade with the Middle East do exist. While tariffs on most Australian exports into the Gulf States are a manageable five per cent, Morocco, for instance, applies a tariff of nearly 300 per cent on Australian sheep meat. Israel applies no tariff on frozen Australian beef but a 190 per cent tariff on fresh or chilled beef. Governments need to address these trade issues in the Middle East.

Food exports will be a major growth area for Australia, with the Gulf States needing to import nearly 90 per cent of their food. Australian food exports to the Middle East grew from $700 million in 2005 to almost $3 billion in 2014.

Services will be another growth area, with total services trade between Australia and the Middle East worth nearly $5 billion in 2014-15.

The committee heard that Australian service companies and consultants were much in demand in the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar. These countries are building new airports, hotels and metro stations, along with multimillion-dollar sports stadiums, hospitals and railway networks, across their countries.

In a highly competitive global marketplace, Australian universities and colleges are attracting almost 14,000 international students from the Middle East each year. Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Education, which sends almost 9,000 fully funded students to study at universities across Australia, raised concerns about the complexity of the student visa applications.

For this reason the committee welcomes the simplified student visa framework proposed by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection but recommends that the department benchmark its student visa process against international competitors and also undertake a review of the process a year after its introduction to see how it is working.

The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources' counsellor based in the UAE won praise from major food exporters, such as the meat and dairy industries, for helping to open doors for their products. The committee recommends that this program be expanded beyond the UAE and Saudi Arabia with a new agricultural counsellor posted in Iran to assist food exporters gain access to this emerging market.

During public hearings, the committee heard a range of views on the impact of federal, state and territory governments and business associations, all promoting their own commercial interests in the Middle East and saying whether this leads to confusion or trade mission fatigue among Middle Eastern governments and potential clients. The committee recommends a joint government study with state and territory governments of Australia's trade promotion efforts with a view to coordinate a more coherent and unified strategy.

We are optimistic that Australia can build on its strong reputation as a reliable exporter of clean, green food for the Middle East, along with education and other services, and to forge
much closer trade and investment relationships with the region. While Australia's trade with Asia is strong, it would be prudent for Australia to diversify its trade into another fast-growing market such as the Middle East and the North Africa region.

As I commend this report to the chamber I also thank my deputy chair for this report. I also note that members of the committee worked hard on this report. They were all committed to a bipartisan report. There is no dissenting report, and that is sometimes unusual in reports. I thank the deputy chair for her support and I thank all those who participated in bringing forward what I think is a very major report. I look forward in the next parliament to hearing the response from the trade minister on the recommendations. I also want to thank the secretariat for the professional support that they have given us and for the invaluable work that they do. Without their support we, as members of parliament, may struggle to bring forward such a comprehensive report. I thank the chair of the full committee who just joined me—the member for Brisbane. It is also one of her last days, like myself, in this chamber. I thank her for the work she has done as chair of the full committee, for the confidence she has had in me and for bringing forward such a comprehensive report in relation to the trade and investment opportunities with the Middle East.

Ms VAMVAKINOU (Calwell) (10:54): by leave—I just say firstly that I am glad to follow the member for Maranoa. I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for the exceptional collaboration that he and I have shared in this parliament as chair and deputy chair of the Trade Subcommittee. I would also like to take this opportunity to wish him all the very best as he leaves this place at the end of this parliamentary term. He has been a wonderful colleague and an exemplary Deputy Speaker. I would also like to take the opportunity to wish the member Brisbane well. As chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade in this term she has also done an exceptional job in overseeing a committee that is one of the biggest in the parliament and has conducted some of the most comprehensive reports over a period of time, and in particular now.

It is also a pleasure for me to be speaking to the trade subcommittee's report into Australia's trade and investment relationships with the countries of the Middle East. The committee welcomed this opportunity to examine Australia's trade relationship with the Middle East, an important trading region, and the committee greatly appreciated the opportunity for four members of the committee to travel to the region to visit three of the states: the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait. Two of our members went on to Qatar in December of last year. I was a member of the delegation. Our field trip gave us the opportunity to gain valuable insights into the cultural diversity of these Gulf states. We were given the opportunity to appreciate the challenges and discover the opportunities for Australia in growing trade and investment relations with the region.

Our visit also made us aware of some of the impediments that exist in growing our trade opportunities with the Middle East. It is, indeed, this report that addresses some of those impediments and offers recommendations that may help us as we go forward. The committee delegation's views from meeting these countries' ministers, government officials and leading businesspeople, as well as with the Australian heads of mission and Austrade commissioners, are well reflected in this report.

Gulf states such as the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait appreciate the value of and clearly want Australian skills and expertise, particularly in architecture and construction, railways,
green building design, tertiary and vocational education and health, to help them with their own ambitious plans to diversify their economies beyond the oil and gas sector.

A number of markets in the region, such as Saudi Arabia, are developing their vocational education and training sector to diversify their economy, to reduce the dependence on foreign labour, to address domestic skill shortages and to tackle growing unemployment. Indeed, Saudi Arabia is looking to Australia and, in particular—from my home state of Victoria—to Victorian TAFE colleges to help them develop their vocational education sector, which they see as a basis upon which they will build the future skilling of their own very young population. For example, of the nearly 14,000 international students from the Middle East who come to study in Australia each year, almost 9,000 are fully funded by Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Education. The value of education exports for students from the Middle East is estimated to be worth some $700 million—a staggering amount of money. These figures are, of course, figures from the Department of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade.

We also heard that when these graduates of universities across Australia return to the Middle East—and we met many of them—they often become very influential alumni who actively promote Australia and Australian products and services to their colleagues and workplaces. That is why the committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training expands its international counsellor network to include a post in Saudi Arabia where the Saudi government has significant influence on students' choices of study and training. Therefore, building long-term relationships with government agencies will be important for Australia's education sector and will help raise the profile of Australian universities as a desirable destination for not only Saudi Arabian students but also Middle Eastern students.

The Middle East also represents a good source of foreign investment for Australia with some of the world's largest sovereign wealth funds based in the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar. With fast-growing populations and arid conditions, food security is a pressing issue for many Middle Eastern countries. Some sovereign wealth funds such as Qatar's have already invested up to $425 million in Australian agriculture on behalf of the Hassad Food Company. Other funds are also looking for strategic investments in Australian agriculture. That presents many opportunities for us here at home. The committee recommends the Australian government encourage further investment by negotiating double taxation agreements with the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar.

Also from our visit and the public hearings it became clear that many Australian exporters face a number of difficulties in the Middle East, including language and cultural barriers and a lack of understanding of the market and how to conduct business.

A highlight for the committee delegation was seeing firsthand the emergence of well-educated women in Saudi Arabia and meeting many influential and inspiring women working for change but also seeking to challenge the Western perceptions of the place of women in Saudi Arabia. The committee delegation welcomed the chance therefore to discuss a wide range of issues when meeting in Jeddah with the CEO of the Al-Sayedah Khadijah Bint Khawilid Centre for Businesswomen, Dr Bashmah Omair, and prominent business woman Dr Lama Al Sulaiman, who was a candidate in Jeddah's municipal election, the first ever municipal election where women were standing for office and permitted to vote.

The delegation met Dr Al Sulaiman and her colleagues on the historic polling day of 12 December 2015 in the city of Jeddah. Their participation in voting and in standing for office
was the result of efforts by the late King Abdullah, who paved the way for Saudi women to participate in municipal elections both as candidates and as voters. The delegation—the member for Brisbane and the member for Murray, who were with me, in particular—was very pleased to meet with these very prominent women and have a discussion with Dr Al Sulaiman, who was successful in being elected. She won a seat on the Jeddah municipal council.

We enjoyed the opportunity of exchanging information about how we as women can help each other develop our causes in our respective countries. In particular, Dr Al Sulaiman told us that she looked to the history of the empowerment of women in the West and our participation in the workforce and how that has helped us advance our causes here. They look to that as an example and to see how it can be of use to them in their own country. Dr Omair told us her job at the businesswomen's centre was to open the doors for Saudi women in both business and government for women to become more involved in public policy, business and discussing various commercial interests.

The delegation also welcomed the opportunity to discuss the progress of women in Saudi Arabia with women members of the Shura Council. I want to particularly thank Dr Thoraya Ahmed Obaid and Her Excellency Dr Elham Mahjoob Ahmed Hassanain, who were both appointed to the Shura by King Abdullah. Getting to know these women in particular was a valuable experience for us. I would like to thank everyone for the opportunity that was afforded to me and my colleagues to visit the Middle East.

I agree with the chair that there was a bipartisan approach to the trade subcommittee's report on the Middle East. We all agree that this is a very valuable region for Australia's trade prosperity. In particular in my own electorate I have a very large number of people who have settled from the Middle East. Understanding the cultural nuances and the history of the Middle East is very important. It has become obvious that that understanding is very important to Australians who wish to do business in the Middle East. I would like to highlight that. The understanding of cultural nuances is very important. Cultural nuances can be an inhibiting factor if that understanding is not there. The committee noted that quite extensively in its report.

Again, I would like to thank my colleagues. I want to thank our committee secretary, Andrew Dawson, who did a remarkable job in putting together a report that I think—and my colleagues would agree—is a comprehensive document and guide for any Australian business or, indeed, any Australian who is thinking of conducting business in the Middle East. I think we put together a report that is going to stand the test of time. It is very, very useful and it makes recommendations that, if adopted, will go a long way to enhancing our trade capability in the Middle East. I recommend the report. I commend it to the House, and I thank my colleagues

Mr BRUCE SCOTT (Maranoa—Deputy Speaker) (11:05): I move:

That the House take note of the report.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Vasta): In accordance with standing order 39, the debate is adjourned. The resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for a later hour this day.
Reference to Federation Chamber

Mr BRUCE SCOTT (Maranoa—Deputy Speaker) (11:05): I move:
That the order of the day be referred to the Federation Chamber for debate.
Question agreed to.

BILLS

Industry Research and Development Amendment (Innovation and Science Australia) Bill 2016

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Pyne.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House, Minister for Industry and Innovation and Science) (11:05): I move:
That this bill be now read a second time.

Innovation is a key driver of economic growth and prosperity.

But Australia lags behind world leaders like the United Kingdom, Sweden and the United States; we are ranked 17th out of 141 countries on the 2015 Global Innovation Index.

Australia does perform relatively well compared to other OECD nations against some measures of innovation—for example, the quality of our research output.

Of the world’s top one per cent most cited publications, Australia’s share has steadily increased over the past decade from 3.7 per cent in 2005 to 6.9 per cent in 2014. Australia places well above the OECD average of 4.8 per cent and is ranked 7th in the OECD on this measure.

Another Global Innovation Index indicator that we perform well on is the business environment. Australia ranks 12th in the world on this measure, which includes indicators for ease of starting a business, resolving insolvency and paying taxes.

However, there are some weaknesses and in some cases our relative ranking is deteriorating over time.

Australian businesses are not investing enough in research and development. The most recent data on Australian business expenditure on research and development as a proportion of GDP was 1.2 per cent, well below the 2.8 per cent average for the top five OECD countries.

Australia is also not doing enough at commercialising and patenting our research, performing well below the OECD average on a range of measures.

We also need to encourage more of Australia’s researchers and businesses to work together to develop the latest technologies and shape our future industries. The most recent data shows Australia ranks last of 26 OECD countries for the percentage of innovation-active businesses collaborating with universities or other research institutions.

Rapid developments in technology and science are disrupting the way we live, work and do business. They are a challenge but the opportunities are vast. If we are to harness them, we
cannot rely on the old way of doing things. We need to embrace that change. Australia has a proud history of solving problems, coming up with bright ideas and facing challenges.

As the Chief Scientist of Australia Dr Alan Finkel has stated:
As a nation we have to do what we can to make sure there will be new jobs, and the way you do that is by constantly innovating – taking the new ideas that have been generated and turning them into opportunities.
The Prime Minister and I released the National Innovation and Science Agenda in December 2015. It is a transformational plan to ensure Australia utilises innovation and science to embrace the future and shape it, instead of just responding to it. It will drive jobs, growth and investment in Australia.

One of the key pillars of the National Innovation and Science Agenda is 'government as an exemplar'. When it comes to innovation, governments have often opted for the easy way out, to continue with the way things have been done rather than embrace new opportunities. But we want the Australian government to lead by example. We will make the cultural and technological changes needed: the changes needed to put innovation at the heart of how we operate. We want to be an exemplar for innovation in business. To start with, we need to put in effective governance and oversight for our $9.7 billion annual investment in science, research and innovation.

Leading innovative countries like the UK and Sweden have established institutions like UK Innovate and Vinnova that manage coherent, coordinated, national strategies for innovation. These institutions support high levels of public sector research translation for economic and social benefit. In many of these leading countries, the delivery of national innovation strategies is the responsibility of an independent agency, which operates at arm's length from government.

This bill will create a new Innovation and Science Australia board.

The new board will replace the current Innovation Australia board and redefine the activities of that board. It will continue to be chaired by Mr Bill Ferris, an active and persuasive advocate for innovation to successive Australian governments. The bill also creates a new board position of Deputy Chair, which will be filled by Dr Alan Finkel during his term as Australia's Chief Scientist.

The current board members of Innovation Australia will continue as board members for Innovation and Science Australia. They include some of the best minds in innovation and science in Australia today. The talent on this board represents innovators and entrepreneurs with proven records of success.

Innovation and Science Australia will continue the good work of Innovation Australia but will gain additional, more strategic advisory responsibilities. I have been working with the current board to set an ambitious work plan for the first 12 months of operation of Innovation and Science Australia.

Innovation and Science Australia will provide strategic guidance and momentum to the government's National Innovation and Science Agenda. It will work across government and will directly engage international, business and community sectors to improve the national innovation system's overall performance.
This will involve undertaking periodic audits of Australia's science, research and innovation system to assess and make recommendations on alignment with the government's priorities. The board will identify gaps and better understand the activity in the science, research and innovation system and the impact of whole-of-government investment.

The board will also develop, for government consideration, a long-term, 15-year National Innovation and Science Plan, to be informed by the audit that I have just mentioned. This plan will identify science, research and innovation investment priorities and specific areas for policy and program reform.

Innovation and Science Australia will review the adequacy, capacity and condition of Australia's innovation system on a regular basis. These reviews will inform any updates to the National Innovation and Science Agenda and improve government policies and programs.

As part of promoting public discussion, Innovation and Science Australia will be able to commission and publish research, including publishing the board's advice to government when the board wishes to do so.

Innovation and Science Australia will promote investment in industry, innovation, science and research in Australia, including showcasing successful innovators, entrepreneurs and researchers. To make this happen, the board through its membership will establish strong and extensive business and community links.

Similar to other Commonwealth statutory bodies, the board will develop a Statement of Intent in response to the government's Statement of Expectations. It is government practice for ministers to issue a Statement of Expectations to a statutory body to provide greater clarity about the government policies and priorities it is expected to observe in conducting its operations. The Statement of Expectations and the Statement of Intent recognise the independence of Innovation and Science Australia's statutory functions.

This bill will mean that Innovation and Science Australia will have the flexibility, capability and capacity to provide strategic advice on all industry, innovation, science and research matters. It will improve the outcomes of the Australian government's substantial investment in science, research and innovation. All Australians stand to benefit if we can deliver on our potential.

Aside from establishing Innovation and Science Australia, the bill also provides a transparent and accountable mechanism for implementing Commonwealth spending decisions on industry, innovation, science and research activities through legislative instruments. This mechanism has been structured to support collaboration across the whole of government on these activities, which is a key concern being addressed by the National Innovation and Science Agenda.

The ability for the Commonwealth to prescribe programs and identify operational elements of spending activities in subordinate legislation in this way provide the level of flexibility for the government to be agile and meet changing demands whilst ensuring its activities and programs are effective, robust, sustainable, and subject to parliamentary oversight.

Innovation and science are critical to Australia's future. We can boost Australia's innovation capacity by better coordinating our significant investment in industry, innovation, science and research activities. This bill puts Australia's leading innovators, entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, commercialisers, scientists and researchers onto that task. It will point the
way for turning great ideas and world-class science into thriving businesses and world-first innovations.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

**Competition and Consumer Amendment (Country of Origin) Bill 2016**

**First Reading**

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Pyne.

Bill read a first time.

**Second Reading**

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House, Minister for Industry and Innovation and Science) (11:16): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Competition and Consumer Amendment (Country of Origin) Bill 2016 is designed to provide more clarity in terms of the safe harbour provisions within the Australian Consumer Law.

This bill forms part of the legislative reform package for country-of-origin labelling that this government has brought forward. Another integral element of this reform package is the Country of Origin Food Labelling Information Standard 2016, which is to be tabled separately—and I know the member for Adelaide, who is at the table, is keenly waiting for that tabling to occur!

Ms Kate Ellis interjecting—

Mr PYNE: Before I detail the specific amendments that this bill makes, I want to explain the objectives of the country-of-origin labelling reform package that the government is championing.

These reforms will provide consumers with clearer and easier to find country-of-origin information so that they can make informed purchasing decisions.

Inquiries and research conducted in recent years show that the current framework is largely ineffective in meeting its objectives, particularly for food. Some origin labels and rules are still unclear, confusing or unhelpful to consumers and business.

We have bipartisan support for this reform package because this is an issue that has vexed parliamentarians of all political persuasions for many years.

The government's reform package has had the benefit of extensive consultations and discussions with businesses, the community, and their representatives—as well as state and territory governments and our overseas trading partners. It is particularly important to note that, through this process, we have secured broad state and territory support for these reforms.

We take this opportunity to thank the thousands of people who took the time and trouble to contribute their views, and to work with us during the development of these reforms. Your participation has helped us achieve our goal of providing Australian consumers with the country-of-origin labelling information they value the most without imposing excessive costs on business. Today is the major breakthrough Australians have long been waiting for.
As part of our reforms, the mandatory country-of-origin labelling requirements for food will be enhanced, and moved from the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code to an information standard under the Australian Consumer Law.

As Australians, we want to know whether the food we buy is from the country we live in or from somewhere else—and, if it was made or packaged here, how much of it was grown here by our farmers.

Under the new information standard, many foods found on Australian retail shelves will be required to include a kangaroo-in-a-triangle logo if they have been made, produced or grown in Australia.

The new labels for food will also include a bar chart and words to indicate the proportion of Australian ingredients in the food. Research has shown that this is the most important piece of origin information for consumers when it comes to food.

Through this package of reforms, consumers will be able to trust that claims such as 'made in' and 'product of' are applied consistently. Businesses will be able to use these terms with greater certainty, and will be less inclined to make meaningless origin claims like 'made in Australia from local and imported ingredients'.

These changes will give consumers a clearer understanding about where their food comes from, while ensuring Australian businesses receive the information and support they need as they transition to the new rules.

This reform also meets a key commitment of the agricultural competitiveness white paper, released last year.

The government will provide the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission with additional funding of $4.2 million over five years to undertake compliance and enforcement activities in relation to the new requirements. The government has also agreed to fund a $15.2 million information campaign to ensure consumers and businesses understand the revised framework.

The Australian Consumer Law prohibits false or misleading representations regarding the claims made of the origin of goods.

To provide certainty for businesses, the law provides 'safe harbour' defences for country-of-origin claims where goods meet certain criteria. If goods satisfy the relevant criteria, the business is deemed to not have engaged in misleading or deceptive conduct or made a false or misleading representation under consumer law.

This bill will:

- make it clearer that minor processes such as packaging, slicing or canning would not be sufficient to justify origin claims like 'made in', consistent with consumer expectations and international norms;
- remove unnecessary burdensome or redundant provisions; and
- amend and align remaining provisions with the new information standard.

Inclusion of changes to these safe harbour defences in the package of reforms is broadly supported by all industry sectors. Businesses will find it easier to make reliable country-of-origin representations through a clarified substantial transformation test and the removal of the burdensome and capricious production cost test. Consumers will also welcome the
changes with the safe harbour defences that make it clearer that goods cannot be claimed to be made here just because their form or appearance has changed and they have been packaged here.

I would like to acknowledge the detailed and exhaustive consultations undertaken by my department and the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources during the various stages of this reform process. I thank them for their hard work and effort. I also wish to thank once more the many businesses, peak industry groups and individuals who invested precious resources and time in responding to the questionnaires and participating in the detailed discussions during the consultation phase. Finally, I wish to acknowledge my colleague and friend the Deputy Prime Minister, Barnaby Joyce, for his long commitment to reform in this important area of public policy.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility Bill 2016

Returned from Senate

Message received from the Senate returning the bill and acquainting the House that the Senate has agreed to the bill as amended by the House at the request of the Senate and without further requests.

Omnibus Repeal Day (Autumn 2015) Bill 2015

Consideration of Senate Message

Bill returned from the Senate with amendments.

Ordered that the amendments be considered immediately.

Omnibus Repeal Day (Autumn 2015) Bill 2015

Senate Amendments—

(1) Clause 2, page 2 (table item 4), omit "Schedule 4", substitute "Schedules 3A and 4".
(2) Page 13 (after line 28), after Schedule 3, insert:

Schedule 3A—Infrastructure and Regional Development

Infrastructure Australia Act 2008

1 Section 39C

Repeal the section, substitute:

39C Annual report

The annual report prepared by the Board and given to the Minister under section 46 of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 for a period must also include:

(a) details of any directions given to Infrastructure Australia by the Minister under subsection 6(1) of this Act during the period; and

(b) details of each method of preparing cost benefit analyses approval of which was in force under subsection 5B(3) of this Act at any time during the period, including the weight required to be assigned to each factor and the method required be taken into account.

Ms LEY (Farrer—Minister for Health, Minister for Sport and Minister for Aged Care) (11:23): I move:
That the amendments be agreed to.

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

Question agreed to.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL’S SPEECH

Address-in-Reply

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

To His Excellency the Governor-General

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY—

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

Mr PALMER  (Fairfax) (11:23): In my maiden speech in this parliament, I stated clearly that I do not believe, and our party does not support, the development of professional politicians. I believe that a parliament should be a forum where citizens serve and bring the benefit of their life experiences, whatever they are, to the important issues of the day for the benefit of the nation.

Now, at the end of the 44th Parliament, it is time to reflect on what our party has contributed to the national debate and what our achievements are. Unfortunately, politics relies attacks on individuals and not on sound policy discussion. Rather than endlessly attacking individuals in parliament, debate in this chamber should focus on the agenda for the nation. Personal integrity is an important quality that needs to be at the very heart of public service. Any person seeking public office must realise that it is not about him but about service for the greater good. In this place all members must repress their own personal interests for the benefit of the nation and the citizens of Australia who elect them and put Australia's interest before their own.

True to my maiden speech, having concluded my service in the 44th Parliament of this House of Representatives, I will not seek further election to this House at the next election. I will use this opportunity to address a number of important issues and set out our party's achievements in the 44th Parliament. Palmer United will contest Senate elections in every Australian state. Palmer United's voting record has been clear in the 44th Parliament and that is why the electorate needs to judge at the coming election. I have been continually personally attacked over last three years by centrally controlled media, which is, by its very support for the two-party system, a danger for democracy in this country. All of the so-called scandals and media questions have amounted, in hindsight, to nothing. And the same is true about the current lies and criticisms, which I will deal with later in this speech.

The status quo of this country is threatened by any third-party political force in politics and will mobilise itself in many ways on both sides politics—the union movement, the banks and the Public Service—to seek to destroy diversity and public debate in our political system. This is the real reason for unprecedented political attacks against me personally and the stand that we took as a party against the 2014 budget. I and our Senate voting positions have rarely
been subject to proper recognition, including the contributions that the Palmer United Party has made to Australia. The three main attacks against me personally related to my private business—not my service in this chamber—which are 100-per-cent owned by me, have no mum and dad investors, and no bank debt. In my electorate of Fairfax, they attack me over Coolum Resort, which is still operating and employing people and was to be closed permanently in 2011. Campbell Newman and the LNP state government refused to allow it to be redeveloped, which would have created over 10,000 jobs on the Sunshine Coast. As a result of 10 years hard work, I secured over $12 billion investment from China, which has resulted in the employment of tens of thousands of Australians in the construction of China's largest investment outside of China. This investment is 15 per cent of China's total investment in Australia over the last 10 years. It should not be forgotten that such an investment has made a real contribution to our economy.

More recently, I have personally been criticised with respect to Queensland Nickel. In 2009, when the price of nickel was $7.50 a pound and BHP had decided to close the refinery, every Australian should have asked themselves: would they have invested their life savings to save over 2,500 jobs in Townsville? I know the member for Herbert would not have. Over the last seven years, would they have invested $4 billion to keep 2,500 families employed? Then, over the last two years, when the nickel price had dropped to around $3.50 a pound, would any citizen have been happy to continue to lose $6 million a month for the families of Townsville? Would anyone have given over $2.5 million of their personal savings so that everyone could be paid at Christmas and keep the refinery open? These are the decisions I made in the affirmative. Why? Because I have a strong and real commitment to North Queensland. The Liberal Party inspired report by the administrator friend of the member for Herbert is untrue. I personally and my companies have never received one dollar of Queensland Nickel's own funds, nor has any person employed ever been dismissed and nor were any workers' entitlements refused by me or anyone that I employ.

The allegations against me have been made for an improper purpose. On 1 March 2016, the administrator stated that, unless he received $10 million that week, he was going to close the refinery and sack all the workforce. He made the same demand to the Queensland government. On 3 March 2016, the joint venture partners, Qni Resources Pty Ltd and Qni Metals, 100 per cent privately owned companies of mine, resolved to appoint a new company that was not in administration as the manager of the joint venture. I personally put up some of my private assets and secured a $23 million line of credit, instead of the $10 million that the administrator was seeking, and I planned to make that available to the new manager to keep the refinery open and the workforce employed. Under the Queensland joint venture agreement, the old manager of Queensland Nickel, on appointment of the new manager, was required to transfer the joint venture bank account, together with other assets and general approvals that Queensland Nickel had, to give the new manager the ability to run the refinery.

The millions of dollars in joint venture bank accounts and debtors, when added the $23 million that I had personally arranged through my personal efforts, would have allowed the business to continue to employ 550 people. John Park decided that he would not transfer the bank account to the joint venture, as he was legally required to do. Park treated the joint venture fund, which was not Queensland Nickel's money, as his own personal piggy bank. The allegations made by Mr Park are completely false. The allegations made against me by
political parties, which I have endured over the last three years or since I have been elected to
the House of Representatives, are also false.

In the resources industry in Queensland, 22,000 jobs have been lost; in South Australia,
14,000 jobs are threatened. The government has done nothing and proposes to do nothing.
Meanwhile, the Chinese government has injected 30 billion yuan into the metals processing
industry in China, and the Canadian government gives free electricity to its metal processing
industry. How can Australian industries compete with such things? Why does the government
want to destroy this country and its infrastructure? Because they are incompetent.

The Treasurer becomes more and more like a public servant. Last night's budget talks about
jobs growth, but it has no substance and no policy. The average Australian family pays
$20,000 per year, over $1 million in their working lives, but they cannot access the savings
that they pay into superannuation to buy a home, to care for their children or to deal with
some disaster, yet the Liberal fund managers make margins on their funds each year and the
union delegates benefit from managing their funds in superannuation. Palmer United will
fight hard to get the balance of power in the Senate to protect the savings of Australian
families and make them available to them during their lifetime rather than when they are
dead.

Even before I had taken my seat in parliament, then Prime Minister Abbott, in one of his
first decisions in cabinet, adopted the Palmer United policy that we took to the 2013 election
to ban political lobbyists from holding office in the Liberal Party. Then, on behalf of the
Palmer United Party, I introduced a bill to stop the GrainCorp takeover. Following the
pressure generated by this takeover, the then Treasurer, Joe Hockey, made the correct
decision to stop the GrainCorp takeover. On 25 June 2014, I hosted the former Vice President
of the United States, Mr Al Gore, in the Great Hall of parliament, where I announced that
Palmer United senators would vote to save the Climate Change Authority, the Clean Energy
Finance Corporation and ARENA, the Australian Renewable Energy Authority. If Palmer
United had not saved them then, the Prime Minister could not have changed the government
policy to support them in 2016. I also announced, against the wishes of the Abbott
government, that Palmer United senators would vote in the Senate to abolish the carbon tax
to ensure that the savings in the reduction of the carbon tax would be passed on to consumers
of electricity and gas. Palmer United votes in the Senate were essential for those decisions. The
Parliamentary Library has estimated that the savings to consumers by Palmer United staying
firm and ensuring savings were passed on were $1.6 billion. Palmer United effectively
reduced electricity prices across Australia by 10 per cent. Palmer United provided the key
votes to abolish the mining tax, to free up investment in Australian projects.

Palmer United led the charge against the 2014 budget and highlighted to all Australians
that Australia's debt was amongst the lowest in the OECD. In 2014 we campaigned for pens
instead of pencils to be used in future federal elections to mark ballot papers. Palmer United
worked hard to stop the GP co-payment, which would have made visits to the doctor
unaffordable for our disadvantaged and elderly population, and our votes in the Senate were
crucial. I remember giving a speech in the House about education. Palmer United stopped
changes to universities, much to the disappointment of the then education minister. The 2014
budget had over $10 billion in cuts to social security, requiring unemployed people under the
age of 30 to wait six months for the dole. Decisive action by our party ensured that these
measures would not be passed and therefore not implemented by the government. Palmer United saved the low income super contribution for over two million Australians, keeping $1 billion in their pockets. It is pleasing to see that the Treasurer has adopted this policy and continued it in the budget last night—only changing the name to claim credit.

The Prime Minister believes in innovation, but innovation does not put food on the table. We voted in the Senate to keep the schoolkids bonus, saving Australians a further $1 billion a year to support their children when they go to school. It is a disgrace that neither Labor nor Liberal party is going to the election with a policy to maintain this bonus for our families. We kept the low income support contribution, of which $1.8 million is paid to Australians each year. It was our votes that did that in the Senate.

We need in this country more love and forgiveness and more compassion for those less fortunate than ourselves. A Palmer United deal with the government freed over 436 children and families from detention. We freed 1,500 people in total from Christmas Island. Following an arrangement with the then immigration minister, Palmer United supported legislation in the Senate that resulted in 30,000 detention cases finally being resolved. It was the Palmer United initiative which resulted in the introduction of the SHEV, the Safe Haven Enterprise Visa. Palmer United made 15 changes and amendments in the Senate on Direct Action legislation and passed it. We have watched and seen how Direct Action has succeeded in reducing Australia's emissions. As part of the deal, the Climate Change Authority was to conduct and is still conducting a study into the introduction of an ETS in Australia. Palmer United kept hope alive for the introduction of an ETS in Australia. The CCA plans to report to the parliament after the next election.

Palmer United supported changes to pensions for all veterans and ex-service men and women over 55. Palmer United initiated by agreement with the government, the opposition and others for three parliamentary inquiries: one into trade investment and growth, one into the Australia Fund and one into the Queensland government. Palmer United acted through me to introduce a bill in respect of the foreign death penalty. We have protected maritime workers' jobs, and our votes in the Senate were crucial in keeping Qantas Australian-owned. In the Senate, we stopped changes to the income tax threshold and the extension of the pension age to 70. We saved jobs in the Australian offshore gas industry—you can look at the voting record on that in the Senate. Palmer United successfully voted against slashing university research grants.

Earlier this year I delivered a speech on gender equality, and the following month I asked the Prime Minister two questions pointing out that there needed to be a minimum of 40 per cent minority gender on all Commonwealth bodies. On 8 March 2016, the Minister for Employment, Senator Michaelia Cash, announced that the government would commit to increasing the target to 50 per cent representation across all Australian government boards, with a minimum of 40 per cent on each board, implementing Palmer United's policy.

You do not always need the numbers. Good ideas will be recognised by those around you, if they are adopted. With others, it is real recognition. Time remains one of the most important things we have. It does not matter how much money you have. We are all prisoners in time. That is why our nation needs to respect all those who serve in this place and give up part of their lives for our country. This is your time, whoever you are and wherever you are. This is your opportunity now and tomorrow. Do not be dragged down by the past. Do not be
held back by the judgement of other people. The Bible tells us that we should not sit in judgement of others. Do not judge others, as we have our own race to run, and I believe life is full of opportunities.

I would like to thank my daughters, Mary, Lucy and Emily, and my son, Michael, who are an inspiration in my life. I feel that with the love and support of my wife, Anna, I could contribute further to our great country.

Public service is not just about parliamentary or government service; there are thousands of Australians serving our country all over Australia. I hope I can go on serving our country in the future. Courage remains one of the important things that I most admire in life. We need to have courage to let go and to move on. I believe I have that courage today, in leaving the House of Representatives, satisfied with what Palmer United has done, and knowing that it would be a different Australia if we had not stopped the 2014 budget and the Newman government in Queensland. We need to praise the incorruptibility of our public officials, the integrity of our marriages and the worth of our people. It is ideas that matter—governments may come and go, but ideas go on forever. It is ideas that will shape this nation; it is ideas through time, when we are gone and forgotten, in history, in commerce and in politics, that capture the consciousness of the nation and will endure. It is ideas that endure when all else is gone. We need to unite this nation we serve and we love, to discover our future, to share our trials and tribulations, to overcome adversity and to pull together for the common good under the Southern Cross. As a wise man once said: 'On earth, God's work must truly be our own.'

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): I call the honourable member for Murray. I understand this is to be her last speech in this parliament.

Dr STONE (Murray) (11:38): Thank you. It has been almost 20 years to the day since I stood in this place to make my maiden speech. When I reread that first speech, I can see much has been achieved, but the key challenges remain. I do leave unfinished business, but I guess there will never be a time when it is possible to say the job is done. What I can say, however, is that, over all the years, on every day I have striven to make a difference and to create more opportunities and more choices for the people I love—the people of Murray. I now pass the baton to Duncan McGauchie, who, like me, was born in the west of the electorate, on the sweeping plains. I hope he will grace this chamber in the next parliament.

My first official duty as the member for Murray was to deliver on a promise to open the new Corop toilets. Corop is a great little town of about 100 people, and they offered to vote for me if I officially opened their new public conveniences. So it was a deal. I am not sure if that constitutes bribery and corruption, but we all had a great day. Some people say it was all downhill from there, but it was a great day.

The key challenge remaining in Murray is the securing of the water supply for northern Victoria—the Goulburn, Murray and Loddon valleys. In 1996, I talked about the rivers of milk and cream and the cornucopia of fruits, grains and vegetables that followed from the establishment of the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District—the biggest irrigation system in Australia, bigger than Tasmania. In 1996, water was also the key issue, and I said in my first speech:

We agree with the COAG principles for the future management of water resources, but cross-basin strategies need dedicated resources and public and private sector coordination.
Sadly, those responsible for implementing the Murray-Darling Basin Plan in the last government lost sight of the triple-bottom-line imperative of balancing community, economy and environmental outcomes. Now agribusiness across the southern basin struggles to access enough water to sustain its farms—as my friend and neighbour across the Murray, the member for Farrer, knows only too well.

Communities are reeling through population loss. Families and individuals are in great distress, with some taking their lives. Some of my hardest moments to bear have been trying to comfort those wives and children bereaved. What is also tragic is the fact that we are jeopardising Australia's capacity to take advantage of the superb new food trade opportunities that our brilliant trade minister has created with China, Korea and Japan.

Irrigators must have access to affordable and sufficient water to survive. It is their hard work, innovation and investment on farm which supplies the more than 23 food factories that underpin our regional economy. Our employment, our transport sector, our social services and our very population sizes in hundreds of small communities are a consequence of that hard work on farm and at those 23 food factories. They also, of course, contribute to Australia's export performance and our transition to the dining boom.

The threat to water security was triggered by an astonishing state government decision, in the middle of the millennium drought, to pipe the irrigators' water to Melbourne to ease their restrictions. At the time, irrigators and dozens of country towns were also on tight restrictions, but a handful of locals proposed the North-South Pipeline—without consultation and without the community knowing—offering the irrigators' water in return for more state government spending on its own irrigation infrastructure. Mr Ross McPherson, a local newspaper proprietor and an instigator of this debacle, must now bitterly regret its legacy. I fronted a massive community effort driving to shut down this pipeline. We succeeded in 2009, but, by then, the idea of raiding a highly secure Goulburn-Murray system's water had well and truly taken hold. It seemed easy prey. We were in the middle of the worst drought on record and farmers were being forced to sell their water to placate the banks.

I thank all of those individuals for their tireless efforts—arrests and legal action did not deter them—as we fought to shut down that pipeline. Jan Beer deserves a medal. She and so many others now dedicate their efforts to challenging the constraints strategy, designed to create man-made floods every 2½ years in the Murray, Goulburn and Murrumbidgee systems. This strategy would damage the environment and the economy. It is another battle we have to win and another Murray-Darling Basin Plan effort that has to be fixed.

Every day for the last three years, I have worked with our irrigators to save the system and, hence, the local economy. The shutdown program, referred to euphemistically as its 'modernisation', was described, just a few months ago, in the official mid-term review, as based on 'false assumptions' and having no social or economic impact assessments built into the officially secret business plan. I thank this government for now taking a close interest in this disaster, given it is the Commonwealth's $1 billion, committed by the Gillard government, that is paying for stage 2 of this project. I know our Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, is deeply interested in getting this right, and I thank him for that. I want to acknowledge some of the water warriors of the region—Alison Coustou, Wade Northausen, Rob and Marilyn Danielli, and the most expert and dedicated Chris Harrison, and there are so many more.
I won the seat of Murray in uncommon circumstances. It was the Nationals' safest, most iconic seat. In 1996 in Murray there were no Liberal branches and virtually no members—there were about five. There were no campaign committees and no campaign funds raised and more than 100 booths to staff over 20,000 square kilometres. And I had nine weeks to do it! The Liberal Party gave me $7,000 for how-to-vote cards and warned me not to ask for more, because this was a three-cornered contest and we had to win the Labor seats to take government. I totally agreed with this. Despite Labor preferencing the Nationals, the people of Murray put their trust in me as the first woman and the first Liberal to hold the seat. I committed to take up our challenges and to always put the survival of my constituents first. I could not have known in 1996 how often I would need to stand alone with my communities to fight for our future. But every day it has been an honour, a privilege and a joy to represent Murray.

Within weeks of the 1996 election, we were faced with the tragedy of the Port Arthur massacre and my hunting, shooting, farming men of Murray wondered what on earth they had done. They had just elected a Liberal and a woman, so how could she possibly be interested in defending their rights as law-abiding gun owners? I went home and I took off the wall a photo of my then 12-year-old son Kirk, rifle in hand, kneeling behind two wild pigs, a fox and a little line of shot rabbits. I put this photo near the front door of my office, and it was smooth sailing after that. We were all on common ground.

Then we had to deal with what still looks like one of the first acts of phytoterrorism in Australia. I had been battling to keep New Zealand fresh apples out of Australia because of the risk of the terrible bacterial disease apple-pear fire blight. The Goulburn and Murray valleys grow most of the country's apples and pears. In 1997, a New Zealand scientist flew into Australia for a one-day visit, took himself to Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens, plucked a bent twig of a cotoneaster hanging over a path, pocketed it and flew back to New Zealand. He did not contact the Victorian agricultural department or anyone else, that we know of. At a New Zealand press conference, he then declared to the world that we, Australia, had this disease and he had the proof in his pocket. Immediately, all of Victoria's apple and pear orchards were shut down, strict quarantine was imposed, hundreds of thousands of trees were inspected, a season's income was lost, millions of dollars were spent—all with not a sign of fire blight, of course! So we cranked up the battle to keep fresh apples from our shores. We rallied and we burnt boxes. Our communities were at the barricades and we begged Coles and Woolworths to behave in the country's interest. The great news is that we still do not have this disease in Australia and you are very hard pressed to find an apple from a fire blighted country for sale in Australia.

There are other triumphs from that time. People said that the federal Goulburn Valley Highway would never be duplicated. It snaked through one of the safest coalition seats in the country. But there were deaths from accidents nearly every year as our great B-doubles and huge transports tail-to-tailed each other through the fog. I still have John Howard's March 1998 press announcement of the Goulburn Valley Highway duplication, and now we have the safest, finest freeway between any region and the ports in the country. Only a bypass around Shepparton is left to go.

When I became a member, we had some of the worst bulk-billing rates in the country, our doctors were ageing, it was hard to find replacements and 70 per cent were recruited from
overseas. Then John Howard's health minister, Michael Wooldridge, delivered a brilliant new strategy. He would establish rural clinical schools, at least one in every state, partnering with a medical facility. The expectation for Victoria was that this would go to Ballarat, Bendigo or Geelong. I argued that if you overlooked Shepparton you were ignoring a region where a trip to Melbourne was not easy, where we had per capita the most refugees, Indigenous peoples, communities without doctors or bulk-billing, accident prone farm and manufacturing sectors, and an ageing veterans community. So the right decision was made. The University of Melbourne Rural Clinical School dental training and medical clinic in Shepparton has changed the face of medicine and allied health in the electorate. We now have some of the highest bulk-billing rates in Australia, and I am sure the Minister for Health, who is at the table, is interested in that. Students from the Parkville campus compete to spend training time in the Goulburn and Murray valleys, and its graduates are now returning as dentists, GPs and specialists to our towns and hospitals. This has been a real triumph. Obtaining federal funding for a new local La Trobe university campus has also made a great difference to local access to tertiary studies, especially for our mature aged women and our ethnic minorities who cannot go to Melbourne alone to study.

We have received millions in federal funding for new trade training facilities and schools in Numurkah, Nathalia, Yarrawonga and Echuca, as well as one in Shepparton to start soon. We have gone from a place where people queued for a long time for aged care beds to an electorate that is now well served. We have had federal funding to rebuild or upgrade hospitals, bush nursing centres or aged care facilities in Shepparton, Moorooduc, Murchison, Euroa, Numurkah, Boort, Tongala, Tatura, Yarrawonga, Cobram, Nathalia, Pyramid Hill, Echuca, Violet Town, Dingee and Rochester. Federal funds built one of the country's best Indigenous aged care facilities in Shepparton, which is managed and run by our Rumbalara community.

In other proud achievements, I am pleased to say our mobile phone black spots are almost gone, and most of our old wooden bridges and gravel roads have been upgraded or have been replaced. The Roads to Recovery and road black spot funding—again continued in last night's budget—have been a lifesaver for my five local councils. Those direct payments from the Commonwealth to local councils have been a godsend.

Virtually every war memorial in every one of my communities has been refurbished or newly built to honour the sacrifice of the volunteers and national servicemen who left from Murray to fight for our country. We have seven Victoria Cross recipients from Murray. We will shortly have fitting memorials for each of these VCs in their home towns. In one small town, Euroa, they have three Victoria Cross awardees. I want to pay my respects to our veterans and their families, who in older age are often experiencing serious health problems. Our volunteer legatees who care for veteran families do a marvellous job. I am proud to be the patron of the Goulburn Valley Vietnam Veterans Association, the Darwin Defenders and the Goulburn Valley National Servicemen's Association.

I was angered at the media response when our Howard government did what was right in 2003, using the best information at hand at the time, when we joined the coalition of the willing to help end the Saddam Hussein regime. No decision to commit Australian troops to war is ever easy or universally popular, but a journalist thundered that this had been a decision, as per usual, made by politicians with no skin in the game. 'None of our sons or
daughters would be marching off to war’, he said. Well, my son, an officer in the Australian infantry, was one to serve in Iraq. This place has many ex-service men and women serving as senators and members, and it has many with more than one Defence Force son or daughter. The cynicism and limited inquiry of Australia’s media is often a great disappointment.

It is also disappointing that the media invariably fails to report on the bipartisanship which is a feature of our committee work and official international and other friendship groups in this place. So much is achieved here through those bipartisan cooperations between like-minded members and senators. But the public is usually only familiar with the cut and thrust of question time. That is all they are fed. They think that all we do all day is throw rocks at one another. This is not engendering a healthy regard or respect for our nation’s parliament—one of the best managed in one of the most stable democracies on earth. The deep-rooted cynicism of the public about their parliament and the motivations of their elected representatives, I think, is deeply concerning. Ultimately, it could even put our democracy at risk.

On the other hand, I am hugely grateful for some print, television, radio and online journalists who have done their very best to bring the issues of rural Australia and the southern Murray-Darling Basin to the notice of the nation. Mike O’Loughlin, or ‘Locco’, of 3SR, those at Star FM and One FM, Warwick Long and Jan Deane of ABC Goulburn Murray, Rob Harris of News Limited, Natalie Kotsios of The Weekly Times, the Riverine Herald, Kyabram Free Press, Numurkah Leader, The Euroa Gazette, The Loddon Times, Cobram and Yarrawonga papers, and, of course, the team at Shepparton's Win TV—I thank them all. All have been crucial in getting the message across. I thank them for their professional efforts and their friendships.

It was the national and local media support which helped galvanise the public’s action in response to the threatened closure of SPC, Shepparton Preserving Co. This entailed the potential loss of 800 jobs from the factory floor and thousands of local jobs directly linked to the last fruit preserver and manufacturer in Australia. I will never forget the sound and sight of lines of bulldozers pushing over the orchards, row after row of prime full-bearing trees—you could just make them out through the dust. Without SPC, their manufacturing varieties had no markets. Hundreds of hectares were cleared. The future seemed hopeless. I knew that saving the jobs and this icon industry had to come before every other consideration. The public joined our fight and said ‘no’. They did not want to see SPC fail. They wanted to buy wholesome Australian food, and they would even pay a little more. In March 2014, when the balloon went up, the public doubled their SPC buys in a couple of weeks. It was a huge and sustained response. With the help of the Denis Napthine state government, the decision to put an innovation grant on the table, matched with more from the owner, Coca-Cola Amatil, SPC was able to buy new equipment and to introduce new products. We are now ready to meet the greater opportunities presented by our three new free trade agreements and a domestic market ever more hungry for authentic Australian-grown, healthy, clean, green food. So we have won.

The calibre of the leadership of SPC and its workers’ commitment in 2014 must also be properly acknowledged in their achieving the changes to the Anti-Dumping Commission’s culture. They had not always worked in our national interest. SPC’s case against all of the
Italian canned tomatoes being dumped by exporters was originally rejected. The ADC had refused to consider the EU subsidies poured into the Italian industry, which also depended on exploited refugee labour living and working in slave-like conditions. SPC requested and paid for a review. The new ADC reconsidered the case. Now, appropriate anti-dumping duties have been imposed on all of those Italian exporters. These changes have also delivered a better deal for Australian manufacturers across the board—for example, our steelmakers. I am proud that SPC, particularly then CEO Peter Kelly, doggedly persisted in challenging the wrong decisions. I am proud to have been a part of these efforts.

I want to acknowledge the richness of the cultural diversity of the Murray electorate. We have welcomed wave upon wave of migrants, including many refugees, since the 1920s. I am so pleased to have facilitated the arrival of the first Congolese, having convinced Philip Ruddock, then Minister for Immigration, that we should settle some of our new arrivals in the regions and rural Australia rather than keep loading them into the suburbs. For months we planned and organised housing, jobs, schools and medical services for 10 families of Congolese, each with about 10 children. These families have thrived and have had other refugees from Africa join them.

I want to tell you about one family headed by a single father. It is an incredible story of endurance, survival and family loyalty amongst the very young. It is about the story of the Maulidi family. In 2000, when their Congolese village was attacked by rebels, the Maulidi family, in the confusion, was separated, with the mother and one of the twins, Neema, heading in one direction and the father and the other five children, including twin Fitina, escaping in the other. The father and the children eventually arrived in a refugee camp in Tanzania. Six years later, they were accepted as refugees to be settled in Shepparton. Sadly, the mother had been killed in the raid. This was not known to the remaining family when they arrived in Shepparton. Fortunately, the 14-year-old uncle of the children, the father's younger brother, Macinda, had fled from the village attack with his three-year-old niece—one of the twins. For five years he kept the little Neema alive, travelling through five countries on foot, avoiding the wars, scavenging for food and finding shelter and clothing as they searched for the family. Macinda then heard that they were in Kenya, so he made his way there with the little girl, but in Nairobi he heard that the Maulidi family had just left for Australia.

Soon after their arrival in Shepparton, the dad asked the principal of his children's new school—Julie Cobbledick of St Brendan's—to see if she could help him find his lost wife and little girl, Neema. Via the excellent work of the Red Cross and DFAT Macinda and Neema were soon located in a refugee camp in Kenya. Sadly, of course, their mother had been killed years before. So Neema, by then a tiny eight-year-old, was soon reunited with her family and her twin sister, Fitina, in Shepparton. Macinda, the young uncle, was then also accepted as a refugee and was reunited with his older brother—the family household head—and his nephews and nieces in Shepparton. This year, Fitina was one of the winners of the ABC's Heywire competition. She aspires to study medicine. Her twin sister, Neema, has almost caught up in size with her sister and is planning her future, and older brother Mongo is studying international affairs at ANU. He has been chosen to represent Australia in different leadership roles. He is doing very well. Like the rest of the family, he is an exceptional musician. Macinda, the heroic young man, is studying.
I find this to be an amazing story of human courage, endurance and ultimate survival. And it is just one of the happy refugee stories from Shepparton. We embrace our diversity, including of course our first Australians. I want to acknowledge the charity and hard work of our Sikh community and our various Muslim communities, some of whom, like our Turks and Albanians, have been settled in the Goulburn Valley for over 80 years.

I also want to pay tribute to Adnan al-Ghazal, a dear friend and Iraqi refugee, who had been tortured by the Saddam Hussein regime, so he was in very poor health. He was almost continually in pain, but he took upon himself the role of easing the new Arabic-speaking families into our community. In particular, he was the liaison between the Iraqi refugees and the schools, hospitals, police and other services. He was always available for translations. He helped so many of my Arabic speakers bring their constituent issues to my office. Tragically, Adnan died while on his way to Mecca. He was only in his 40s. We will miss him greatly, and I acknowledge his great contribution and kindness.

It has not always been easy trying to defend the rights of rural women, in particular, in relation to their sexual and reproductive health. For example, rural women have never had equitable access to a surgical termination when they have had to make the difficult decision to end the pregnancy. But then the health minister of the day proposed that Australian women's access to a pregnancy termination pill be subjected to ministerial veto. This would have meant that rural women's option of accessing RU486 at a lower cost and in their own supportive community was likely to be blocked. I persuaded John Howard to allow a conscience vote in this chamber, and with the support of the Senate, and some magnificent women there, we won the day. I want to thank the great Dr Mal Washer, then the member for Moore, for his tireless work on this issue.

I also want to acknowledge the courage and outstanding leadership of the NGO Marie Stopes International, which took up the task of the distribution of this drug and ensured GPs were registered for its use. They have persisted in this work and evolved even better access over the last 11 years. Its CEO, Maria Deveson Crabbe, has been an outstanding champion of women's reproductive health rights, and I wish her well in her new career directions.

I have had responsibility for numerous portfolios over the years, starting from 1998 when I was so pleased to become the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage. I thank Prime Minister John Howard for this early opportunity. Following from there I became the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration; the Minister for Workforce Participation; the shadow minister for the environment, heritage, the arts and Indigenous affairs; then the shadow minister for immigration and citizenship; and finally the shadow minister for early childhood education and child care and the shadow minister for the status of women. Each of these portfolios taught me so much. For example, one of my first responsibilities was for the Antarctic Division. I hope that more Australians one day will realise how Australia has led the saving of this last great wilderness. Lord Casey was the architect of the Antarctic Treaty, still a marvel, that has helped guide the treaties governing celestial bodies. We have so much to be proud of for such a young nation.

I want especially to thank the public servants, the backbone of any effective government, for their diligence and commitment to the nation's good in the various departments. In particular, I want to thank my chief of staff when I was the workforce participation minister,
Karen Massier, who, I have no doubt, one day will be one of our great new members in this chamber.

I have also had the privilege of chairing a number of standing committees which have brought down some significant reports. These include national inquiries into Indigenous incarceration, Indigenous education, high-risk drinking, and language retention. Our foreign affairs and aid inquiries have included the role of the private sector and nutritional issues in the Indo-Pacific.

When I was a member of the Social and Legal Standing Committee we undertook the first national inquiry into fetal alcohol spectrum disorders.

Mr Perrett: Hear, hear!

Dr Stone: And Graham Perrett was the fantastic chair. Our recommendation for a national FASD prevention strategy was adopted, and at last there seems to be some greater recognition of this disability, its cause and its prevention. We could eradicate this greatest cause of non-genetic newborn brain damage, which is the result of the baby being exposed to alcohol in the womb. FASD, or FAS, is 100 per cent preventable if the pregnant woman simply does not drink for the duration of her pregnancy. Too many Australian women are still not aware of the dangers of drinking alcohol when pregnant. The alcohol culture, lobbying and industry in Australia are very powerful. I am proud to be the patron of the Russell Family Fetal Alcohol Disorders Association and I commend the work of these volunteers. I thank this government for continuing to roll out the national FASD strategy.

My work as the chair of the Australian group of the Asia-Pacific parliamentary population development forum has helped me build close relationships with like-minded MPs across our region. I am vice-chair of the umbrella Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development, chaired by Japan's Dr Keizo Takemi. It was a privilege to meet Prime Minister Shinzo Abe last week to report on our work, which will feed into their G7 deliberations. This forum is tackling the horrors of child marriage, FGM, the trafficking of women and girls, grinding poverty, poor health and education access, and women's need for empowerment, all of which are such pressing issues in our region. Changes are so important for the peace and prosperity of our region, but, as well, it is a right of every person, man or woman, to have a safe and decent life.

It has also been a pleasure to chair the Mongolian, East Timorese, Moroccan, Congolese and UN parliamentary friendship groups. I must say that the three months working with the Australian mission to the UN in New York, at the end of 2014 was an exceptional experience, and I thank this parliament for the opportunity. I was so proud to see Australia in the chair of the Security Council. I think Julie Bishop is one of our greatest foreign affairs ministers. I have been pleased to co-chair our drug reform and harm minimisation group, which championed the new medicinal cannabis legislation. Senator Richard Di Natale did so much to achieve that outcome. Our Dying with Dignity bipartisan group still has some way to go.

I talked about my commitment to Indigenous Australia in my maiden speech. One of my first books was a documentary history of Australia's race relations. During my time in this place I have seen the development of the parliamentary protocols which daily acknowledge the traditional owners, the flying of Indigenous flags and the 'welcome to country' ceremonies. These are significant symbols to be observed by the Australian public, in viewing
the parliament as a model. They reflect the rightful place of our First Australians, the original owners of our country. But, of course, beyond the symbolism, we need the outcomes, and we all acknowledge the unacceptable gap between the life experience of Indigenous Australians and that of the rest of our society. I was proud to represent the government on the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation for five years until 2000. I celebrated that great march across the Sydney Harbour Bridge, with my children, and the march in Melbourne that brought black and white Australians together, many for the first time. It has also been a joy to see our first House of Representatives Indigenous Australian MP, Ken Wyatt. May he be joined by many others in the future, especially if they are women. It is a disappointment that this parliament will see a reduction in numbers of women in the 45th Parliament. That is of great concern for our Liberal-National coalition and it is a concern for all of us in the parliament because we want to be seen to be representative of all of the Australian nation.

Every member of this chamber knows that, without highly professional and dedicated electoral office staff, their goals cannot be realised. I have had the great good fortune to have been supported by some of the best electoral staff you could find. Most of them are here with me today. They have all been committed to the cause of Murray and all have gone beyond the call of duty to help assist our constituents, often in great distress, and to give me 100 per cent support. Great staff have served before, but currently they are: Rhonda Whitehead, the first face to greet people as they come through the door in my office—she has been a wonder and has been with me more than 10 years; Steve Cooper, my case manager, has been with me for, I think, seven years; Callum Whitehead, my great media manager who recently left me—he has been luckily inherited by another member; and, of course, my part-timers, Vicki Neele and Lynette Phillips. They have all been magnificent. It has been a real Team Murray effort. I also want to refer to Simon Frost and Andrew Cox, previous staffers who are now state Liberal division CEOs in Victoria and WA and doing great Liberal work. Two of my staff have run for parliament.

I want to pay a special tribute and pass on my deep gratitude to Mary Coad, my chief of staff for the last 10 years. Mary has been my right-hand person, deeply committed to the electorate and all of my other issues. She is always highly efficient, selfless, loyal and able to organise the seemingly impossible at very short notice. Mary has been such an integral part of my life for the last 10 years that I really do not know what I will do without her. She will remain a true friend, of course, and a fellow champion of Murray. I thank her most sincerely.

I thank the marvellous team who helped me raise the funds and campaign in that impossible election of 1996 and who are still my core team today—although I do confess there have been a few additions. I call them my 'Liberal family'. Only five or six were members of the Liberal Party before 1996, but now they make up my branches or are members of my fundraising 250 club.

There are too many names to mention and it is always a terrible danger when you start mentioning names that someone will be left out, but I do need to put on the record my enormous thanks to Bill Parsons and his wife, Gwen. Bill has been my federal electorate chair since my election in 1996. He is the driver of my 250 club. He has been at the centre of the Liberal business of Murray for all of these 20 years. Also with me for all or most of those 20 years have been the wonderful Del and Gerald Brown, John Taig, the Van Zeists, Barry and Lorraine Smith, the Sterlings, the Lovell-Brown family, the Salis, Peter Twomey, Santo
Varapodi and his late wife, Theresa, Keppel Turnour and his late wife, Helen, Kevin and June Reid, Marty Richardson, Rob Watson, Ruary and Nanette MacKenzie, Don Oberon, Ron and Rhonda Crossman, Mackenzie Craig, all the wonderful Inglewood-Wedderburn people of the Loddon branch, especially their pioneer, Maureen Turnbull, all the wonderful people of my Loddon-Murray branch, President Alan and Betty Mann, Alice and Cliff Harrison, Campbell and Janice Chalmers, Vince and Cheryl Bartels, John and Margaret Nelsons, Kelvin Jeffery, Ron Bear and so many more. The late Bill Hunter is also a Liberal icon in Murray. We miss him greatly.

One of the secrets of my success in staffing over 100 booths without any branches and managing the campaign in 1996 was the fact that I am related to half of the electorate—the western half, the great Tragowel Plains-Boort-Pyramid Hill area. It was easy when I was able to hand the job of coordination over to my brother Grant and my beloved cousin Rhonda Hosking. Rhonda then became my electorate officer in a second unofficial office I opened in Kerang, which I had for 10 years until the boundaries were changed. She used her own home as my office and contact point—a most generous arrangement. Rhonda was a brilliant electorate officer. She knew everybody; she cared about everybody, and she has also managed the Loddon-Murray branch with Alan Mann, a second cousin, ever since. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to Rhonda Hosking and deeply appreciate all that she has done for the area that we both love and call home.

I also want to acknowledge the unceasing support of my beloved father, Harvey Bawden, who remains vitally interested in all things in Murray where he farmed for 50 years. My mother, who passed away some 18 months ago, has also always been my inspiration. My sisters and brothers have always been loving and free with their advice, and my own children, Georgina and Nadia, who are here today, my son Kirk and my 11 grandchildren are a constant reminder to me about why the work we do is so important and why all of us strive so hard to make the country a better place. I thank them—my children—for their unconditional love and support.

It is hard to believe that it is 20 years since I first stood in this place. I did not anticipate that we were about to face the worst droughts and floods on record and various other challenges that have kept on coming. But, perhaps, that is the nature of life in rural and regional Australia. We are largely price takers and dependent on the vagaries of weather and global markets. I strongly believe that we will soon see the viability of the irrigation system and the irrigators protected. As I have said, our irrigation system is our lifeblood. It underpins our economy and it is a vital part of the solution to our 27 per cent youth unemployment.

My Murray electorate is magnificent. Its people are heroic, innovative and resourceful. We are proudly one of the most multicultural populations in regional Australia. We celebrate our diversity and the history of our pioneers. We have strong and vigorous Indigenous communities. I am proud that some of my grandchildren are growing up as a part of Murray. They are lucky children.

I leave this parliament proud of the gains made, regretful about the problems that are yet to be resolved. But every day it has been a privilege and an honour and a joy to serve the people of Murray. I thank the House.
The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): Order! I call the honourable member for Fremantle. I understand that this is her final speech in this place—a valedictory—and I welcome her to start her remarks.

Ms PARKE (Fremantle) (12:17): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I have greatly appreciated the dignity and balance that you and the Speaker have brought to your roles. I would like to begin my parting speech by paying respect to the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples as the traditional custodians of the land in the Canberra area. As was said by the former Young Australian of the Year, former Afghan refugee Akram Azimi, we make this acknowledgement not out of a sense of protocol but out of recognition that the Dreaming has not ended and we are all a part of it.

I came into this place to represent the Fremantle electorate and to engage in what I termed the war against indifference. Before I expand on that I would observe that there have been many wars fought in this place: the war on terror, the war on drugs, the war on people smugglers, the war on each other. Only the last one seems to have had any success, and that has been to the ultimate detriment of all of us and of public trust in our political system.

The war on terror has too often become a tool used by governments around the world to suppress dissent, to shrink civil society, to curtail independent media, to increase surveillance of civilian populations and to erode the rule of law and hard-won civil liberties. We are seeing this in Egypt, Turkey, Russia, Malaysia and Ethiopia—to name just a few countries—but we are also seeing it much closer to home. Terror is invoked by our allies to justify deviation from the international rule of law, such as extrajudicial assassinations, with the killing of civilians in drone strikes excused as accidental collateral damage.

Terror is used by Australia to justify laws providing 10-year jail terms for journalists who disclose secret intelligence operations. It is used to justify sending Australian forces to war in distant countries—in which the casualties are predominantly civilians—without any debate in the national parliament or the United Nations. It is used to justify cracking down on certain communities, when, in fact, such actions may increase the risk of terrorism while undermining the very principles that are being defended, which is clearly a lose-lose situation.

National security is increasingly invoked by the government to surveil and monitor the Australian community, while at the same time denying the community access to information about the government's actions—for example, the claim by an increasingly militarised Immigration and Border Protection agency that on-water matters may not be publicised, or the lack of transparency in defence procurement.

The mandatory data retention scheme, the gutting of Labor's FOI framework, the crackdown on whistleblowers and journalists, the blocking of changes to political donation disclosure thresholds—all of these matters at the federal level—together with the increasing suppression of dissent through draconian antiprotest laws in Tasmania, WA and New South Wales are troubling developments that seem to be taking Australia backwards not forwards as an open, democratic and progressive nation.

Our insistence on compliance with the international rule of law should be consistent and even-handed, whether we are talking about China's island-building activities in the South China Sea, Israel's settlement building, the US's bombing of Medecins Sans Frontieres hospitals, or our own treatment of Timor-Leste in relation to maritime boundaries.
The worldwide war on drugs has been an unmitigated disaster, serving only to destroy young lives and those of their families, foster and sustain organised crime and massively increase the cost to communities in terms of lives and productivity lost, increased hospital admissions and courts and jails packed with people consigned to a cycle of disadvantage and punishment. It is heartening that countries like Portugal and Uruguay are showing a more constructive way forward.

The recent parliamentary drug summit that looked at how Australia might move beyond the failed crime and punishment approach to a health and treatment centred approach is an encouraging development and aligns with a global shift in thinking. I thank my co-convenors of the Parliamentary Group on Drug Policy and Law Reform, Senator Dr Richard Di Natale, Dr Sharman Stone and the wonderful former chair, Dr Mal Washer, as well as the many experts, academics, public health organisation, users, family and community organisations for their dedication to addressing decades of global policy folly.

The war on people smugglers, accompanied by a faux concern for drownings at sea, has facilitated the profound deterioration in Australia's treatment of asylum seekers and refugees, our compliance with international human rights obligations and our own image of ourselves as a nation of tolerance, egalitarianism and the fair go. The present offshore detention system is a festering wound that is killing people and eroding our national character and reputation. It needs to be healed. The government falsely accuses asylum seekers of arriving illegally when, as observed by the United Nations and the Australian Human Rights Commission among others, it is Australian that is violating its legal obligations.

If we look at the many poor countries hosting millions of refugees in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, and the millions of souls trying to reach Europe, the hysteria generated in the past decade and a half by politicians in Australia over a few thousand refugees arriving by boat should be understood as just that. It is time for debate and policy on this issue to be based on reason, facts, perspective and our obligations under international law rather than politics. Many parliamentarians from different parties have been deeply engaged on this issue—Anna Burke, Andrew Giles, Sharon Claydon, Russell Broadbent, Cathy McGowan, Adam Bandt, Sarah Hanson-Young, Lisa Singh, Claire Moore, Sue Lines, Doug Cameron and Anne Urquhart to name just some. I apologise to those I have missed out. I hope those efforts will soon lead to better outcomes.

There is an alternative that involves establishing a genuine regional framework, working constructively with other countries in the region to improve conditions in source and transit countries and negotiating resettlement arrangements with other countries—including, of course, a much greater commitment on Australia's part to taking more refugees. Every year, Australia accepts some 200,000 new migrants. If a portion of this number, say one-quarter, was allocated to humanitarian places, there would still be the same number of people coming to Australia overall. As we know, many refugees are highly skilled, keen to contribute and have shown great courage and resourcefulness in getting here. Such people can only enhance our country.

We also need to treat decently those thousands of asylum seekers left in limbo in Australia on bridging visas without work rights. Refugees facing indefinite detention due to negative ASIO security assessments should be given access to review by the AAT and alternatives to indefinite detention. As the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has said, human rights
are not reserved for citizens only or for people with visas; they are the inalienable rights of 
every individual regardless of his or her location and migration status.

As I have noted in this place before, the High Court decision in February this year 
upholding the offshore processing arrangements as constitutional was the result of a lack of 
human rights protections in the Australian Constitution—which, as noted in *New Matilda* last 
week, was framed before the postwar human rights area. This is why many people have been 
calling for a bill of rights or a human rights act, Australia being the only western democracy 
without one. Of course, regardless of the domestic legal position, under international law 
Australia cannot contract out its legal responsibilities and remains responsible for the plight of 
people it sends to Manus Island and Nauru.

Looking at the sorry record of the wars on drugs, terror and people smugglers, I have 
tended to be against wars on things as they seem to be misused by governments to impose a 
host of controls and restrictions on populations and to violate fundamental human rights 
without providing evidence of their effectiveness and fitness for purpose. But, as I said in my 
introduction, there is one war that I pledged to fight when I first started here, the war against 
indifference: indifference to extreme poverty and the plight of victims of human rights abuses 
here in Australia and elsewhere; indifference to the growing extinction of species and the 
heating of the planet; indifference to nuclear proliferation; indifference to corruption and poor 
governance; indifference to animal cruelty; indifference to the marginalised, the 
disenfranchised, the vulnerable in our society; and indifference to the need to safeguard and 
increase the public goods we all share, including high quality public health and education, 
infrastructure, fair and safe working conditions, affordable housing, strong independent public 
institutions and respect for the rule of law, public transport, public broadcasting, support for 
the arts, science and ancient cultural heritage and the environment.

In terms of improving the condition of humankind, in my view a shift is needed from the 
current economic orthodoxy which is fixed on the idea that economic growth can and should 
continue indefinitely. In *Prosperity Without Growth: Economics For A Finite Planet* UK 
economist Tim Jackson argues for a vision in which it is possible for human beings to 
flourish, achieve greater social cohesion, find higher levels of wellbeing and yet still reduce 
their material impact on the environment. The parliament and the government play a critical 
role in regulating our market economy and protecting equity, justice and the environment— 
things that markets do not provide or often ignore or work against. However, governments at 
state and federal level let their communities down when they contract out significant public 
services to the private sector. Not only does this result in a focus on profit rather than on 
delivering effective public services and safeguarding public goods; it exacerbates the trend 
towards greater and greater secrecy when commercial-in-confidence reasons are given for 
denying transparency and accountability about how taxpayers' money is being spent and who 
is to blame when things go wrong in, say, privately operated immigration detention centres, 
vocational training centres, prisoner transport services or public hospitals. Meanwhile, 
governments render public services and institutions increasingly less efficient with the 
euphemistically named efficiency dividends imposed with every budget.

In 2011, in the St Thomas More Forum Lecture, Chief Justice Robert French spoke of the 
concept of public office as a public trust. That is a notion I agree with. My work for a number 
of years as chair of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on the Australian Commission for Law
Integrity, following on from my work at the UN on ethics and accountability, has convinced me that Australia needs a national integrity commission. Like my friends Stephen Jones, who formerly worked in the community and public sectors, and Senator Nick Xenophon, who is just naturally suspicious, I do not believe that the Commonwealth sector is uniquely invulnerable to corruption. Indeed, to borrow a phrase used by Premier Anna Bligh when she opened the 2009 national anti-corruption conference in Brisbane, there are a number of undisturbed rocks lying around at the Commonwealth level and no-one is picking them up to look underneath. A standing national integrity commission, appropriately resourced and empowered, would avoid allegations of political bias and the time, and massive expense to taxpayers, involved in setting up ad hoc royal commissions. It is imperative also to legislate strong protection for whistleblowers in the private sector. Almost all of the scandals revealed over tax havens, misconduct by banks, foreign bribery, exploitation of foreign workers, animal cruelty et cetera have come to public attention through the courageous actions of whistleblowers and journalists, who often pay a very high price for their bravery.

The role of an informed and engaged parliamentarian, quite apart from one's position vis-a-vis the executive as a frontbencher or backbencher, is undervalued in the Australian political system. All parliamentarians occupy a position of responsibility and privilege held by relatively few in the history of Federation, affording the occupant a rare platform from which to represent their electorates and the national and global interest.

I am grateful to the Accountability Round Table—a nonpartisan group of academics, lawyers, retired judges and public servants dedicated to improving standards of accountability, transparency and democratic practice in all governments and parliaments in Australia—for the parliamentary integrity awards named in honour of John Button and Alan Missen that were bestowed on Mark Dreyfus, Judy Moylan and I in 2013.

I am grateful to have had the experience of being a parliamentarian in government and in opposition. I am proud of the former Labor government's achievements across many areas: the apology to the stolen generations; staving off the global financial crisis in Australia; the carbon price and support for renewable energy development; the significant increase in Australian aid; paid parental leave; the NDIS; NBN; Gonski; massive investments in public transport, schools and local government infrastructure; removing discrimination against same-sex couples from over 80 Commonwealth laws; an ambassador for disability-inclusive development; and FOI reform and whistleblower protection for the public sector. Sincere thankyous to Professor AJ Brown, Howard Whitton, Tim Smith QC and the Accountability Round Table for their invaluable assistance on whistleblower protection.

I am also glad to have received Labor government support in my electorate for local companies undertaking significant innovation, such as Carnegie wave power and Richgro waste to energy. As an aside, I note that my constituent the Rottnest wind turbine survived former Prime Ministerial disparagement and has gone on to become famous with its own Twitter account. The Labor government also obtained World Heritage listing for Fremantle Prison, the return of Cantonment Hill to the people of Fremantle from the Department of Defence, the revitalised Hilton Community Centre, the maritime trade training centre at South Fremantle Senior High School, the Cockburn integrated community health centre, Coogee Beach Surf Life Saving club, the Jandakot Fire and Emergency Services headquarters, new facilities at Bibra Lake and of course marine sanctuaries—the largest network of marine
sanctuaries in the world, which was begun under the Howard government and was delivered by the Labor government. It is essential that the three-year hold put on the network of sanctuaries by the present government now be lifted. My constituent Tim Winton assisted the brilliant Save Our Marine Life campaign—and there they are in the gallery—when he came to the parliament to deliver a speech for the ages. He observed:

Commonwealth waters are public assets. The family silver. Silver that moves, breathes, swims. If you've ever swum in a school of trevally or barracuda or anchovies, you'll know what I mean; it's like being Scrooge McDuck rolling around in the vault.

I am also grateful to former prime ministers Julia Gillard and Kevin Rudd for the opportunity to have served in the executive as parliamentary secretary for mental health, homelessness and social housing and as the first dedicated minister in 25 years for Australia's world-leading international development agency, AusAID. The present government's abolition of AusAID as a separate agency resulted in a large number of dedicated, experienced staff having to seek work elsewhere. The staff who remain in DFAT and the broader aid and NGO community must cope with changing mandates and rapidly diminishing resources, following the $11.3 billion cuts to Australian aid—taking us down to a pitiful 0.22 per cent of GNI—which we know will wreak devastating impacts upon the world's poorest people. That puts us in the bottom half of OECD donors and it is the least generous level of aid in our history. It is a national shame that aid has such a low priority. It is also short-sighted because, in addition to being the right thing to do from a humanitarian perspective, our provision of aid is also in the larger national interest, contributing to global and regional peace and security and fostering economic development and self-sufficiency, which in turn expands our own export and economic opportunities.

Of course, some of the world's most disadvantaged people are here in Australia. One hundred and fifteen years ago, Labor member for Coolgardie Hugh Mahon moved a motion in the first year of the federal parliament calling for a royal commission into 'the conditions for Aborigines in northern Western Australia and into the administration of justice in the lower courts of Western Australia as it affected Aboriginal people'. He presciently argued that 'in this particular matter the reputation of the whole people of Australia is at stake.' He was right, but his motion went nowhere. Mahon himself became the only member ever expelled from the House of Representatives in 1920, for disloyalty and sedition, after he denounced British policy in Ireland at a public meeting. I hope the motion moved by my colleague Graham Perrett seeking a posthumous parliamentary pardon for Mahon is successful.

Unfortunately, more than a century after Mahon's motion, conditions for Australia's Indigenous peoples remain dire, with a young Aboriginal man more likely to go to jail than to university. Just a few weeks ago a 10-year-old girl in WA's Pilbara region committed suicide, following her older sister's suicide and that of many other young people. Deaths in custody like those of Mr Pat, Mr Ward, Mr Langdon, Ms Mandijarra and Ms Dhu keep occurring while governments remain missing in action on justice reinvestment; on the abolition of imprisonment for unpaid fines; on setting justice targets for Closing the Gap; on ratifying OPCAT, which would enable national oversight of all places of detention, including police lock-ups; and on implementing the recommendations of the now 25-year-old 1991 royal commission.
The overwhelming message from Aboriginal people is that they need to be an integral part of the discussion and decision-making around issues that affect them. A greater representation of Indigenous people in parliament, including present colleagues Ken Wyatt and Labor senators Nova Peris and Pat Dodson, will surely make a difference, as will a fuller accounting and reparation for the manifest injustices done to the First Australians, the adoption of a date other than 26 January to celebrate our national day, long-overdue constitutional recognition and the preservation of Indigenous cultural heritage, including languages and the magnificent rock art throughout Australia.

As noted in the former Labor government's national cultural policy, Australia is home to the oldest living culture on earth and we have been welcoming of the greatest diversity of cultures on earth. This is what has made us unique and it is why we have to preserve our culture, nurture it, invest in it and build upon it. Culture and art reflect our values of inclusion, respect and freedom of expression, and they promote healing. There is no better example of this than the organisation DADAA in Fremantle, working with disability and the arts. There are also incredible economic dividends to be gained from the arts because a creative society is necessarily a more innovative and productive society. There are more than half a million people working in the creative industries in Australia, around six per cent of the workforce, and the sector's growth is almost double that of the rest of the workforce. As the Prime Minister so often says, it is creativity and innovation that will power our nation's future, so we need to tap into the passion and imagination that young people innately have and nurture it in our homes, in our schools, in our businesses and in our community.

Last year's Western Australian of the year, neuroscientist Professor Lyn Beazley, observed that one of the keys to redefining our nation's prosperity will be an increased focus on science and the arts. The cuts to both science and the arts in the last two years have been devastating and must be reversed, and funding increased. This is critical to Australia's future wellbeing. It is no accident, in my view, that, while there are many artists, writers and musicians living in Fremantle, there are also many scientists and inventors.

It has been a joy to represent the wonderful, engaged, spirited, outward-looking, creative and caring community of Fremantle. I have enjoyed working with local councils, schools and church and community groups on issues such as raising funds and awareness for homelessness through the annual Gimme Shelter concert, and being involved in community support for more humane treatment of refugees, increased Australian aid and action on climate change, renewable energy and marine sanctuaries, as well as community opposition to live animal exports, supertrawlers and the proposal of the WA state and federal coalition governments to fund and build the disastrous and poorly thought out Perth Freight Link, which would entail the building of a truck freeway through sensitive rare wetlands, ancient Indigenous cultural heritage and local communities.

The phrase 'think globally, act locally' is well worn but contains great wisdom. I have been fortunate in my professional life to work as a community legal centre lawyer in regional Australia, as a UN lawyer and as a member of parliament. I have found that looking at any issue from a local, national and international point of view can raise wider perspectives and a range of potential solutions or actions. Ultimately all issues are local issues, whether you are talking about human rights, the environment, health or development. Rights and standards articulated in the international arena are concerned with the essential dignity of the individual
and the community. These standards can only be implemented at the local level, whether it be planting a tree to combat global warming, vaccinating a child to reduce child mortality under the sustainable development goals, or protecting the migratory birds at Bibra Lake, in my electorate, under the conventions on migratory birds.

Most of our efforts as MPs, and the efforts of those who come to see us in this place or in our electorate offices, are directed not so much at trying to change minds but rather at getting people to care sufficiently about an issue to attend an event, to speak or write about it, to contribute funds or to vote for it. In a place and time when everyone is busy, overcoming indifference is no easy task. It is often the personal connection, the real-life story of individuals and families, that helps to overcome political inertia on an issue.

A recent example is the moving story of Daniel Haslam's struggle with cancer and the campaign that he and his mother, Lucy, fought to ensure that medicinal cannabis could be legally available to Australians suffering chronic pain, nausea or seizures. Or there is the story of the incredible Peter Short, who, while suffering terminal cancer, led the campaign to raise community and political awareness of the need for dying-with-dignity laws.

The terrible execution of Australians Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran in Indonesia has reignited determination in the Australian government, parliament and community to see an end to the death penalty worldwide. I pay tribute to Philip Ruddock and Chris Hayes for their longstanding leadership in the parliament on this issue and to Julie Bishop and Tanya Plibersek for their international advocacy.

The plight of Peter Greste and his colleagues in Egypt turned a much-needed spotlight on the issue of decreasing media freedom around the world. Again, parliamentarians like Jane Prentice, Graham Perrett, Teresa Gambaro and others, working with Amnesty International, helped to raise the profile of this issue.

What these particular campaigns have shown is that parliamentarians from all parties, listening to the community and acting with the best interests of the nation at heart, putting politics aside, can achieve amazing thing together. This has been my experience working on parliamentary committees including the treaties, foreign affairs, human rights, and law enforcement integrity committees, and in parliamentary friendship groups for the United Nations, UNICEF, ABC, TPP, drug policy and law reform, nuclear disarmament, and refugees, as well as Parliamentarians for Global Action, which is an international organisation of individual MPs from parliaments around the world that conducts campaigns on abolition of the death penalty, universal ratification of the International Criminal Court Rome Statute and the Arms Trade Treaty, among other things.

I want to thank the many colleagues and friends from all parties, as well as Independents, with whom I have worked on so many issues across this parliament—too many to name without risking leaving someone important out. I have been the beneficiary of great acts of kindness in this place, some of them from unexpected sources, and I will not spoil anyone's promotion prospects by mentioning names! Everyone is here with the best of intentions and a diversity of backgrounds, experience and knowledge to contribute. As I said in my first speech, while I acknowledge that there is an aspect of our democracy that is necessarily and even usefully adversarial, I also believe there is greater scope for cooperative, consensus politics.
Many of us have been inspired by the people we have met and the stories we have heard about suffering and about hope. Lyn White, of Animals Australia, uses forensic investigations and powerful advocacy to raise public consciousness of the plight of the millions of animals raised, transported and slaughtered for human consumption. Her efforts are reinforced by many other dedicated animal welfare professionals, scientists, journalists, vets, lawyers and community members too numerous to name, as well as some valued parliamentary colleagues, including—among many—Kelvin Thomson, Tony Zappia, Andrew Wilkie and Jason Wood. I thank them for their support and their voice for the animals. I agree with the former President of the Australian Law Reform Commission, David Weisbrot, who said animal welfare would be the next great social justice movement. Establishing properly resourced independent offices of animal welfare at federal and state levels should be a priority to ensure that animal welfare laws and policies are strengthened, harmonised and enforced.

As members of parliament, we frequently receive delegations of scientists, doctors and young people regarding the existential challenge of climate change. I will never forget the young people from the Pacific islands who came to the parliament to discuss the devastating impact that global warming is having on their islands, with increased cyclonic, drought and storm surge events and sea level rise eroding precious land and polluting crops and fresh water with salt. There is nowhere for them to go. Australia has a duty as a high-per-capita emitter to reduce its carbon emissions as a matter of urgency and to assist poorer nations to cope with the impacts of climate change.

Dr Hla Myint has been a frequent visitor to parliament to raise awareness of the plight of the Rohingya Muslims of Myanmar, often described as the most persecuted people in the world. It is to be hoped the new presidency will promote human rights for all in Myanmar. The Baha'i community in Fremantle, Canberra and elsewhere have consistently spoken about the persecution of Baha'is in Iran, an issue I recently raised with the Iranian foreign minister and ambassador, who gave me a good hearing. It is only through dialogue that understanding and breakthroughs can occur.

As a member of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet, it has been wonderful to meet with His Holiness the Dalai Lama—and with members of the Tibetan community in Australia and in exile—to learn about the situation of Tibetans and their peaceful quest for genuine autonomy and respect for their language, religion and culture within China. Given the growing power of China, it is particularly important that parliamentarians continue to raise human rights issues faced by Tibetans and other groups within China, including Uighurs, Falun Gong practitioners and the many courageous Chinese advocates for democracy and rights.

I thank the Palestinian ambassador, His Excellency Izzat Abdulhadi, and the Moroccan ambassador, His Excellency Mohamed Mael-Ainin representing the Council of Arab Ambassadors for the recent special presentation of thanks to Maria Vamvakou, Laurie Ferguson, Alan Griffin, Jill Hall, Craig Laundy, Sussan Ley, Lee Rhiannon and I for our work as members of the parliamentary friendship group for Palestine. As someone who lived in Gaza for 2½ years out of the eight years I worked with the UN, it has been heartening to see increasing recognition, in this place, of the injustices suffered by the Palestinian people as a result of the decades-long occupation, the continued illegal settlement-building, the Gaza blockade and the discrimination within and outside of Israel.
This situation harms everyone, including Israel, which will find it increasingly difficult to combat claims that it is becoming an apartheid state within the meaning of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. I look forward to Australia joining the two-thirds of the world's nations that already recognise the state of Palestine alongside the state of Israel and that support an end to the occupation. Only a solution that respects international law and the human rights of all is sustainable.

I am perturbed by the recent report that the last visit by an Australian government minister to Australia's great friend and close neighbour Timor-Leste was when I visited in August 2013 as international development minister. I hope that Labor's policy to enter negotiations with Timor-Leste—and submit to international arbitration if talks fail—will become bipartisan policy. I also look forward to the long-suffering people of West Papua finally seeing justice and respect for their human rights, including self-determination.

The United Nations remains as important as ever, despite its flaws, and I am proud of Australia's longstanding commitment to the organisation and to multilateralism, since it was first championed by Labor Prime Minister and former federal member for Fremantle John Curtin, and foreign minister Doc Evatt. As a former UN staff member, I was appreciative of the encouragement of the former member for Fraser Professor John Langmore to establish the Australia-UN Parliamentary Group, together with former Liberal Senator Russell Trood, in 2008. The group is an important—and, I hope, lasting—development in the parliament, which complements the longstanding parliamentary association for UNICEF, which I have also had the privilege of co-chairing.

The United Nations' annual peacekeeping budget, at US$7.8 billion, is equivalent to half of one per cent of annual global military spending. In 2011, the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade inquiry into the 2009-10 DFAT annual report canvassed the enormous disparity, in budgetary terms, between defence and diplomacy: roughly, $27 billion versus $1 billion, at the time.

In the committee's view and in my view, there is no reason we should not invest in preventative defence in the same way as we do in preventative health and—in addition to the regular diplomacy work—promote the active work in conflict resolution or peacemaking that might be done to anticipate and prevent wars from starting in the first place. This is something Norway does very well through the peace and reconciliation section of its Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Australia could play a key role in involving women in peacemaking processes, in implementation of the landmark UN Security Council resolution 1325, which recognises women as active agents of change in conflict prevention and resolution. I look forward to the day when the resources we devote to peacemaking and peacekeeping are within touching distance of the resources we pour into weapons and war.

I also hope Australia will end its habitual stance of 'strategic dependence' on 'great and powerful friends' and forge a greater independence in foreign policy matters, as urged by former Prime Minister Malcom Fraser in his last book, Dangerous Allies. The Australians for War Powers Reform, of which Malcom Fraser was one of the founders, have persuasively advocated for the parliament to be required to give consent before Australian forces are sent overseas to war. This was an issue I raised in my first speech, and I hope it will be revisited by the parliament in light of the outcome of previous and current deployments and the practice of most comparable countries.
The Australian Conservation Foundation and ICAN, the International Campaign to abolish nuclear weapons, have pointed out the profound inconsistency of Australia supporting a nuclear weapons-free world while maintaining a defence policy that includes reliance on US nuclear deterrence. We have just commemorated the 30th anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster. It is worrying that the government is intent on selling uranium to countries, such as India and Ukraine, that do not have good nuclear safety records. Given that high-level nuclear waste requires isolation from the environment, for many hundreds of thousands of years, it should also be inconceivable for any government in Australia to contemplate Australia becoming an international high-level nuclear waste dump.

I am aware that I have touched on a great many issues but it is a complex and challenging world. Believe me, there are so many other issues I want to mention, such as marriage equality, the need to boost resources for community legal centres, legal aid and the Aboriginal Legal Service, to increase the pitifully inadequate Newstart allowance, to address violence against women, homelessness, social and affordable housing and mental health, including for veterans who have been too long neglected, and the elderly suffering great loneliness, to prohibit supertrawlers, to restrict alcohol and gambling advertising, to safeguard our fundamental public institutions—like Medicare, CSIRO, the ABC and SBS—to investigate whether our patent system is promoting or stifling innovation, to act on the dangers of antimicrobial resistance and the need for better food labelling to allow consumers to make informed choices on health, environmental and animal welfare grounds.

But it is all part of that same war, the war I mentioned at the beginning, the war on indifference that I have tried to fight all my political life. And you cannot fight a war without allies—so now I must get on with some personal thank yous.

I thank the parliamentary staff; David Elder; the clerks; the international relations office; the committee secretariat staff; the arts, library and Hansard staff; the chaplain, Peter Rose; the attendants; the serjeant's office; the security officers; the cleaners; the gardeners; Tim and the dining room staff; Alan in maintenance; Martine, the hairdresser; and Greg and the shuttle team and the COMCAR drivers. We, as parliamentarians, are surrounded by brilliant, friendly and professional people who help us achieve our goals in this place.

I thank the Labor Party for the rare and precious opportunity to represent Fremantle in the national parliament and I wish my successor in Fremantle for Labor, Chris Brown, every success in the coming election and in carrying out this important role. I thank my caucus colleagues, past and present, for their comradeship and for giving me a hearing so often—even when they may have preferred not to—and I look forward to the election of the Shorten Labor government. I particularly acknowledge my colleagues Alannah MacTiernan and Gary Gray, as the only other lower house representatives from WA. We hope that number will increase significantly after the election.

I thank state Labor colleagues for their cooperation and friendship, Labor members and supporters in the Fremantle electorate for their steadfast confidence and support, and Labor members more generally who have communicated with me over the years to offer their encouragement. Labor elders like Carmen Lawrence, Barry Jones, Gareth Evans, John Faulkner, Daryl Melham, Jim McGinity, Pat Giles and Peter Dowding have been and continue to be inspirations; and groups like Labor for Refugees, Rainbow Labor, Labor's
Environmental Advocacy Network, LEAN, and Labor's new animal welfare network, LAWN, contribute enormously to positive policy reform.

There have been many community members who have offered their support and encouragement over the years, and I thank the vibrant Fremantle community for all of that support. I also thank Janet Holmes a Court, Sam Gazal, Ben Elton, Dr Luigi Palombi, Anna George, Allan Behn, Harry Dixon, Howard Whitton, Tony Preston-Stanley, Svend Robinson, Humayun and Ruhi Kabir, and Sena Wijewardane, as well as those friends who have passed on but remain with me in spirit: Gough Whitlam, Malcom Fraser, Luiz Carlos da Costa, Jean-Selim Kanaan, Jean-Philippe Laberge, Dr Ern Manea, Dennis Tarrant, Roy Scaife, Liam Barry, Hank Helman, Mary Jenkins, Mr Hume, Peter Short, Laurie Humphries, Ray Lees and Don Buckingham.

I also thank United Voice, the MUA, the CFMEU, the CPSU and WAPOU for their support of my role in Fremantle, and I thank the union movement generally for their campaigns on behalf of all Australians on issues like fair and safe working conditions, Australian coastal shipping, local content, the exploitation of foreign workers, the gender pay gap, Australian aid and the dangers in unfair free trade agreements and in the Trans-Pacific Partnership. The union movement, public health and consumer organisations, and AFTINET—led by Dr Pat Ranald—have tirelessly campaigned to raise awareness of the dangers to public health, to local jobs and to the environment presented by trade agreements that advantage foreign multinational corporations at the expense of Australian democracy and sovereignty.

I especially thank my staff, past and present, for their hard work and their support not only at election times and in the day-to-day work but also for the ideas, the campaigns and the many causes to which I have put my name and, by extension, their names. They have been unfailingly generous with their time, with their friendship and good humour, and with their professionalism. I particularly acknowledge my present team: Josh Wilson and Peter Woodward, who have been with me from day one; Kath Longley and Leeanne Willows; and Cate Anderson and Nicholas Chinna; as well as assistance from Zita Pal, Lesley Murphy and Helen Mills. I especially pay tribute to my chief of staff, Josh Wilson, without whom I could not have done this work. Josh is an extraordinarily talented and public-spirited individual with much to contribute to Freemantle and to this nation, and I look forward to following his future career, wherever that takes him.

I acknowledge the invaluable contributions of Patrick Gorman, Claire Davidson, Liz Nedela, Joseph Quick and Ron Mizen, as former personal staff, as well as the advisers I worked with in my executive roles and the irrepressible Neil McCann, who came from Ireland to assist me in my first campaign. I pay tribute to my late friend and staff member Conor Murphy for his enthusiasm, work ethic and humour. We miss him very much. Conor had Duchenne muscular dystrophy. He refused to let this rare disease stand in the way of his talent, energy and ambition, and among his many contributions to the greater good was his work as an advocate for better research, more coordination and more funding to tackle rare diseases.

I thank my dear friend Olivia Gesini and her son, Ari, for so generously welcoming me into their home during parliamentary sitting weeks. It has been a haven, and Olivia has been an exciting travel and dinner companion on many occasions. Olivia's parents, Wendy and
Raffaele, have also been wonderful sources of support. It is lovely they can be here today. To everyone who is here, I thank you all very much.

I thank all my friends and my family for bearing with my absences. In particular, I thank my parents, George and Lorraine Parke; my sister, Georgina, and my brother-in-law, Chris; my brother Aaron, his fiancée, Emily, and their kids, Lucinda and Thomas; my brother Justin; and my aunts, uncles and cousins for their ongoing strong support, including Ray and Eileen Sinclair. My family has been extended in recent years to include my darling husband, Warwick Hemsley, his wonderful children and their partners and children: Meredith, David, Patrick and Sasha; Conor, Tristan, Max and Hamish; and Alex and Mona. While I will never stop caring about the world we live in, I look forward to spending more time with them.

This is my ninth year in this place, and I am deeply aware, from my previous eight years overseas with the UN, that life is short and that the timing of one's departure from this earth is uncertain. Being mindful of this every day helps keep things in perspective. Such perspective tells me—and I note Pat Dodson said it at the Press Club the other day—there needs to be more of a sense of urgency about the issues confronting our First Australians.

On 14 February 2008, I ended my first speech in this place talking about Heather Vicenti, a constituent and a member of the stolen generations. I would like to conclude this valedictory by mentioning another friend and constituent, Reverend Sealin Garlett, a respected Wadjuk Noongar elder and a gentle and wise man. He has told me about the first people of this land, who shared strong and nourishing cultural bonds forged among family and nation members, and of how they were displaced from the land and consequently deprived of their economic base. He despairs for the youth and the children who do not have hope. He sees the lost young people caught up in the justice system and addicted to illicit drugs. His message to us is:

We cannot turn back history. However, as we endeavour to journey together, I plead with you to listen to our Aboriginal brothers and sisters and especially to the young people; together we can find a way. I talk with you in truth. My heart is glad that we can listen together.

In the Noongar language:

Kaya noonakutt ngan kaanarje wonggin ngan kwuurt jurip jurip nih kattigin.

BUSINESS
Rearrangement

Mr McCormack (Riverina—Assistant Minister for Defence) (13:00): by leave—I move:

That standing order No. 43 (Members statements) be suspended for the duration of the speech of the Member speaking at 1.30 pm.

Question agreed to.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL’S SPEECH

Address-in-Reply

Debate resumed on the motion:

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

Mr Baldwin (Paterson) (13:01): Let me commence by saying thank you to the very people who allowed me to be the member for Paterson: my constituents. It has been an
honour, it has been a pleasure to serve you, but now is the time to say goodbye. But whilst I am retiring from politics, I am not retiring from life.

Just on 25 years ago I was out fishing with my very good friend Mike Warczak. My twin boys, Robbie and David, had just been born—a life-changing event by any means. The nation's economy was in a fine mess and the future for our youth was not all that inspiring—well, not to a new dad of twin boys. So, I was complaining, complaining and complaining, when Mike turned around and said words to the effect of, 'Shut up and fish or go into politics yourself and fix it.' It was an epiphany of sorts. I decided, on the spot, to do something about it. The passion was ignited. And so the long journey began. And here I am today, and the time has now come to reverse the scenario and to shut up and go fishing.

You see, back in February I fished the New South Wales Game Fishing Association Interclub out of Port Stephens—in which, by the way, we were just lucky enough to win champion boat, and I was crowned champion angler; just lucky, I guess—but it was not a celebration as much as a feeling of guilt that overcame me: a guilt that I should have been working for my electorate, not having those weekends off to fish. So, after all this time in politics as a candidate, as a member, I have decided it is time for some 'me time', without the associated guilt. And the only way I can do that as a marginal-seat member is to retire.

I remember vividly, just after the 1996 election, gathering just down the corridor in the government party room and then venturing into these halls of power, into this very chamber, scared and definitely shaking. I was standing there with my very dear friend Dr Brendan Nelson, the then member for Bradfield, and Joe Hockey, the then member for North Sydney—the three amigos, or so we were called. And I was struck in absolute awe at just being here at the very centre of all decisions for our nation—an immigrant boy who came to Australia at the age of three, whose life in Australia started at the Villawood migrant settlement camp with his struggling parents, Dave and Betty, and three siblings—and I see my sister Trish in the gallery today. We lived in a six-metre by 3.6-metre garage. It was called a 'temporary dwelling'. How could I be elected into these corridors of power in our nation's parliament?

Life was never easy for our family. Everything—and I mean everything—came through plain hard work and personal sacrifice. I might be a conservative Liberal, but I can guarantee you that there were no silver spoons in our household. I was asked at the time—sincerely, I guess—whether I was happy with my allocated parliamentary office. I immediately replied, 'I would have been happy to sit on a fruit box with a clipboard as my desk, such is the honour to be the 889th person ever elected to the House of Representatives in just on 95 years.'

As I said, I went into politics to make a difference—a difference not just for my children but for every child. All children need the opportunity to achieve their maximum potential. That is the strong part of the Liberal ethos, and nothing less is acceptable. Remember that no child is ever born bad. They are the result of the environment that we as parents—and in particular politicians—create for them. That is why I thought that the focus of last night's budget was absolutely on track—supporting our young people to reach their maximum potential but providing real incentive and opportunity, providing the tax breaks so SMEs can grow and employ those young people. Government does not create the jobs; it simply provides the necessary pathway for businesses to do so.
Despite running in Dobell in 1993 I was first elected in 1996 as the member for Paterson, as part of that Howard class of ‘96—in fact, jointly with Nick Dondas. I had the most marginal seat here then, with a 622-vote margin. Who would have guessed that I would be the last of the New South Wales class of ‘96 in this parliament?

 Redistributions have never gone well for me—losing the safer grounds and inheriting the harder areas. But somehow I still managed to grow my personal vote. The personal elation I felt back in 2004 to finally win the seat on primary vote alone, with 51.99 per cent of the electorate, was a feeling that was just too hard to describe or to dare ever imagine. And then to grow that to 53.86 per cent of the primary vote at the last election was beyond any comprehension. Again, I say thank you to my constituents.

 I took a forced sabbatical in 1998, and then I was re-elected in 2001, 2004, 2007, 2010 and again in 2013. The ‘forced sabbatical’—which is my term for an election loss—in 1998 was actually a blessing in disguise, because, in 1996 when I was first elected, I entered into this parliament as a politician and I thought, like many others who come into this House, that I was someone important. It went to my head. However, the humility of losing in 1998 made me determined to come back in 2001 as a local member—always putting my constituency first. It is what built the strong bond between the late Don Randall and myself: sharing the common experience of both victory and defeat in marginal seats.

 Bill Clinton, during his election for President of the USA, had a simple sign in his office, and it was: 'It's the economy, stupid.' In a marginal seat the sign, the slogan, is: 'It's the constituents, stupid.' You see, it is all about the constituents. For my constituents I have always had an open desk policy: I will meet with anyone on any issue at any time, whether it be state, federal or local government issues. Why? Because my constituents sought me out because they thought I might be able to help fix their problems. At times they just did not understand the difference between the levels of government or were simply so frustrated by the system, but they knew that the issue was so big for them that they needed help, my help. It was an honour and it was a privilege to have helped as much as I could. To each and every one of them I say, 'Thank you for putting your trust and your confidence in me and my team to do our best for you.'

 My loss in 1998 was a mixture of GST, mostly guns and an awful lot of Pauline Hanson. The 1998 loss was also a blessing for another reason: it allowed me to reconnect with my three children, David, Robbie and Samantha—the very reason I went into politics. I acknowledge them in the gallery today. Those who are in safer seats may not realise that marginal seat politics is all consuming of both time and finances, sadly at the family's expense.

 There have been so many local issues over the years. Within days of being elected I was contacted by local chicken grower John Wilkinson about a government regulation allowing for the importation of chicken meat—something that was signed off in the dying days of the former Labor government. The biosecurity concerns could have devastated our local chicken industry. They needed a champion so I donned the jersey. It was a bruising experience for me: my inexperience being carpeted by ministers and prime ministers, but it did not dampen my resolve. I had to stick up for my constituents, and I won. I won because we proved the protein testing presumptions were absolutely wrong.
The issues of RAAF Base Williamtown have been a long and continuing saga, whether it was fighting originally for the BAE lead-in fighter contract to be established at Williamtown or the continuing saga of aircraft noise. That was felt nowhere more on a constant basis than in Steele Street, Moxy Street and Slades Road at the very end of the runway. I acknowledge that Brendan Nelson, who was the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence at the time, gave me the opportunity to do the right thing by my constituents and have them voluntarily acquired. Living under each and every fighter plane's take-off and landing is not a pleasant experience. Those houses were there before the airport. It now continues with the PFOS contamination emanating from Lake Cochrane at RAAF Base Williamtown. There is a lot of work to be done; there is a long way to go. As I have said in this House before, the government need to stop the seepage from Lake Cochran as a priority and clean the base up first. Only then can they work on the downstream solution.

There were issues such as fighting for road funding for the Pacific Highway, Buckets Way, Lakes Way or our local roads. It is always a challenge and there is never enough money. Also, there was the issue of fighting for shipbuilding and securing the purchase of the Tomago shipyard for Steve Forgacs from the Australian Submarine Corporation. The former member for Newcastle Alan Morris just sat back and watched, kind of like fiddling on the hill like Nero whilst Rome burnt. The same could be said for his successors in Newcastle. They are always happy to complain when in opposition but are never there to do the heavy lifting when needed in government.

The building of the Thornton Aspect school was a personal highlight of my career because it involved my community and its spirit more than any government or its funding. I remember clearly when Tim Austin came to my office during the 2010 election campaign with his young son, Joe, because there was no suitable school for his autistic son. I had read an article the day before that the Aspect school was being kicked out of a public school ground because of the Rudd BER program needing the space at the school grounds for a new building. As a parent who went into politics to make a difference for all kids, this was my personal test—the actual measure that I would be judged against. So, while Tim sat opposite me in my office, I called a person whom I am very proud to call a personal friend—family of sorts—for over 20 years, and that is Hilton Grugeon. I acknowledge Hilton and Bev in the gallery today. After outlining the issue, I asked Hilton if he knew where I could get a block of land to build a school. After a minute's very deafening silence, he said, 'Yep.' We call him 'grumble bum' by the way because he grumbles so much! Then he asked, 'How much money do you have?' and I said, 'Nothing.' There was silence again and then he said, 'Okay.' I thought I would push the boundaries a little further and I said, 'Hilton, would you mind helping to build the school?' After another very long minute of extremely deafening silence, he said, 'Well, how much money have they got?' I said, 'Very little, but this is important.' He said, 'Okay, we'll build a school.' He also said to Tim, 'With friends like Baldwin, who needs enemies?' So the Aspect autistic school was built. It was built in record time, in just over six months, by Hilton Grugeon and our community. People gave their products, their labour, their time, their money and their support. I say to everyone involved: thank you from the very bottom of my heart. You could imagine how we were all shocked and devastated when Tim succumbed to depression ended his own life.
As a former builder, I spent a fair while on the tools with my son, David, building and erecting the internal frames of the school. It was a great honour to work beside my son who had just finished his apprenticeship. He wanted to put something back into our community. I had forgotten how long my hamstrings once were as a former builder!

I have also taken pride in working with St Phillips at Salamander Bay, Medowie Christian School, the Maitland Christian School and my friend Ray Collins from Catholic Education—and I extend my best wishes to Ray as he has now announced that he is retiring—when we have established new schools and expanded schools.

I have also worked with the New South Wales government to fund new schools, such as the Tomaree Education Centre, the Great Lakes campus and the Bulahdelah Central School, as well as the many upgrades to existing schools in Paterson. Investing in a child's education is important, as is parental choice in education. An education invested in a child is the one thing that can never be taken away from a child, no matter what they do in life.

Yes, there have been challenges. I have had to work on many doctor shortages over the years, whether it be in Karuah, Bulahdelah, Dungog or Medowie to name but a few. The system of RRMA arrangements is just so wrong, but somehow with the support of various ministers through the years we have achieved results for our communities. I also enjoyed working with Dr Arn Sprogis, the then head of the Hunter division of general practitioners to establish a pilot program, the after-hours GP program, in Maitland in 1998—a program by which others can be measured.

I have always looked for a challenge. When I met the lovable 'Fat Freddy', the late Ross Presgrave, he was a champion of young people facing a challenge, whether it was diabetes or cancer. So the seed was sown for the Ronald McDonald beach house retreat at foster. We worked extremely hard together and secured both government funding and community support for the beach houses. I thank Tony Abbott as the then health minister for providing so much necessary funds. While I miss my good mate Ross, I thank him each and every time I drive across the bridge at Foster for the legacy that he created for the families of sick kids.

In my electorate we have had our fair share of natural disasters, from severe windstorms to floods to fires. Windstorms of the like never seen before wreaked havoc in Metford in 1998, a community I was living in. That havoc was replicated just a few years later up at the Barrington Tops and then at Bucketts Way. So many trees came down it could have kept the timber industry going for many, many years. But the greenie controlled ALP state government would not have a bar of it. They would not let the lumber industry go in and recover the fallen timber, instead preferring to shut down the industry in Gloucester, Bulahdelah and Dungog. It destroyed the lives of so many of the people who for generations had been in the lumber industry that supported our communities.

The many bushfires have always taken a large toll on my rural community. But my community has always grown from the experience stronger than ever before. Then there were the severe floods in 2007, 2015 and 2016, almost equalling the 1955 floods of Maitland. The loss of property does not even begin to compare with the loss of life experienced in the floods just a little over 12 months ago. It takes time to rebuild lives, confidence and infrastructure. We have amazing communities—strong and resilient—and they are rebuilding. Whether it was the visits by then Prime Minister Howard in June 2007 or then Prime Minister Tony
Abbott in 2015, these efforts let the community know that we cared and that we were trying to understand what they were going through.

We have amazing volunteer communities in Paterson. Whether it is the SES, the Rural Fire Service or Marine Rescue, each and every one of them inspire me when they put their lives on the line to help others. I am so grateful to them and so proud of them. It has been an honour to work with and for them. I salute their service. As I said, our communities are resilient and tough—but they need both moral and financial support when fires and floods ravage them.

There have been so many more issues that I could have gotten into today, but time will escape me. But I need to recognise that Lyme disease is a real disease affecting people in Australia and that appropriate funding for diabetes, particularly juvenile diabetes, needs to be secured. I was also very proud of securing the seed finances for our now world-famous Hunter Medical Research Institute at the John Hunter Hospital. I acknowledge it has been supported financially by both sides of parliament in this House, but it has also been built by our community. I dare to name the person who undertook the building at great personal cost. His name was Hilton Grugeon. I thank him.

There are many more issues that I could keep going on with and that I have raised in this House before, whether it is the way marine parks are structured or the supertrawler, the Geelong Star, which is just so wrong on so many fronts. That is my opinion. Over the years I have found that the bureaucracy does not always get it right. The role of a minister is to steer and direct policy to the bureaucracy in the national interest, not to be steered by the bureaucracy. I would say to ministers: just remember that bureaucracy is always in government, never in opposition.

I have had a very fortunate career, a career that I have enjoyed so much, particularly when I served the nation at a higher order. I was deeply honoured when then Prime Minister Howard called and asked me to be Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources. It was a whole new direction in my life, working on the action agendas then under Ian Macfarlane, my colleague sitting in front of me. There were new challenges. I took them in my stride, whether it was working on the JSF program, advanced manufacturing or the restaurant and catering industry and the furniture industry, to name a few. I acknowledge John Hart from the restaurant and catering industry in the gallery. He has been an absolute standout advocate for his industry. I was also able to go in part back to my natural home, the tourism industry. As a former operator who had some very, very serious skin in the game over the years, it was a challenge and an opportunity and I embraced it wholeheartedly.

Then after the 2007 election the then Leader of the Opposition, Dr Brendan Nelson, called and asked me to serve as the shadow minister for defence personnel and assistant minister for defence. I had the opportunity to hold Joel Fitzgibbon, the member for Hunter, to account over pay issues surrounding the SAS as well as his being compromised over using his official position for the benefit of others. He was the minister who started the Labor defence budget cuts that ultimately led to the recent Newcastle shipbuilding closure and who, I must say, was aptly joined by the then member for Charlton, Greg Combet, as his junior defence minister. As usual, Labor did nothing in government and then complained when in opposition.

I again remind the House that no new prime shipbuilding contracts were issued during the six years of a Labor government—none. That is why we have had the valley of death in
The one death that had the deepest effect on me was the loss of Sapper Darren Smith. I met Darren and his dog Herbie in Tarin Kowt in 2010 when I visited as part of a parliamentary exchange program. Darren was charged with the responsibility of explaining to me, the member for Fadden, the member for Wakefield and Senator Hutchins all about detecting and clearing of the IEDs. His role was to detect, to protect and to save the lives of his mates. Who would imagine that some two months later I would be attending his funeral? All I could say was that I was sorry and thank you for the sacrifice. Words are just never enough as you feel and share the pain.

Just as I will never forget the final Saturday night in Tarin Kowt when the Dutch forces group were hit by an IED and then the coalition response. All of a sudden war became very real; lives were lost yet the work had to be done to save the wounded and recover the dead. Most importantly, in the rebuilding of a sense of purpose, the esprit de corps to move on, remembering the very purpose for being there in the first place, I witnessed a camp go from shock to realisation to recovery all in a matter of hours. I have to say that just sitting behind a desk trying to develop or understand policy will never ever teach you that.

I also remember being in the Q store Tarin Kowt, hearing of how essential supplies—tourniquets, special dressings, bandages—were all being held up and then ringing the then defence minister's office and advising that I had a press release ready to go in 48 hours, unless there was action on the hold-ups. I am glad to say that press release never had to go out. I also remember coming back to the defence committee of this parliament and raising the question about the need for short barrels for the Steyrs for our troops and night-vision glasses that only required one hand to use, not two. This was a request from those on the front line, in harm's way. They wanted immediate solutions. I could never accept the answers from those who just sat behind desks and whose greatest danger was stabbing themselves with a pen.

During this time I also worked with my friend and colleague, Louise Markus, the member for Macquarie, on the Defence Force Death Benefits Scheme and the inequities. Labor, under
Minister Snowdon, had promised action under the Podger review, yet, despite six years, delivered absolutely nothing except excuses. It took a coalition government to deliver the promises. I am so proud to have co-written the policy with my colleague. I do not make promises lightly.

I have always enjoyed the long and challenging journey with the Joint Strike Fighter, in particular the in excess of $1 billion that is being spent on RAAF base Williamtown redeveloping and preparing for its introduction. I really look forward to the first Royal Australian Air Force badged Joint Strike Fighter arriving at Williamtown in my electorate.

As I said previously, tourism is one of my natural fits. When the then opposition leader Tony Abbott offered me the opportunity to shape the coalition's tourism policy in 2010, I jumped at the chance. Immediately, I developed tourism roundtables; I relentlessly engaged stakeholders; I worked through all the issues. Together we developed a strong policy that the industry owned, because the industry developed it. I acknowledge one of my staff, Alistair Mitchell, who is here today and who was a key part of that. It is the very policy that has been introduced by the coalition that is ensuring that we grow our share of the international tourism pie.

Policies that moved tourism into its natural home, away from industry into foreign affairs and trade, that froze the passenger movement charge for three years, that saw the end to dabbling in domestic tourism market—which is the responsibility of the states—to become more internationally focused. It is a policy that saw an end to just backing winners to backing the industry as a whole, to funding that supported demand driven infrastructure, a policy that opened up new horizons with China, with easier multi-entry visa access.

But more, much more, needs to be done in such a dynamic, evolving market. Government needs to continue listening to and working with the industry, the very people with the skin in the game, who create the opportunities for our nation. They need to be listened to about penalty rates on weekends, which are killing the tourism experience. Let me make it very clear: tourism is all about the experience!

With Nola Marino, the member for Forrest, I went down to Margaret River as the shadow minister. That is a world-class destination, second only to Port Stephens, but it actually survives on a domestic tourism market from Perth—if my memory serves me correctly it is around 65 per cent of its market. On any Sunday or public holiday, many of the cafes; restaurants are shut. Why? Because they cannot afford the loss of penalty rates on these days, when there is a non-critical scale mass market—it depends on the weather.

I put this to the Leader of the Opposition: how would he feel if he went away for a weekend to a regional or rural area—he and his family arrive on the Friday night, and all is good; they go about their business on Saturday, and all is good—and he gets up late on Sunday and goes out for lunch or brunch but finds that all the cafes and that are closed? They simply cannot afford to open on a Sunday or a public holiday because, as I said, there is just not the secure, critical mass to rely on.

There are no second chances at first impressions. Not having a great tourism experience because of closures on Sundays and public holidays starts a never-ending spiral downwards. We need to improve it. Imagine how many jobs in regional and rural tourism areas could be created with the right policy. We need to understand that 75 per cent of something is better
than 100 per cent of nothing. The reality is that Labor misses the point, and tourists miss the opportunity.

As I said, I was privileged to work with the industry to deliver the policy that that industry created and owned—a policy that is delivering in spades back to the industry through the growth in international visitors. I thank Ian Macfarlane, who was then the minister, who delegated absolute control and responsibility to me. He said, 'Baldwin, it's all yours. It's on your head if you bugger it up! It's all yours.' I thank him for the opportunity.

After the election in 2013 I was made Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Industry, where I had the opportunity to continue to work with the then minister, again Mr Macfarlane. We had the opportunity to reshape our Anti-Dumping Commission and push the legislation to the very edges allowable under the World Trade Organisation arrangements, supporting Australian industry. Working with the steel and aluminium industries, and with the tomato and other agricultural industries on antidumping reforms, supporting Australian jobs, was an honour and a pleasure. I acknowledge my staff member from then, Aaron Parnell, who worked on that. Sadly, my colleague Fiona Scott made the mistake of marrying him!

It was also an honour to work with the Building Ministers' Forum to shape new directions, standards and, in particular, accountability. The move to online access for the Building Code of Australia was an expensive but a necessary benefit to the building industry. But much more needs to be done to enforce compliance with the standards for products being used in our building industry. People's lives depend on it.

The work that I was tasked with on the Rudd pink batts saga allowed me to utilise the skills that I had learnt as a licensed builder and as a building investigator for the former New South Wales Building Services Corporation. Having had hands-on experience, it was easy to grasp the issue and work towards realistic outcomes. It was also funny that I finished up my time as parliamentary secretary for industry doing work on the pink batts issue only to find myself with the task of cleaning up the environment side of it when I became parliamentary secretary for the environment. Talk about consistency.

There was no bigger shock to my system then being made parliamentary secretary for the environment in 2014. Perhaps the only people who got a greater shock were the greenies! In particular, I was charged with the responsibility for our nation's water. While I have spent an awful lot of my life underwater, in the diving industry, managing it from the surface was a whole new ball game. But I undertook a pragmatic, not a populist, approach to the issues. I negotiated the successful passage through the Senate of the bill abolishing the National Water Commission, because there was no further need for the commission—that had failed so many times before.

I also successfully negotiated the passage of the 1,500-gigalitre cap on buybacks in the Murray-Darling Basin, which was important to all of the communities. I got this through both the ministerial council and the Senate, and had the agreement of the Labor Party—and I acknowledge the then shadow minister, the member for Blaxland, who is at the table. We did it because we showed them what was in it for them, not just what was in it for the government. We managed to take everyone on the journey with us; it was not us in isolation.

I also had to clean up issues with the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust, where the right building was being located in the wrong spot. Using prime community land for a private
aged-care facility was just wrong on so many fronts. I respected the applicant and I respected their position, and I was more than happy that a mutually acceptable negotiated settlement was able to be achieved.

I also had the opportunity to commence the rebuilding of the tourism markets in our national parks in Kakadu and Uluru, where numbers had been steadily falling. I enjoyed talking to people, particularly the local Indigenous people, on the mutual journey to success.

Perhaps one of the most challenging jobs I have had has been the work on synthetic greenhouse gases and CFCs. Minister Greg Hunt has been masterful in pushing the agenda for phasing out synthetic greenhouse gases and CFCs globally. But for some in the industry it is not hard enough or fast enough. Whilst the passion and commitment are there, we all have to recognise that at an international level we can contribute to the leadership direction but we cannot dictate it. I think Mr Hunt has done an amazing job as the minister. It was an absolute pleasure to work with him. He delegated responsibilities to me and let me get on with them. I say to Greg Hunt: thank you, my friend.

Now my time as the member for Paterson is coming to an end, I am excited to be handing over the opportunity to someone with fresh passion, ambition, dedication and determination—a wonderful young lady called Karen Howard, who will seek to uphold the work levels, the commitment and the passion that I have put into Patterson for nearly 20 years. I with all of my friends will do everything we can to make sure that we hold this bastion, because when I go, from the Central coast to the Queensland border, there will be no more Liberals.

I have been asked: what will I do? I will look for challenges ahead in life. As Zig Ziglar said, and it is one of my favourite quotes, 'Please, Lord, don't let me die before I'm dead.' I will work towards something that provides mental stimulation along with job satisfaction. As I have said, I am retiring from politics, not from life. So now I leave this amazing house of power. To quote Sinatra, 'Regrets, I've had a few. But then again, too few to mention.'

Before I go, I need to thank some people. Again, I thank my constituents for their support—but you know I always tried my best for you. To the literally thousands of my volunteers and supporters over the 20 years: without you, I could not have achieved what we have achieved together.

I say to my family, who are here today to hear my final words in this parliament: thank you for your patience, your tolerance, your forgiveness. I am sorry for the too many times I put my constituents before them. In particular, I say to my children, David, Robbie and Samantha; Robbie's fiancee, Emily; and David's partner, Hannah: I am sorry that I passed up on your sports days, your speech days, your school ceremonies and your birthdays to attend to the needs, and attend the events, of others. I know you accepted it, but perhaps at times you did not quite understand it.

Cynthia became the ultimate single parent, working a stressful full-time job whilst achieving a master's degree in special education, and all whilst running a family and a household single-handedly. You are an amazing person. You raised, single-handedly, three wonderful children. The truth is, I was never there. I was gone before sun up and home after everyone was in bed. It was always the way, yet you rarely complained. I sincerely thank you. You deserved much better.
I say to my family: I am sincerely sorry, but I thank you from the very bottom of my heart for allowing me to achieve the ultimate dream, and that was to have been the 889th person ever elected to the Parliament of Australia in just 95 years. Time in this House has taken a personal toll. While here, I have lost a mother, a brother and just too many close friends. I know that I can never reclaim lost time. I know I should have been there perhaps a little bit more for you, but you accepted that I had a job to do, an important job. Such is the life of a marginal seat campaigner. If I were in a safer seat, perhaps I would have had more time to share, but, as a person driven by challenge, I doubt I would have ever felt the same about time served in this wonderful House.

It is said in politics, 'If you want a friend, then buy a dog.' But I have made some very great and close personal friends through my political journey: Gerry McGowan, who is listening to this in New York at the moment; Hilton and Bev Grugeon; and Peter and Sussie Evans, without whom I would never have been able to return to parliament in 2001. When I returned to parliament in 2001, I decided to run my campaign my way. If I lost again, it would be because I messed up, not others. That being said, I do thank the Liberal Party, without whom I would never have had the opportunity to have been elected.

I thank my staff. I thank all of them over the years, and in particular current staff: Chief of Staff, Simon Ryan; Shelley Mexon; Joe Wilkinson and Kraig Butler. They are all here today, as, indeed, are former staffers Aaron Parnell, Brooke Vitnell, Brett Sundell and Alistair Mitchell. Recently departed from my team is Adam Olsen, who is also listening from his new home in the USA. I must have done something right in developing staff over the years because members at state and federal levels always seem to be stealing them, including a Labor member in Newcastle who has taken one of my staff. I do not know what I did wrong there! I have helped them and I have loved watching them grow and develop into fine political advisers and operatives. I only won because of the efforts of my team—not my individual effort but the team effort.

I thank the many volunteers and Bob Geogehan, my campaign director and the FEC president under whose leadership I have never lost an election. I thank Dennis Martin, my treasurer, and all of the members of the Liberal Party and the National Party in my region. I have always tried to be a coalition candidate. Whilst there have been too many volunteers to single out today in the time available—I worked out that, if I read them all out, I would be speaking for about another 40 minutes—I must single out Doreen Bradley, who is in the gallery. Doreen is not the typical Liberal. In fact, she was president of the Labor Party branch in the Tilligery and ran the local campaign against me in 1996, 1998 and 2001. That is until the former state member for Port Stephens, the Labor member, refused to help her on a critical law and order issue in the community. He berated her in public for standing up for her community. As I said: politics, and in particular marginal seat politics, is all about the constituents. I listened, I helped and we become allies—so close, in fact, that I have now adopted her as my surrogate mum. I acknowledge her here today. I thank the many community groups that gave me the opportunity to help them so they could do what they do for our wonderful community.

Finally, I say thank you for the honour. Thank you for the opportunities. Thank you for the memories. May God continue to bless this great country in every way. Thank you.
The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Broadbent): The debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 43. The debate may be resumed at a later hour.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Gellibrand Electorate: Altona Miniature Railway

Mr WATTS (Gellibrand) (13:42): I rise to congratulate the Altona Miniature Railway for receiving departmental approval for a Stronger Communities grant yesterday. The Altona Miniature Railway is a hobby club run by members that provides miniature train rides on scaled steam and diesel engines over a 1.5 kilometre length track in Altona in my electorate.

I note this in the parliament today because it is truly an extraordinary achievement. The Altona Miniature Railway has, in one $12,000 grant, secured more Commonwealth funding for an urban rail project than was invested in urban rail infrastructure across the nation under the Abbott government. Victorian commuters are currently paying the price of Tony Abbott's ideologically-driven decision to cut the $3 billion of funding allocated by the previous Labor government for the Melbourne Metro Rail tunnel project. But, instead of making up for lost time, all Malcolm Turnbull has done is say one thing and do another on urban public transport. On coming to power, the Prime Minister indicated that he might allocate funding to it, but only as an investment that would have to make a return for the government, not as a grant. Now, in the budget handed down last night, the Prime Minister is saying that the government will allocate $958 million for this $11 billion project, but they want it spent on an additional $1 billion South Yarra station that the Victorian government analysis says will return only 30c in the dollar for the public. Instead of putting people first, the Prime Minister is putting commercial investment in Melbourne's east first. Victorians deserve better. They deserve a government that will put the interests of our growth corridors and our outer communities first. Labor will deliver that. (Time expired)

Leichhardt Electorate: Stronger Communities Program

Mr ENTSCH (Leichhardt) (13:43): Residents of Cape York and the Torres Strait will be very pleased to hear that three community focused infrastructure projects will be funded under the federal government's Stronger Communities Program. In Bamaga, the Naygayiw Gigi Indigenous Corporation will receive $5,000 towards a community bus that will be used to transport elders to meetings, social events and medical appointments, and by the dance group to get to performances around the Cape. In Lockhart River, the Puuya Foundation will receive up to $20,000 to help beautify the town centre, creating a visually-attractive garden and a place of reflection where community members can gather. And on Mabuiag in the Torres Strait, the Goemulgaw (Torres Strait Islanders) Corporation will receive up to $5,000 to install a mobile phone repeater so the community groups that operate there will no longer have to walk to the other side of the island to get phone reception.

This is fantastic news for these non-profit groups, who do essential work in our communities but often run on the smell of an oily rag. It is also great to see that, for every dollar the government is investing, the proponents themselves are making a matching contribution. These are all projects that have a very positive social impact on our residents. I am certainly looking forward to travelling up into that area in the not-too-distant future to encourage them to look at putting further initiatives into this program so that they can continue to build on it in their communities. (Time expired)
Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (13:45): Canberrans feared the worst from the Abbott-Turnbull government's budget last night, because we know what Liberal government budgets mean for Canberra. We saw it under former Prime Minister Howard. We saw it under former Prime Minister Abbott. Last night, we saw it on show again with Prime Minister Turnbull: more Liberal cuts to Canberra; cuts to Canberra's economy; cuts to our community; cuts to Canberra's public service; and cuts to our national institutions. These are cuts we should not be asked to absorb.

We found out last night that the Abbott-Turnbull government is cutting a further $1.9 billion from the Public Service. What do we get in return? Three hundred thousand dollars of investment in this city. It is absolutely outrageous. Those opposite say this budget is about jobs—which is true. It is about cutting thousands of jobs here in Canberra. That comes on top of thousands of public service jobs that have already been cut. It is about ripping thousands of pay packets out of the Canberra economy. It is about sacking the customers of Canberra's retailers and tradies. The National Library is losing one in 15 people; the National Film and Sound Archive, one in 14; the National Gallery, one in 12. For Canberra, the Treasurer is right: this budget is about jobs. It is about how many Canberrans will lose theirs. *(Time expired)*

Ms CHESTERS (Bendigo) (13:48): I can say one thing about the budget that was handed down last night, and that is that this government is delivering on the shocking cuts that were in the 2014 budget. Delivered last night were cuts of $240 million in emergency food relief for organisations that help our most vulnerable and $12 million for volunteer support programs. Another cut delivered last night was $45 million from the ABC. There were cuts to community legal aid centres and billions of dollars in cuts to health and education. This government is delivering on it cuts in the shocking 2014 budget. But that is okay. It comes back to priorities. What the government said last night is that they prioritise tax cuts for
millionaires. Last night they delivered a tax cut for millionaires of $16,000. Meanwhile, those on the smallest incomes will get nothing. The member for Petrie said in the Federation Chamber today: 'That's is okay. We give it to the people on $80,000. For those on $50,000, $60,000 and $70,000—don't worry. When you earn $80,000 you'll get the tax cut.' How are they going to earn an extra $30,000 to get the tax cut? When is the bill coming forward to suggest that we will increase wages by an extra $30,000 for those on $50,000? We have negative wage growth in this country. Wages are not going up by $30,000, as some would like to suggest; they are going backwards. This government is delivering for one end of town and hurting the rest of us. *(Time expired)*

**Budget**

**Mr GOODENOUGH** (Moore) (13:49): The budget provides additional funding to build better roads in Moore, adding to the federal government's record levels of funding in my electorate, which saw more than $210 million of federal funding last year. Under the Roads to Recovery Program, the City of Joondalup will receive $2,269,117 to assist in maintaining and upgrading local roads, whilst the City of Wanneroo has been allocated $2,712,056. In addition, under the Black Spot Program, the City of Joondalup will receive $390,000 to upgrade the accident-prone roundabout at the intersection of Hepburn Avenue and Glengarry Drive in Duncraig. Road construction activity in Moore is progressing on an unprecedented scale with the extension of the Mitchell Freeway and associated construction of Neerabup Road, and widening of Hester Avenue progressing ahead of schedule. Additionally, there is the widening of Wanneroo Road, Connolly Drive, Whitfords Avenue and Ocean Reef Road. These projects are also co-funded by the WA state government, and I acknowledge the contribution of my local colleagues in Hon. Albert Jacob MLA, Jan Norberger MLA, and the Hon. Peter Katsambanis MLC. These projects will pave the way for key economic development projects to progress, such as the Neerabup Industrial Area, the future Ocean Reef Marina redevelopment, and facilitate north-south and east-west traffic.

**Budget**

**Ms RYAN** (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (13:51): Unlike the member for Moore, I stand today to say what was not in yesterday's budget. Yesterday's budget was a very disappointing budget for the people of Lalor. It has been a week of contrasts. Last week in communities across Lalor we opened up the state budget to find that our communities were going to be supported, that roads were going to be delivered, that there was congestion-busting funding; but, in the federal budget, we find nothing. In fact, we have found less than nothing for the communities that I represent.

The Treasurer came in last night full of bluster about his tax cuts; but, really, it was cheap trick Tuesday, because a cheap trick was delivered in here last night. Families in my electorate will be worse off under this government. Four in five of the people working in Lalor—almost 80 per cent—will get no tax relief from this government because they earn under $80,000 a year. This is set against millionaires, who will get a $16,000-a-year tax cut. This is completely and utterly unfair. We did learn one other thing yesterday, and that is that Malcolm Turnbull is definitely a Prime Minister no different to the member for Warringah, who preceded him. One would have thought that he might have brought back the Office for Women, to have a look at this budget to see how it travels for women, but no. *(Time expired)*
Youth Suicide

Mr HASTIE (Canning) (13:53): Last month, I led a team of local leaders from the Peel region to meet with the Prime Minister and the Minister for Health about the alarming rate of youth suicides in our community. The team of local leaders came from all levels of government, including representatives from health, local schools and law enforcement. In attendance were the Mayor of Mandurah, Marina Vergone; the CEO of the City of Mandurah, Mark Newman; the state Liberal member for Dawesville, Dr Kim Hames; the state Labor member for Mandurah, David Templeman; the Young Western Australian of the Year, Rhys Williams; the Peel Youth Medical Service team of Eleanor Britton, Dr Rupert Backhouse and Amanda Poller; two students from Halls Head College, Paige Rosenberg and Matthew Read; and Sergeant Paul Trimble of the Western Australia Police.

Our team seeks better support services in Canning to address mental health, drugs, alcohol and other social issues. We have a local solution in the form of the PYMS Health Hub. The PYMS Health Hub is a vision for a unique regional facility that will deliver a comprehensive approach to the health needs of the youth in the Peel region, specifically for high-risk 12- to 24-year-olds. On behalf of the group, I thank the Prime Minister and the health minister for hearing local concerns on this issue direct from our local leadership in the Peel region. We sincerely hope that our vision for the health hub will be realised with funding from the federal government.

Budget

Mr HUSIC (Chifley) (13:54): Yesterday, when Scott Morrison delivered his first budget and you scanned that side of the parliament, everyone was up and clapping, except one person.

Mr Clare: Who was that?

Mr HUSIC: The person who was not clapping, Member for Blaxland, was the member for Warringah. It is no surprise because, basically, he lost his job as a result of someone saying, 'I need to provide new economic leadership.' That was Malcolm Turnbull, the Prime Minister. He said he would provide new economic leadership, and this budget delivered everything that Tony Abbott used to do: cut, cut, cut. Worse still, every single thing that was delivered under this budget is actually worse than under Tony Abbott. The deficit under Scott Morrison is worse than under Joe Hockey. The deficit over the forward estimates is worse than under Joe Hockey. Debt under Scott Morrison is worse than it was under Joe Hockey. Taxes as a proportion of GDP under Scott Morrison are worse than under Joe Hockey. Every single measure is worse, worse, worse. The cuts keep coming: cuts to schools, cuts to Medicare—we see all the types of things that are going on—and cuts to higher education. When the community judges this, they will judge all of you harshly. Which ones will go? The member for Solomon, the member for Corangamite, the member for Petrie—(Time expired)

Corangamite Electorate: Budget

Ms HENDERSON (Corangamite) (13:56): That is the sort of arrogance we hear from those opposite. Last night, the Turnbull government released our economic plan for jobs and growth. This is a national economic plan which drives investment in innovation and science and our defence industry and exports, delivers tax cuts and tax avoidance crackdowns and invests more in health, education and roads. In Corangamite, there is another $30.6 million for
roads, including $25 million for the Great Ocean Road and $1.5 million for a regional women's rehabilitation facility to treat ice addiction. There are tax cuts for small business to drive jobs, $840 million for a life-changing youth employment package, support for low-income earners to help them save for their retirement and a reduction in generous superannuation concessions for wealthy Australians.

Consider the Labor plan. Their housing tax will affect 7,134 people who negatively gear an investment property in Corangamite. Two-thirds of them have a taxable income of below $80,000. There are 10,396 homes being rented to people living in Corangamite. Rents will go up and they will suffer under Labor. If that damage was not enough, consider the renamed carbon tax—a tax on manufacturing, on jobs and on electricity. In contrast to the member for Corio, the Liberal candidate for Corio, Richard Lange, opposes this carbon tax, which is bad for the people of Corio, bad for the people of Corangamite and bad for our nation. (Time expired)

Budget

Mr CONROY (Charlton) (13:57): I rise to speak on the budget—a budget that promised so much but delivered so little for working Australians. The budget cut $1.2 billion from infrastructure, delivered zero for the Glendale transport interchange—the most important infrastructure project in the entire Hunter region—confirmed $29 billion of cuts to schools funding, cut Medicare by $1 billion, cut aged care by $1 billion and delivered zip for every worker who earns less than $80,000 in this country. In the Lake Macquarie region, the median wage is $45,000, so the budget delivered zip for working families in my area. As for the tax cuts for so-called small businesses, only a Goldman Sachs merchant banker would think that a business with a turnover of $1 billion is a small business. This is a budget that does not deliver for working families and does not deliver for pensioners—in fact, it cuts pensions for new pensioners. Let me repeat that: this budget cuts the pension for new pensioners. This is a budget that hurts working people, is as unfair as the 2014 budget and will be the tombstone around the neck of this short-lived Prime Minister.

Taxation

Mr HOGAN (Page) (13:59): Multinationals need to pay their fair share of tax. The new diverted profit tax announced last night will make sure large multinationals are paying the tax they should on profits made in Australia. I have always believed, as does my community, that, if you make a profit in Australia, that profit should be taxed in Australia. The people in my community of Page work hard and pay their taxes; so should large multinationals. This new diverted profits tax will result in many billions of dollars to the Australian community. I am proud that this government will close the loopholes that allow large corporations to exploit the differences between Australia's and other countries' tax rates. It will start on 1 July this year. We will provide the ATO with greater powers to deal with these multinationals. They will be penalised at a 40 per cent tax rate. This will reinforce that Australia has among the toughest laws in the world to combat corporate tax avoidance—a title we should all be proud of.

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

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:00): For the information of the House, I present a revised list of the shadow ministry.

In addition to his responsibilities as shadow minister for communications, the member for Blaxland will be the shadow minister for resources, supported by the member for Rankin, who will take on responsibilities as shadow minister assisting on resources in addition to his current portfolios. In addition to responsibilities as shadow minister for Indigenous affairs and shadow minister for ageing, the member for Blair will be the shadow minister for northern Australia. The member for Throsby will assume the portfolio of shadow minister for regional communications, in addition to his current responsibilities as shadow assistant minister for health. I am delighted to announce that Senator Patrick Dodson will be my new shadow parliamentary secretary.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank the member for Brand for his contributions to our party.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Housing Affordability

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:01): My question is the Prime Minister. On ABC radio this morning when Jon Faine told the Prime Minister his children were locked out of the housing market the Prime Minister replied, and I quote: Well you should shell out for them—you should support them, a wealthy man like you.

Is that really the Prime Minister's advice for young Australians struggling to buy their first home? Have rich parents?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:02): I thank the honourable member for his question. Housing affordability is a very serious issue, and it is very regrettable that the Labor Party are seeking to mislead young Australians about what their policy will do. They have represented to young Australians their proposed ban on negative gearing as being designed to make housing more affordable because it would bring down housing prices. Honourable members interjecting—

Mr TURNBULL: That is what they have suggested. Yet this morning we heard the member for Grayndler say that: What you will see as a result of our policy isn’t, you know, some fall in housing prices. It is not doing that at all.

So apparently Labor's negative gearing policy—their ban on negative gearing—is not going to result in any reduction in housing prices. So how could it possibly make housing more affordable. Then we ask this question. Labor's policy does not just apply to residential housing. It bans people from offsetting against their personal income net investment losses in commercial property. What has commercial property got to do with housing affordability?

An honourable member: Shares too.

Mr TURNBULL: Shares, business assets right across the board, every single asset class except new dwellings. The truth is as the member for Grayndler acknowledged this morning in his debate with the Leader of the House, the Minister for Industry and Innovation and
Science. As he acknowledged, Labor's negative gearing policy is like all of the policies they have announced so far—nothing more or less than a tax grab. Nothing more or less than measures designed to slow growth and discourage investment.

Honourable members interjecting—

Mr TURNBULL: Now, for our part, every measure we propose in our budget—every part of our economic plan—is designed to drive jobs and growth. It will ensure there is more investment, more employment, more entrepreneurship, more enterprise in Australia, and that will deliver our children and grandchildren the great opportunities that await them with a strong government with strong economic leadership and a vision for the great opportunities that await Australia if led wisely, prudently by a government that is committed to growth, to jobs, to a sustainable tax system and to ensuring that we bring our budget back into balance. That is our commitment. That is our economic plan.

The SPEAKER: I have made it clear each day this week that the level of interjections is far too high. Today is no exception. I particularly draw my statement to the attention of the members for Wakefield, Throsby, Bendigo, Rankin and Kingsford Smith.

Budget

Mr SUKKAR (Deakin) (14:05): My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister update the House on how the government's economic plan is driving jobs and growth to secure a strong economic future for all Australians? How will the measures announced by the Treasurer in last night's budget make our economy more innovative, competitive and productive?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:05): I thank the honourable member for his question. Every measure in our national economic plan, every measure in our budget, is directed to driving jobs and growth so Australia can continue the successful transition from the post mining construction boom to a stronger new diversified economy. An economic plan that delivers a stronger and more innovative economy is an economic plan that benefits all Australians. At a critical time in making this transition, we are working to a carefully designed long-term plan to build upon our enduring strengths as an economy, and make Australia more innovative, more competitive and more productive.

Our plan secures continued strong economic growth and more and better-paying jobs for Australians, their children and grandchildren. Our plan includes the innovation and science agenda announced in December, incentivising start-up businesses to generate the jobs and industries of the future. Our plan includes a historic investment in Australia's defence industries to provide our armed forces with the 21st century capabilities they need and to secure thousands of jobs in advance manufacturing for years to come. Our plan includes the export trade deals negotiated by our government with China, Japan and Korea that provide unprecedented access for our farmers and services industries to the world's largest and most dynamic growth markets.

Our plan ensures that our tax and superannuation systems are sustainable and that the government moves towards a balanced budget. The budget delivered by the Treasurer last night addresses gaps in the tax system, reducing superannuation concessions for the very wealthy and ensuring that multinational corporations pay the tax that they should. The budget works to balance the budget to reduce the burden of debt and deficit bequeathed to us by
Labor governments. Every measure is designed to drive jobs and growth. Our PaTH program provides new opportunities for 120,000 young unemployed Australians to get experience in the workplace. Our 10-year enterprise tax plan lowers company tax rates, with the small-business sector the early beneficiary. It will encourage more investment, higher labour productivity, higher wages and more jobs. We provided modest tax relief to average full-time wage earners so that 500,000 Australians are not forced into the second highest tax bracket. We are providing guaranteed funding for hospitals and schools, with an additional $2.9 billion to the states for public hospitals and an additional $1.2 billion for schools.

We are committed to this plan. This is the plan for jobs, for growth, for our future.

**Housing Affordability**

**Mr SHORTEN** (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:09): My question is to the Prime Minister. Can the Prime Minister confirm that in the past two weeks his advice to young Australians struggling to buy their first home was to have rich parents or to have parents who buy you a home when you turn one. Prime Minister, just how out of touch are you?

Honourable members interjecting—

**The SPEAKER:** The Prime Minister has the call. Members on both sides will cease interjecting.

**Mr TURNBULL** (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:09): There has never been an opposition that has surrendered so totally to a budget as this one. Here we are the day after the budget and not yet one question on the budget itself! I will make this observation about the Leader of the Opposition's question: he referred to a family buying an investment property and he referred to a one-year-old.

Opposition members interjecting—

**Mr TURNBULL:** He was referring to the Mignaccas in the member for Banks' electorate—a plumber and a social worker, the parents, who have bought an investment property which they are paying off. The proud father and mother said that they were making this investment so that they would have something when their little girl grew up that they could give to her. These are hardworking Australians. This ambition, this aspiration, this desire to make an investment for your children is despised and mocked by the Labor Party. They talk about being out of touch; they are so out of touch. The Mignaccas know that what they are doing is seeking to care for their children—just as the government is setting out to ensure that our children and grandchildren have the opportunities they deserve in the future. That is why we have laid out an economic plan that will deliver jobs and growth for the future, back Australian enterprises, ensure our tax system is sustainable, ensure we bring the budget back into balance and, over time, reduce the burden of debt, which, of course, will weigh heavy on future generations. That is our plan for the Australian economy. That is our plan for the future.

The Labor Party are sneering at the aspirations of parents. They are sneering at the hardworking Australians who seek to make something for their children. And they dare to talk to us about being out of touch! This is a war—a political war—they want to commence against aspiration, against ambition, against enterprise. We stand up for enterprise, we stand up for family businesses. We do not put family businesses out of business—that is the Labor
Party's way. We are for enterprise, we are for our children and our grandchildren, with their future in a 21st-century economy underpinned by a strong economic plan for growth and jobs.

Mr Husic interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Chifley will cease interjecting. The first point that I was going to make at the conclusion of the Prime Minister's answer was that the member for Chifley has been interjecting repeatedly. He is warned. The member for Wakefield is warned, as well, for interjecting.

Mr Champion interjecting—

The SPEAKER: I say to the member for Wakefield that I have asked him to stop interjecting. I now have a warning next to his name. The next action will be to put a line through his name. The member for Macquarie has the call.

Budget

Mrs MARKUS (Macquarie) (14:13): My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister outline to the House the importance to jobs and growth of a strong and successful small-business sector in Australia? What incentives is the government providing to encourage small family businesses, the backbone of our economy, to invest and employ?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:13): I thank the honourable member for her question. Every component of our national economic plan is directed at creating more and better jobs and boosting growth. Tax reform plays a critical part in this plan. Our budget is backing in small business with incentives to grow, invest and employ.

Over three million small businesses in Australia, often small family enterprises, are integral to the fabric of our economy and our society. We need them to grow; we need them to thrive. They are the engine room of the economy. They play an integral role in every community across the nation—from shopping strip retailers to the family farm, from tradies and motor mechanics to hairdressers and small professional practices, from food and hospitality to tourism operators and IT consultants. Their energy, their optimism, their entrepreneurship, their readiness to mortgage their home and borrow money to set up a business and to have a go—that is what drives jobs and growth and investment.

They are agile and flexible and they are able to make decisions to hire and invest at a rapid pace, which helps our economy transition from the mining construction boom to the 21st century economy. Our budget outlines a plan to reduce taxes for 870,000 businesses employing 3.4 million Australians. Under our 10-year enterprise tax plan, from 1 July this year the small business tax rate will be lowered to 27½ per cent. This will directly benefit 60,000 businesses that employ 1½ million Australians. The unincorporated small business tax discount will fall from five per cent to eight per cent. The small business entity turnover threshold will be increased from $2 million to $10 million—that will directly benefit between 90,000 and 100,000 businesses.

Those tax cuts build on our economic plan for small business, including the free trade agreements with Japan, Korea and China; saving of tens of thousands of mum and dad businesses by abolishing the tribunals set up by Labor to force them out of the trucking industry; improving our competition laws to give small business a fair go against larger firms; establishing unfair contract term protection for small business; and establishing the small business ombudsman. Our small business entrepreneurs have a vital role to play in our
successful transition to a vibrant, dynamic, innovative, 21st century economy. If our opponents say no to a tax cut for a small business with a turnover above $2 million and below $10 million they are saying no to a tax cut for 98,040 small businesses, who employ 2.17 million Australians.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER (14:16): I inform the House that we have present in the gallery this afternoon the Hon. Bruce Baird AM, the former member for Cook. We welcome you back to the House. Also is present my friend Mr Peter Falconer, the former member for Casey between 1975 and 1983. Welcome to the House.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Budget

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:16): My question is to the Prime Minister. How can the Prime Minister justify giving someone earning $1 million a tax cut of nearly $17,000 every single year, confirmed in last night's budget?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:17): I will ask the Treasurer to answer.

Mr Burke: Mr Speaker—

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer will resume his seat. The Manager of Opposition Business will resume his seat.

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members will cease interjecting. The Prime Minister is quite entitled to transfer a question to any minister. It is outlined clearly in Practice; you can look to the first paragraph of page 550. If that is what the point of order is about, it is not valid.

Mr Burke: Mr Speaker, the right of the Prime Minister to refer to another minister is when the other minister is better able to answer the question. How can the Treasurer be better able—

The SPEAKER: The Manager of Opposition Business will resume his seat. I say to the Manager of Opposition Business I am very tolerant with both himself and the Leader of the House, given their positions, but I do not want him to find the limit.

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (14:18): I thank the Prime Minister for the opportunity to respond to the question. The only change to the tax schedules that was contained in last night's budget was to broaden the middle income tax bracket to ensure that average wage earners on full-time earnings stayed within the middle income tax bracket.

On the matter that I think the Leader of the Opposition is referring to, I would like to take him back to when he was Assistant Treasurer. He spoke to the Tax Institute on 4 March 2011. He said:

The Government—
that is, the then Labor government—
recognises that higher taxation reduces incentives to work, save and invest—
Honourable members interjecting—

Mr Brendan O’Connor interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members will cease interjecting. The member for Gorton is warned. The Manager of Opposition Business on a point of order?

Mr Burke: Yes. Surely the Treasurer can be directly relevant to the budget for more than 20 seconds.

The SPEAKER: The Manager of Opposition Business will resume his seat. I refer him to my earlier rulings on this subject. The Treasurer is in order and he has the call.

Mr MORRISON: The Leader of the Opposition said:

… higher taxation reduces incentives to work, save and invest, which I believe are essential building blocks for ensuring Australia’s long-term economic growth.

I refer also to the words of his own shadow Treasurer, which under the bookkeeping rules that he will apply to managing a budget if he is Prime Minister means his Treasurer would be a shop steward, not a Treasurer, and they would apply union bookkeeping rules. The shadow Treasurer said:

People at the upper end of the income scale like a tax cut, and they deserve a tax cut.

The member for Fraser said, ‘Humans typically work harder when their tax rate fails.’ The shadow Treasurer—

Opposition members: Fails!

Mr MORRISON: Falls, I should say. The shadow Treasurer has also said:

There’ll be things like the deficit levy which we wouldn’t do in office …

He has said:

There are items which we might not like, like the deficit levy …

What we know of those opposite and their feigned attacks on this issue is that when they are in government they say that they want to reduce taxes and they think it is really important to reduce the tax burden. That is what I suspect the Leader of the Opposition may well think. But what we know is as the election approaches the political motive of this Leader of the Opposition knows no bounds. There is nothing he will not change, including when they came into this place and they voted for a temporary levy. We honour our promises. This Leader of the Opposition will break any promise, break any word, change any position because of the political opportunism that runs through every single vein in his body. What we know from those opposite is they cannot be trusted to keep a straight line on tax and supporting Australians to work, save and invest.

Dr Chalmers: You were arguing for super changes two months ago!

Ms Owens interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Rankin is warned. The member for Parramatta is warned.

Asylum Seekers

Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (14:21): My question is to the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection. With two refugees setting themselves on fire after being sent to offshore
detention camps, will you finally accept the consequences of putting desperate people in a situation even worse than the trauma that they are fleeing? Minister, aren't you just showing pure cowardice by blaming the advocates helping the vulnerable, instead of accepting responsibility for your actions? Can't we do better than this Labor-Liberal policy of not drowning but burning?

Mr Burke: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order—I suspect it stands for members opposite as well. The reference at the end of the question is deeply unparliamentary and offensive to all members of the House. I ask that the last part of the question be ruled out of order. It is not the policy held by any of us here.

The SPEAKER: I heard enough of it to concur. The minister will disregard the last part of the question. I ask the member for Melbourne to withdraw.

Mr Bandt: I withdraw.

Mr DUTTON (Dickson—Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) (14:23): I am sure I speak for all honourable members and, in fact, for every Australian when I say that we do not want to see people self-harming. We do not want to see them self-harming in our country; we do not want to see them self-harming on Nauru, Manus or anywhere else. Equally, though, all Australians do not want to see people drowning at sea. The reality is that we need to deal with very tough situations in relation to movements across our borders. We need to make sure, particularly in this day and age, that there is a secure border management system in place and we need to do that because we need to have a safe community.

The United Nations tells us that there are some 58 million people around the world who would seek to come to a country like ours because they want a better life for themselves and for their children. All of us can understand that. The reality is that we are a population of 24 million and we have one of the highest per-capita intakes in the world of refugees. Along with Canada and the United States, we take people in record numbers. Thirteen thousand seven hundred and fifty refugees will come to our country this year and, within two or three years, that number will grow to 18,250. In addition, we are bringing 12,000 Syrians in—we are conducting rigorous security and health checks to make sure that these people will be able to integrate successfully into our community—and we should be very proud of that.

But what the government have been absolutely adamant about is that we are not going to allow people smugglers to dictate the refugees who seek to come to our country. We have said from day one—we were elected, in fact, on this platform at the last election—very clearly and very definitively: the Australian people want secure borders. They want to offer a helping hand to those people who are in a desperate situation, and we do that through the refugee program. We bring refugees to our country by plane, not by boat. We will work with the Nauruan authorities and with the PNG authorities to provide opportunities for people there who have been found to be refugees—in the case of PNG, to integrate into Papua New Guinea society, or, on Nauru, to either stay on Nauru or move to Cambodia. We are working on third-country settlement options, but we need to structure any arrangement in such a way that it will not create a pull factor or an opportunity for people smugglers to get back into business. We have dozens of health workers working on Nauru at the moment, including mental health workers and support people, who are providing support to refugees and to people on Nauru but also delivering a very clear message—and that is that they are not going to settle in our country.
Mr Bandt: Do you still blame the advocates?

The SPEAKER: The member for Melbourne will not interject.

Mr DUTTON: We are not going to tolerate a situation which allows people smugglers to get back into business. It does mean that we need to take tough decisions to ensure that we do not see women and children going to the bottom of the ocean, as they did only a few short years ago. We should speak for the 1,200 people who drowned trying to make the journey across to our country, and we should never allow that to happen again.

Budget

Mr WOOD (La Trobe) (14:26): My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer update the House on how the Turnbull government's economic plan for jobs and growth ensures Australia continues to successfully transition from the mining investment boom to a stronger, more diversified economy? How will the budget support hardworking Australians, young workers and small business who are working, saving and investing in our stronger new economy?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (14:26): I thank the member for La Trobe for his question and his keen interest in the budget and how the budget is actually providing for Australians' future prosperity. Last night was not just another budget. Last night was a national plan for jobs and growth in a stronger new economy. That is what it was. It was about a national economic plan. What the Australian people need, what they are looking for and what they have received is a national plan to take us through the transition from the resources investment boom to a newer, diversified economy, where all Australians who are running businesses can grow their businesses and find jobs in those businesses.

There are six key points to that plan. Firstly, there is an innovation and science program for start-up businesses. Just passed through the House today are measures that will be there for angel investing in new start-ups—a measure that was particularly championed by the member for Banks—to ensure that we can get start-up businesses happening.

Secondly, there is a defence plan for high-tech manufacturing and technology. This is about a defence industry plan which is providing for high-tech jobs for decades, ensuring a naval shipbuilding program with the decisions that were taken by this government, decisions that were ignored by those on that side of the House for six years. It took this side of the House to make those decisions and to decide to build the naval fleet improvements here in Australia. This is providing the basis for our defence supply chain right across the country.

Thirdly, there are export trade deals to generate new business opportunities. This government's record on expanding trade opportunities is well known. I acknowledge in this House again the former trade minister Andrew Robb, who was the greatest trade minister this country has ever had—and I have no doubt that the new minister will be up to that same task as well.

Tax cuts and incentives for small business and hardworking families is the fourth point in this plan. The enterprise tax plan supports small businesses, which employ hundreds, thousands and millions of Australians who are in hardworking families and depend on the success of that business for their job and for their future. It will support them in those businesses, in addition to supporting those hardworking families in that middle-income tax
bracket, which we have expanded so that they do not pay higher rates of tax as they work harder and as they save and invest for the future.

This is a sustainable budget which cracks down on tax avoidance and loopholes, in particular multinational tax avoidance, which was ignored by those opposite when they were in government and ignored by those opposite in opposition when they voted against the laws. Our policies on multinational tax avoidance will deliver $3.9 billion to the bottom line, which means we can fund the tax incentives that are needed and guarantee funding to health, education and roads with real money that families can rely on.

Ms Butler interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Griffith will cease interjecting.

Budget

Mr BOWEN (McMahon) (14:30): My question is to the Treasurer. The budget states that the Treasurer's so-called enterprise tax plan will be phased in over 10 years, but the budget fails to outline a 10-year cost for this promise. So, Treasurer, what is the 10-year cost of your 10-year plan?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (14:30): The budgeted tax plan, which is in our budget and forward estimates, the shadow Treasurer might like to know, goes for four years; it does not go for 10 years. I note that those opposite have adopted a 10-year budgeting strategy, which has left a $20 billion hole in their costings for their policies. But I thank the member opposite for his keen interest in company tax cuts. And I know why: because on page 63 of Hearts & Minds we see a wonderful chapter—

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer will not use props. He is entitled to quote, but he will not use the book as a prop.

Mr MORRISON: In his weighty tome of Hearts & Minds: A Blueprint for Modern Labor, under 'Promoting growth through cutting company tax', it says—

Mr Burke: Mr Speaker, a point of order on direct relevance: the day after the budget, he should be able to be relevant to the budget for more than 30 seconds in an answer.

Mr MORRISON: He is very sensitive, the member for Watson, when it comes to weighty tomes of the member for McMahon. But what he said was:

We do not need to have the lowest corporate tax rate in the world …

We do, however, need to be concerned if our company tax rate is on the higher side of the world's advanced economies. … While 30 per cent sounds low compared to the rate that Paul Keating inherited, it is how the rate compares to that of our competitors that counts.

The member opposite likes to write about company tax cuts in his books. He likes to talk about them outside of this place. But he has no plan to do it. Our company tax cuts have delivered a cost to revenue of $5.3 billion over the budget and forward estimates. We know what they cost, and we have been able to ensure that we can meet and offset that cost by the other revenue-raising measures in the budget, which include our commitment to cracking down on multinational tax avoidance and removing access to generous concessions for those on high incomes and with high wealth. In that area we have raised $6 billion in additional revenue from just the top four per cent of those with superannuation accounts, and we have reinvested $3 billion of that back into ensuring that we can pay for the company tax cuts and
income tax cuts that are in this budget and, in addition to that, reinvested in making superannuation fairer, more accessible and more flexible for the Australians who need it.

Those opposite talk a big game when it comes to tax. They talk a big game when it comes to any number of issues—multinational tax avoidance and all the rest of it. But we know that in government they do nothing about it and in opposition they vote against it. And as we come to an election, the only thing you can notice is that they will engage in their class-envy politics. The Australian people are over it. They are over this opposition. There is nothing new about this Leader of the Opposition. He is the same old Labor politician we have known for a long time.

Ms LANDRY (Capricornia) (14:34): My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources. Will the Deputy Prime Minister update the House on how last night's budget is underpinning the coalition's support for Australian agriculture? How is this government's plan to deliver jobs and growth benefiting not only the people of Capricornia but the whole nation?

Mr JOYCE (New England—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources) (14:34): I thank the honourable member for her question. I know she has a distinct interest in agricultural issues because of the region she lives in and the fact that it is at the centre of the beef capital of Australia, in Rockhampton. Last night's budget did indeed build on what we are doing in agriculture. Not only have we taken agricultural exports to being the second-largest export, after iron ore, but we continue to build on the work we have done, especially through the agriculture white paper—the fact that we have a new country of origin labelling scheme being rolled out, clearly describing the proportion of what is inside the packet that comes from our nation, the fact that we are continuing to invest in research and development, and the fact that we work on the back of the 100 per cent write-off on water reticulation and on fencing and the write-off over three years for fodder storage. We also acknowledge that we work on the back of what we have done in getting an ACCC commissioner in to make sure that farmers are dealt with fairly, and the $20,000-a-year small plant write-off, which is now extended to $10 million, and that is incredibly important. And there is the work we have done on co-ops, and the work we have done on new Foreign Investment Review Board guidelines, and drought concessional loans: over 800 people receiving over $400 million. That is not a bad turnaround considering that when we actually arrived in government only eight had been given out, and now we have 800. That is 100 times better than with the Labor-Greens-Independents alliance.

But two things that are vitally important in last night's budget are what we are doing with water storage and what we are doing with transport, especially the inland rail. In water storage we have put aside $½ billion already for the assessment and for capital grants to build new dams. I know there are so many areas in the Fitzroy—Eden Bann, Rookwood and further north—and the Ord. I know Wellington also has a strong interest. These areas want water storages built, and we have a $2 billion concessional loan facility to assist us to build these water storages, because we are not scared of building the water storage. We are not scared of taking our nation forward.

We can see a great metaphor for what happens under Labor with—it is actually in my own electorate—Chaffey Dam. When we arrived it was underfunded, unbuilt, unapproved. And
we will open it on Friday. That is the sort of delivery that we do, because we are 'doers' on this side. We actually make things happen.

It is not just there. It is also on the inland rail—so often just a discussion piece by Labor, the Greens and the Independents, but we put close to $600 million on the table for that because we believe that there should be a corridor of commerce from Brisbane through to Melbourne, in the western regions of New South Wales and Queensland and through Victoria to give those real opportunities. This is a great budget for regional people. It is a great budget for agriculture. It is a great budget for Central Queensland right down to Victoria and everywhere in between, and to the west and to Tasmania. (Time expired)

**Budget**

Mr BOWEN (McMahon) (14:37): My question is to the Treasurer. The government last night released modelling of the impact of the Treasurer's so-called enterprise tax plan over 10 years. Given that it is inconceivable that the government would have modelled the economic impact without modelling the cost to the budget of his plan, will the Treasurer now outline to the House the 10-year cost of his 10-year policy?

Mr Joyce interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Prime Minister will contain himself.

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (14:38): The modelling details were released last night in accordance with the normal processes of the budget. I refer the member to those figures and to those papers that were released last night. I find it interesting, though, that the shadow Treasurer is raising questions about costings, particularly costings over 10 years. We all know that those opposite have a plan to increase the tax burden on the Australian economy by $100 billion.

Ms Butler interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Griffith is warned!

Mr MORRISON: Well, it was $100 billion until we found out that he was short by a rounding error of some $19.5 billion. Their promises for education are so linked to the tobacco excise revenue, courtesy of the member for Adelaide, who has linked these two together. It is what we know over the budget and forward estimates. Let's just put the $20 billion black hole that they have to one side over 10 years. Just over the budget and forward estimates, the hole in their funding on tobacco excise revenue is $3.25 billion. That is money that they do not have to spend on the promises that they have been making to Australian parents. But we have seen it all before. We saw it with the mining tax with the member from Lilley when he was Treasurer. He was going to have the great mining tax. If it were operational now, we would actually be paying money to the mining companies as a result of that tax. And this was going to build roads and it was going to do all sorts of things. It was one of the member for Grayndler sphinxes that he built while he was the minister for infrastructure. But what we have seen from those opposite is form. They get these things wrong and then they cannot fund the things they say they can fund. What happens then is the Australian people are either let down, as they were by those opposite, or they pay more in tax, because what we know about those opposite is they know they cannot control spending. I am quite sure they will make up that $20 billion black hole. They will just tax people more and more and more, and it will not stop, because this Leader of the Opposition cannot stop
spending, that shadow Treasurer cannot stop spending and, worse than that, they cannot stop taxing.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER (14:41): I would like to inform members that we have present in the gallery this afternoon an APEC delegation from Japan. On behalf the House, I extend to you a very warm welcome.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Defence Procurement

Mr BRIGGS (Mayo) (14:41): My question is to the Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science. Will the minister advise the House how the Turnbull government's defence plan for local high-tech manufacturing will improve the productivity and competitiveness of the Australian industry? How will innovative manufacturing create jobs and growth for Australians?

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House, Minister for Industry and Innovation and Science) (14:41): I am absolutely delighted to get a question from the member for Mayo about innovation and industry, because he, like me, is very excited about what the budget holds for industry policy and innovation policy into the future. Because, like the member for Mayo, right across the country this budget is the most exciting time to be in industry and in innovation.

Through our Defence Industry Policy Statement, committed to in this budget, we will be creating thousands and thousands of jobs right across Australia, in Cairns, Brisbane, Newcastle, Sydney, Melbourne, Tasmania, Perth and Adelaide. They will all benefit from the extraordinary investment that we are putting into naval shipbuilding around this country. There are 21 Pacific patrol vessels, 12 offshore patrol vessels, nine future frigates and 12 submarines and at least $90 billion of investment in naval shipbuilding around Australia, and all are driving high-tech, advanced manufacturing jobs. In that way, there are our defence industry commitments. As the minister for industry, I am particularly excited about the opportunities that this gives for advanced manufacturing and high-tech.

In this way, we are driving our innovation agenda, because the fourth pillar of the National Innovation and Science Agenda is the government as an exemplar. The Prime Minister and I, when we launched it last December, talked about using our procurement dollar—in that case, in ICT, but also in Defence—to drive innovation right across our economy; not to spend that money overseas but to try and use every lever that the government has at its disposal to drive innovation and high-tech jobs across the economy. That is what we have done in last night's budget.

It is not just in naval shipbuilding but right across Defence procurement. Whether it is the upgrade of Defence facilities and some of the barracks around Australia, the Woomera Defence rocket range, the Joint Strike Fighter program, the Poseidon program, support for our intelligence agencies or our radar and sonar capabilities, this is going to have a real impact in real firms, which you would have thought Labor would support rather than mock. There are firms like Leavitt Engineering, in the member for Wakefield's electorate, who are working on
the Joint Strike Fighter program, the Collins-class submarines and Defence global supply chains; Nova Systems Consulting, in the member for Adelaide's electorate, who are working on the Air Warfare Destroyer and the LHD; and APC Technology, in the member for Port Adelaide's electorate. This is an area where, as South Australians, we can drive our Defence dollar to create jobs and growth.

Budget

Mr BOWEN (McMahon) (14:44): My question is to the Treasurer. Treasurer, the 10-year corporate tax cut plan was your self-described centrepiece of last night's budget. Is the Treasurer seriously telling the House that he did not have costed over 10 years the centrepiece of his own budget?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (14:45): Our plans are fully costed. They are accurate and they can be relied upon, just like our commitment to cut company tax. We know that a tax on the businesses that employ millions of people in this country is a tax on their enterprise. A tax on that is a tax on growth and jobs.

Those opposite used to believe that. In fact, it was not that long ago in that great tome *Hearts and Minds* that the shadow Treasurer said:

... the United Kingdom, facing a much tougher fiscal situation than Australia's, cut its company tax rate to 23 per cent in April 2013, to be reduced further to 21 per cent in April 2014.

That is what he said. He said they did that even though times were tough and things were difficult and it would have been hard to afford. He said, 'That is something that should be admired. That's what should be done.' But on 2 May 2016, this is what he said:

I don't think that a cut for the company tax rate of Australia's largest companies is a priority at the moment.

We know that those opposite will change their view on pretty much every issue to whatever they think will politically advantage them. It is not about a good economic plan for Australia. It is not about having a plan for Australians across the country. It is just about a plan to prop up one person, and that is the Leader of the Opposition. What they do is all about one person. It is about trying to drag this Leader of the Opposition along and make him look as good as they possibly can. They do not have a plan for the future; they have a plan for higher taxes.

The Australian people know that the more the opposite propose to spend the more they will be taxing. Every time you see the Leader of the Opposition's lips moving he will be spending more money and then he will be taxing you more. That is what you will learn every single day of the election campaign that follows. They will keep spending and, as a result, they will keep taxing.

The costing of the company tax cut in this budget is $5.3 billion over the budget forward estimates. You can rely on that. Australian businesses know they can rely on a government that understands that a dollar in the hands of someone who earned it is better than a dollar in the hands of the government. But those opposite do not think that. Those opposite cannot tax this economy high enough. We have a Leader of the Opposition who will make it until he can fake it and we have a shadow Treasurer who will tax it until he can break it.

*Mr Dreyfus interjecting—*

The SPEAKER: The member for Isaacs is now warned.
Trade

Mr HUTCHINSON (Lyons) (14:48): My question is to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Will the minister advise the House how the government's economic diplomacy strategy is helping Australian businesses access new export opportunities through our export trade deals and, in doing so, creating jobs and growth?

Ms JULIE BISHOP (Curtin—Minister for Foreign Affairs) (14:48): I thank the member for Lyons for his question. What a great champion he is for Tasmanian businesses in his electorate. This government is making every effort to ensure businesses across Australia, particularly small and medium businesses, are able to benefit from the opportunities created by the free trade agreements that this government has entered into with massive markets to our north, including with China, Japan and South Korea.

We need to enhance our representation overseas. Last night in the budget the Treasurer announced that there will be two new diplomatic posts and missions in China and in Papua New Guinea as a way of enhancing our presence in these countries and increasing our economic engagement with them. This means that since 2013 this government—

Mr Perrett interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Moreton is warned.

Ms JULIE BISHOP: has presided over the largest single expansion of diplomatic missions and Austrade posts in at least 40 years, with new posts in not only China and PNG but also Indonesia, Mongolia, Qatar, Iran, Thailand and the United States.

Our economic diplomacy efforts do not stop overseas. We are also making every effort to enhance diplomatic representation in Australia, thus increasing our trade and investment. Last week I hosted over 80 Canberra based foreign diplomats on a visit to Tasmania. I want to thank the member for Lyons, the member for Bass and the member for Braddon—the 'three amigos!'—for helping with this visit. Through their efforts, Prime Minister Turnbull and I were able to meet with representatives of Tas Prime Oysters, a Tasmanian company that will benefit from the free trade agreements with China, Japan and Korea because tariffs on seafood, particularly Tasmanian oysters—

Mr Conroy interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Charlton is warned.

Ms JULIE BISHOP: will be eliminated by 2020.

Premier Will Hodgman also introduced the over 80 diplomats—

Mr Husic interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Chifley has been warned. He will leave under 94(a).

The member for Chifley then left the chamber.

Ms JULIE BISHOP: to businesses in Tasmania that produce seafood, fruit, chocolates, wine, whisky and beer—all export opportunities for Tasmanian businesses. I want to thank the members for Lyons, Bass and Braddon for ensuring that these businesses had the opportunity to meet with diplomats who were interested in export opportunities for their produce and goods and services into their countries around the world.
'Made in Tasmania', 'grown in Tasmania' and 'produced in Tasmania' are synonymous with high-quality, clean, green produce and goods, and the world is demanding more. This government is committed to backing Tasmania and backing small business.

**Budget**

Ms PLIBERSEK (Sydney—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:51): My question is to the Prime Minister. Why is the Prime Minister cutting $4,463 every year from a single working mum with two kids in high school on $87,000 a year while he is giving someone earning $1 million a year a tax cut of nearly $17,000?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:52): Mr Speaker, the government is doing no such thing.

**Budget**

Small Business

Mr EWEN JONES (Herbert—Government Whip) (14:52): My question is to the Minister for Small Business and Assistant Treasurer. Will the minister update the House on the additional support our government will provide to Australia's hardworking small businesses? What will these measures mean to the small business sector in my seat of Herbert and the city of Townsville? How will these measures create jobs and growth?

Ms Plibersek interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Sydney will cease interjecting. The member for Sydney has asked her question; we are onto the next question.

Ms O'DWYER (Higgins—Minister for Small Business and Assistant Treasurer) (14:52): I would very much like to thank the member for Herbert for this question. As someone who worked very hard in a small business before coming to this very place, the member for Herbert very much understands small business. He understands that this Turnbull government is backing hardworking small businessmen and women and encouraging workforce participation and business investment to improve growth and to create jobs. We are expanding tax incentives and tax cuts to even more small businesses so that they can reinvest in their businesses and they can create local jobs.

More than three million small businesses will benefit from the government's cuts to tax. From 1 July 2016 the company tax will be reduced to 27.5 per cent for the 870,000 small businesses with a turnover of less than $10 million. Unincorporated small businesses will also benefit from increased tax discounts of eight per cent from 1 July 2016 for the more than 2.2 million unincorporated small businesses with a turnover of less than $5 million. We are also expanding access to a range of small business tax concessions for businesses with a turnover of less than $10 million. This includes access to those $20,000 instant asset write-offs, which mean that business owners can invest in their business.

How will this help the electorate of Herbert? Under the government's new definition of small business, there are more than 13,000 small businesses in the electorate of Herbert with a turnover of less than $10 million. Take, for example, the Great Northern Laundry. This is one example of a fantastic small business in his electorate. It employs more than 50 people in the local community; it has a turnover of above $2 million. Currently, it does not qualify for the government's small business tax cuts or concessions, but under the government's changes the
Great Northern Laundry will receive a tax cut of 2.5 per cent and will be able to take advantage of the instant asset write-off. Are there any risks to this? Well, yes, there are, and they are sitting opposite. Labor has said that it will tax small- and medium-sized businesses more. Compared with our economic plan, they will force more than 90,000 small businesses, employing more than 2.2 million Australians to pay more tax. As the Leader of the Opposition said in his interview today on the ABC: 'It's a matter of priorities.' We on this side of the House prioritise small business; we back small business. Those opposite stand in the way of small business and are a handbrake to their expansion.

**Budget**

Mr BOWEN (McMahon) (14:55): My question is to the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer confirm that he said last year to Ray Hadley:

Well, what we want to make sure of with superannuation is that we need to respect the fact that people have been saving under particular rules over a long period of time that there is nothing that punishes or penalises them retrospectively on any of these things. I mean that is one of those iron clad rules about when you look at these systems.

If that is the Treasurer's ironclad rule, why did he do the exact opposite last night?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (14:56): I thank the member for the question, because I did no such thing, Mr Speaker. I did no such thing. You might want to listen carefully. What the government did last night on superannuation is that we did not change the taxation status of superannuation funds in the retirement phase. We did not change it; they remain tax-free. If you have money in a retirement phase account, you do not pay any tax on the earnings in that account. There is only one side of politics that is doing that, and that is those opposite.

Those opposite will change the rules if they are elected; if you have money in a retirement phase account, you will pay tax on the earnings. That is what their policy is. We did not do that policy, because it is not a good policy and it does not accord with the principles that we follow on this side of the House. Last night we ensured that the generous tax concessions for those on very high incomes and very high levels of assets those concessions have been taken away for those at that level—$6 billion will be raised over four years from just the top four per cent of those in those categories. We have taken $3 billion of that and we have invested back into this superannuation system and we have invested it back in ways to ensure that, if you work up to the age of 75, you can still make contributions to your superannuation. Particularly for those who are largely self-employed, we have removed all the restrictions on them being able to make tax deductions for the contributions they make to their superannuation. That is really important news for tradies.

We have also lifted the threshold for people in couples so that the primary income earner now will have greater opportunity to invest in the superannuation accounts of the secondary income earner. We have re-established the support for those on low incomes through the Low Income Superannuation Tax Offset, which will make 25 per cent of those low income earners with accounts better off.

So with superannuation we have not gone after a tax grab like those opposite. All that those opposite see when they see an Australian working or saving or investing is an opportunity to tax them. On this side of the House, we see an opportunity to encourage them. Through last night's budget we want to encourage people, particularly those in small business, to go out
and employ young people. There are 120,000 placements for young people to get into real jobs with real employers, based on real experience.

**Budget**

Mr MATHESON (Macarthur) (14:59): My question is to the Minister for Health. Will the minister inform the House how the Turnbull government's guaranteed funding is putting patients at the centre of the health care system?

Ms LEY (Farrer—Minister for Health, Minister for Sport and Minister for Aged Care) (14:59): It is a pleasure to take a question from the member for Macarthur, continuing the excellent work of his predecessor, Pat Farmer, in fabulous Western Sydney. I am delighted to report to the House that spending in the Health portfolio has increased in this budget by 4.1 per cent. It is now $89.5 billion. Some of the highlights of this budget are our fast-tracking of access to medicines and medical devices, making Australia a much more attractive place to invest in and innovate—

Ms Plibersek interjecting—

Ms LEY: The member for Sydney has, helpfully, reminded me of our first ever Commonwealth public dental scheme—

Ms Plibersek interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Sydney will not interject!

Ms LEY: the largest ever Commonwealth investment in a dental scheme that Labor really should have introduced—

Ms Plibersek interjecting—

The SPEAKER: I have asked the member for Sydney not to interject!

Ms LEY: We have an important women's health initiative. We are building infrastructure to train new doctors in the bush, because access to GPs is vital for rural and regional Australians. We are creating a national registry for breast and cardiac devices. They are just some of the highlights.

But, against that background, I remind the House of our ongoing solid policy development in health, all of it designed with patients at the centre. I have a saying that the further away the dollar falls from the patient the less effective it is, and that is what our policy does, whether it be our $2.9 billion funding for hospitals—received with great pleasure by every single state health minister—building in reform around safety, quality and reduced avoidable hospital admissions; the landmark Medical Research Future Fund; our mental health reforms that really stop people falling through the cracks; access to medicines and new breakthrough drugs; or access to medicinal cannabis and the important reforms to come for the supply and cultivation of something that will help patients in distress.

Against that background, we are in the dying days of the 44th Parliament, and we do not have a single health policy from Labor—not a single health policy. We have not heard one. We started last year with a big year of new ideas—

Mr Dreyfus interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Isaacs has been warned.
Ms LEY: we had not one single idea in health. And I am still waiting. The Leader of the Opposition said today, 'We've got a plan to properly fund our hospital system,' but the only plan that we have ever heard of was reported in The Courier-Mail recently, when we were told that Bill Shorten’s team had been meeting with state Labor treasurers to determine what health funding they could live with. In other words, Labor were going around working out the sort of deal that could get them off the hook for their $57 billion unfunded spending promise that they have rolled out time after time. Absolutely not one single policy— (Time expired)

Ms Plibersek interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Sydney will cease interjecting!

Budget

Ms KATE ELLIS (Adelaide) (15:02): My question is to the Prime Minister. Why is the Prime Minister making Australian families wait two more years for any help with their childcare fees, while he gives someone on $1 million nearly $17,000 every year?

Government members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer and the Leader of the House will cease interjecting!

Mr Pyne interjecting—

Mr Morrison interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the House will cease interjecting, as will the Treasurer!

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (15:03): The honourable member's question—and, I believe it is likely, the member for Sydney's question—proceeded on the premise, the false premise, that there is a change to the deficit levy in the budget. There is no change to the deficit levy in the budget at all. The deficit levy was introduced two years ago, to run for three years; it adds two per cent to the top marginal rate; and it expires on 30 June next year. It was introduced for three years only, and apparently the Labor Party want to make it permanent. So they want to increase the top marginal rate, permanently, by two per cent.

Mr Bowen interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for McMahon!

Mr TURNBULL: I would simply refer honourable members to the remarks of the shadow Treasurer when it was proposed. He said:

… we don't believe that the answer of increasing the marginal tax rate is an innovative one or it's good policy when you consider that we have to compete for labour around the world.

I also refer members to the remarks by the Leader of the Opposition back in 2005, when he said:

It should be remembered that reducing the top marginal rate is part of the solution …

Apparently increasing it is now part of the solution! Of course, there are the immortal words of the shadow Assistant Treasurer, who observed: 'Humans'—as opposed to other species, no doubt—

Ms Butler: Mr Speaker, on a point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Prime Minister will resume his seat.

Honourable members interjecting—
The SPEAKER: The Prime Minister will resume his seat. It is difficult for the Prime Minister to hear me when people are interjecting. The member for Griffith, on a point of order, and she will state the point of order.

Ms Butler: Yes, on direct relevance, Mr Speaker. He needs to come to child care—

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Ms Butler: to be relevant to the question.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I am listening carefully to the Prime Minister. But I thank the member for Griffith for giving me the opportunity—

Mr Pasin interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Barker, I believe—

Mr Pasin: Yes, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: thank you for owning up—will not interject. I say to the member for McMahon: I have asked you to cease interjecting. Earlier today, I agreed to your matter of public importance, and I think you would like it to go ahead. And the member for Sydney, I am presuming, wants to be here to hear it.

Mr TURNBULL: As I said, the shadow Assistant Treasurer observed: Humans typically … work harder when the tax rate falls—

and that is a very good insight, for which we thank him! Another interesting insight on the matter of taxation and motivation came from the member for McMahon back in 2005, when he said in this place:

We all like a tax cut. Everybody likes a tax cut—

not anymore, apparently!—

People at the upper end of the income scale like a tax cut, and they deserve a tax cut. Under Labor they would get one.

Well, under this Labor Party, what they would get is a tax increase.

A number of these questions, full of assumptions and numbers, have been based on a completely false premise—that the budget deals with the deficit levy. It does not. The deficit levy was introduced for three years. The Labor Party criticised it trenchantly and then finally voted for it. They voted for it to be a three-year levy. If they want to propose tomorrow night that the top marginal rate be increased by two per cent, then they are free to do so, but that would be a consequence of their policy, not ours. It would be a change in their policy, to increase income tax.

Budget

Mrs WICKS (Robertson) (15:07): My question is to the Minister for Small Business and Assistant Treasurer. Will the minister update the House on the government's plans to improve the superannuation balances of Australian women? How will these important reforms help Australian women to be more economically secure?

Ms O'DWYER (Higgins—Minister for Small Business and Assistant Treasurer) (15:07): Another great question from the very hardworking member for Robertson. The hardworking member for Robertson knows that this government, of course, has a plan to have a very strong economic future for all Australians, but particularly for women. One of the features of our
budget and of our government is to make sure that we change the superannuation system so that women can save more for their retirement. We are providing flexibility and more incentives for those women to save for their retirement because we know that women are more likely to experience interrupted work patterns that can include: taking time out to care for children or to care for loved ones. That contributes to women having lower lifetime earnings and, therefore, lower superannuation balances.

We know that, on average, women retire with around 35 per cent less superannuation and that they outlive men. But, knowing these facts, what has the Turnbull government decided to do about it? We have acted to allow women to make catch-up payments for their superannuation when they return to the workforce. They will be able to use the unused parts of their concessional cap on a rolling five-year basis if they have balances of less than $500,000 in their retirement savings. For the member for Robertson, this will actually help her constituent, Amy—who takes a year away from work to care for her baby and earns no income that year—so that she can then contribute up to $50,000 concessially the following year when she returns to work. We are also extending the current spouse tax offset to help families to support each other to further accumulate superannuation savings. If her constituent, Amy, goes back to work part time and she earns less than $37,000, then her partner, Steve, is able to now put money into her superannuation account and get a tax offset of up to $540.

We are also supporting low-income earners, who are more likely to be women, to accumulate superannuation through the low-income superannuation tax offset. This replaces the low-income superannuation contribution, but it deals with it through the taxation system, not the payment system, as those opposite would like, and it helps around two million Australian women. Women should not be economically disadvantaged if they have interrupted work patterns. This government is determined to make sure they are not and it is determined to ensure that women can save for their retirement and can have a strong retirement income. That is what we stand for on this side of the House.

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

AUDITOR-GENERAL’S REPORTS

Report No. 29 of 2015-16


Ordered that the report be made a parliamentary paper.

DOCUMENTS

Presentation

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House, Minister for Industry and Innovation and Science) (15:11): Documents are presented as listed in the schedule circulated to honourable members. Details of the documents will be recorded in the Votes and Proceedings.
Communique of 21st National Schools Constitutional Convention
Presentation

The SPEAKER (15:11): For the information of honourable members, I present the Communique of the 21st National Schools Constitutional Convention held from 16 to 18 March 2016.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE
Economy

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

The failure of the Government to provide an economic plan for Australia’s future.

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

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

Mr BOWEN (McMahon) (15:12): Three years ago my predecessor as shadow Treasurer responded in the MPI the day after the budget and he warned about growing debt and deficit and what a Liberal-National Party would do about it. He announced that to the House. Who would have thought that three years later—with the member for North Sydney retired to Washington to fight the age of entitlement from the ambassador's residence and replaced by the member for Cook—the member for North Sydney's successor as the Liberal-National Party Treasurer announces a budget which sees a deficit that the member for North Sydney forecast for this year tripled under a Liberal-National Party government, and a Liberal-National Party Premier outlines a budget balance off in the distance that is based on very optimistic presumptions and forecasts, and the budget sees Australia's net debt increase by $109 billion, from $217 billion to $326 billion. That is this government's idea of dealing with debt and deficit.

Is it any wonder that the Treasurer was asked this morning on radio whether the debt and deficit disaster was over and whether the budget emergency was over? He was very agile and nimble in his response, as you would understand. He said, 'That's a tired old argument.' 'That's old politics,' said the Treasurer. Of course, it is pretty difficult. He could hardly say that it was over with those figures. He could hardly say, with his unfunded and uncosted taxing plans and plans in his budget, that it was over. The Treasurer was caught out.

Even the figures that I just outlined in terms of debt and deficit are based on very optimistic forecasts from the Treasurer. Nominal growth, the most important growth measure in terms of impact on government revenue, is predicted to jump from 2½ per cent this year to 4.25 five per cent next year, and then five per cent over the forward estimates. Well, that is a relief. I am sure honourable members are relieved to hear that everything is okay. Nominal growth is going to just rocket up and fix the budget.

I read that forecast last night in the budget. I thought: 'That sounds familiar. I've read similar figures to that in the past.' I got out last year's budget from our old friend the former member for North Sydney and I found that he was forecasting nominal growth this year of
3.25 per cent, which was revised down to 2½ per cent, and 5.5 per cent for 2016-17, which is now revised down as well.

Mr Brendan O'Connor: Heroic!

Mr Bowen: They have a plan to fix the budget but it is just that for the next year they have to put in a little adjustment to say, 'Actually, it didn't quite work out that way.' I wonder what we will see about these forecasts in coming years. We have a budget based on wages growth of 3½ per cent. As the member for Gorton well knows, wages growth of 3½ per cent might be called an heroic assumption. The Treasurer has decided that the recent up-tick in iron ore prices is permanent. It will also come as a relief to the House to know that with the temporary recent increases—which we all hope are there for a long time—the Treasurer has decided that it is okay. We can bank on those, and he will build his budget plans on them.

The Treasurer tells us that he has come up with a plan for jobs and growth. I have to admit—and I am going to give credit where it is due—this government's economic plan announced last night has done better than most of the economic plans announced by the Turnbull government. It has made it to day 2. It is a long-lived economic plan, this one, by the standards of the Turnbull government. The biggest reforms to Federation in our history did not make it to day 2. State income tax did not make it to day 2. The big sweeping broad tax reform that the Treasurer promised last a little while longer, but it certainly did not make it to budget day. Dealing with the excesses in negative gearing did not last too long either. So this plan is doing very well. By the standards of the Turnbull government, it is standing up very, very well to scrutiny. But what it is not doing well is standing up to scrutiny when it comes to its impact on the budget, because it is a 10-year plan.

What we have been told by the government is that we all have to live within our means. We all have to budget for the long term. What we have to do is make sure our decisions make the budget sustainable. So, of course, the obvious thing to do is come up with a 10-year plan and have a four-year costing. That is the obvious thing you do in this situation, isn't it? It makes eminent sense to everybody. The Treasurer thinks it makes eminent sense to everybody that you would have a 10-year plan, except not cost it over 10 years. Could you imagine what would happen if we proposed that? If we said that we had a 10-year plan but we were not going to cost it over 10 years, I think the Treasurer might have something to say about that. I think the Prime Minister might even decide to get himself excited about that. We have the centrepiece of the budget, the so-called jobs and growth plan—the plan for 10 years time—and the Treasurer cannot tell us how much it will cost over those 10 years. He managed to get costing over 10 years his cuts to schools and hospitals. That was important enough to cost over 10 years, but he did not bother to get costed the centrepiece of his budget—and he expects the House to endorse a 10-year tax plan, without knowing what it costs. He expects the Australian people to endorse a tax plan on 2 July, and he cannot tell them what it costs. This is fiscal recklessness, and we will not have a part of it. We will not be part of a 10-year tax plan which is unfunded and uncosted.

The Treasurer can lecture us about funding schools and hospitals and how it should be paid for, and we will remind him that his policies need to be paid for as well. He cannot pay for them, because there is a small little technical detail: to pay for something, you need to know the cost of it! That is how it works. You have to work out the cost before you can work out how to fund it. It is a pretty basic process, which the Treasurer seems to have forgotten.
understand he was rushing it. He had a week less than he thought. But he still could have thought to cost the centrepiece of the budget. This shows the hypocrisy of this Treasurer, who is simply not up to being the economics minister of a G20 economy, as we have been shown time and time again over recent days.

We also know that the Prime Minister promised substantial tax reform. He promised it last Sunday on the Chris Kenny show. He told us it was substantial tax reform. We have seen what substantial tax reform is—a $6-a-week tax cut if you are on $87,000. But, credit where credit it is due. There is some substantial tax reform in the budget. If your annual income is $1 million, you get a $16,750 tax cut. That is substantial—I grant you that. Sixteen thousand dollars a year—that is substantial. We give points to the Prime Minister for that. We acknowledge that that is substantial.

But we should not be too harsh on the Treasurer. It is his special day—his budget. It may be his only budget, so I am going to try and find things in the budget that I like, that we can endorse. I have looked through it and I have found some.

Mr Albanese: Our policies.

Mr BOWEN: We can endorse them because we announced them! We can endorse them because they are Labor policies announced by the Leader of the Opposition, by me and by my colleagues over the course of the last two years to deliver budget repair which is fair, such as dealing with high income superannuation. Why don't we make $250,000 the threshold for the surcharge? Who thought of that? We did. The Treasurer personally led the campaign against it. He said it was an attack on the retirement of incomes of all Australians. He was going to fight to the last drop of his blood to oppose it. Last night, he announced it. That was his great big plan. We had tobacco. Of course, not only did the Treasurer oppose that, the health minister opposed increasing tobacco tax. The health minister said it was a tax grab. It is just unbelievable that a government could spend two years campaigning against things, announce them and then argue that this was their plan all along. What we saw last night was not a budget; it is an alibi for the last three years. The last three years did not happen.

What we are told is that this budget is a plan for jobs and growth. I will tell you, Mr Deputy Speaker, what a jobs and growth plan would not do. A jobs and growth plan would not cut $1 billion from Australia's infrastructure budget. That is what a jobs and growth plan would not do. We were told that this budget was going to be great for infrastructure. It was going to have a cities policy—

Ms Macklin: Where is it?

Mr BOWEN: Apparently, the cities policies, at its core, was to take $1 billion out of infrastructure. That is their great plan.

Mr Fitzgibbon: Bring back Jamie!

Mr BOWEN: Bring back the member for Mayo. He might have done better. The other thing you would not do in a jobs and growth plan is cut funding to schools for the future, to actually say to Australia's schools: 'You don't need that money.' Apparently money does not count. Well, tell that to the principals and the teachers in Australia's schools who are trying to improve their educational outcomes and using the resources that they have for good outcomes by doing good things under the Gonski funding model but who are about to have it cut. That is not a plan for jobs and growth.
A plan for jobs and growth would not have a second-rate and more expensive NBN, which is this government's policy. Who is responsible for that? A man called the Prime Minister of Australia, who has had the disaster of the NBN on his watch. It now costs more, takes longer, is more expensive and is less efficient than the plans left to him by the previous government. We will have an election based on plans for jobs and growth. We will have an election based on your budget. We will have an election based on our priorities. It is an election that you will regret.

Mr HAWKE (Mitchell—Assistant Minister to the Treasurer) (15:22): Never could there be a more stark contrast opening up between a government and an opposition than in what we just heard from the shadow Treasurer. If you listened to the Treasurer last night delivering his economic plan for Australia, outlining, measure by measure, the confidence intervals that the government is putting into place so that businesses will continue to grow, so that we have a good plan for jobs and growth, and then listened to the shadow Treasurer opposite, it would tell you that the opposition has simply learnt nothing in three years and that they continue to be a reckless and negative opposition. You could not see a starker contrast.

This budget is clearing the path for economic growth and jobs in a stronger new economy. Listening to the Treasurer last night, Australians would be aware that this is a government that will stick to the economic plan that will make our economic transition a success. Australians know that the world is in difficult economic times. They know that we have to make this transition. Indeed, it is the households, the small businesses, the larger businesses and the ordinary Australians having a go that are making that transition every single day. This government is dedicated to producing and delivering on its economic plan to ensure that the government not only lives within its means, balances the budget and reduces the burden of long-term debt but also delivers real incentives for jobs and growth in our economy.

If the opposition wants to come into this chamber and lecture us on not having an economic plan, we can outline with absolute clarity what our economic plan is for Australians. I am going to speak to that plan once again so that the shadow Treasurer can get it, because he has missed it. He has not heard it. We have a plan that will ensure jobs and growth in Australia. It is multifaceted. It meets the needs of the economy and our people. It has policy settings that will not hold Australia back and will keep the nation's prosperity going. It includes an innovation and science program for start-up businesses. We are investing in new measures for different forms of capital, at the start-up phase of businesses and through crowdsourced equity funding—all the different new economy measures that will produce more start-up businesses with more innovation.
Our defence plan, as the industry minister said in question time, will leverage each and every single dollar of defence expenditure across the economy to ensure that we have that local high-tech manufacturing base and sustainable order cycles in our shipbuilding and ship enterprises across the country, ensuring that that investment in ongoing maintenance and sustainment of these vessels will be over the long term in Australia, with each and every single dollar that the government spends on the defence industry and in the industry portfolio. We have a real plan for jobs and growth using Commonwealth defence expenditure to ensure Australian industry is sustained.

It is also important to remember that we now have free trade agreements, thanks to this government, with all of our main export markets—something the shadow Treasurer did not mention in his speech. We have enabled free trade agreements with China, Japan, Korea and the USA—our top four export markets. The trade minister is working, and continuing the work of the former minister, to pursue a free trade agreement with one of the world’s emerging economies, India.

We have a sustainable budget crackdown on tax. What you can see in all the measures are responsible measures on tax—measures that will ensure that we provide the right incentives to our economy and do not send the wrong signals to our hardworking small and medium businesses. We have a crackdown on tax avoidance through our new diverted profits tax, a successful measure out of the UK, and we have 1,000 ATO staff working on multinational tax to raise $3.7 billion. We have measures that have not been thought about before—whistleblower protections, penalties for nondisclosure and real action on multinational avoidance—that will deliver $3.7 billion. This is real money, costed by the ATO, not fantasy figures as we have seen in the opposition costings.

Importantly, the incentives in our tax plan are the real basis for growth and jobs in our economy. How else do you grow jobs in our economy except by providing incentives through our tax and innovation systems? How else can any government provide the right settings for small businesses to grow and become great medium and large businesses in Australia? That is why we are lifting the threshold for small business to $10 million immediately and reducing the rate of business tax to 27.5 per cent. All Australians who work in a small business—whether they run and operate a small business, want to start a small business or employ people in a small business—ought to pause and think very carefully about the settings that governments put in place for tax for small business across Australia. We are increasing the threshold to $10 million and we are reducing the rate.

What does the Labor Party have to say?

Mr Burke: Will you campaign on that?

Mr HAWKE: I will take the Manager of Opposition Business’s interjection. He asks if we will campaign on that. We will campaign on small business. We will campaign on tax cuts for small business. We will campaign on lifting the threshold to $10 million, and I will tell you why. While we lower the rate for small business, small businesses will be enabled to grow and add more workers. They will be able to access the instant asset write-off. They will spend more in our economy. They will enable more purchasing. They will enable their business to grow, adding more employees. Jobs and growth—that is why the coalition will campaign on tax cuts for small and medium Australian businesses.
It is the Labor Party that wants to deny a tax cut to 90,000 small and medium Australian businesses that are doing it tough competing against multinationals and other large competitors in Australia. It is the Labor Party that wants to deny a tax cut to those businesses. It says you are a large business in this country if you get $2 million of turnover. That is the Labor Party's position. It says you are suddenly a large multinational company if you have a turnover of $2 million or if you sell one sandwich over $2 million you are suddenly a large business and you do not deserve a tax cut. That is the Labor Party's position. We absolutely reject that notion. We reject it because we understand the real economy. We understand how hard it is for a small business to grow in this country. We understand what non-competitive rates of business tax do on the international stage when you want to export your goods, and we understand what they do to your ability to add an extra worker, to put on an extra shift, to grow your business or to invest in a new asset.

These 90,000 businesses employ 2.2 million people. We should not underestimate the importance of this point. There are 2.2 million people employed in those 90,000 businesses that the Labor Party say are too large. These are Aussie small businesses working hard every day. This is turnover, not profit. Those opposite are making a big mistake with this, and I am happy to help them so. We will campaign on this every day. We will walk every street in every electorate and we will tell people: 'If you want to grow your business, if you want to get ahead in this country, if you want to add more people on, if you want to add an extra shift, if you want to add an extra worker, the Labor Party will stop you. The Turnbull government will enable you to grow your business and enable you to grow jobs.' That is why this is a budget for growth and jobs. That is why this is a real economic plan. This is not a set of measures; this is a real plan for businesses to grow and adds jobs in this country—more jobs and more growth. We combine this with our measures in income tax. We are going to make sure that half a million Australians do not enter the second highest marginal tax rate. There could be no more important priority in the income tax spectrum at the moment than to prevent half a million hardworking Australians, average full-time income earners, from moving into the second highest category of income tax. There could be nothing more important.

Ms Butler interjecting—

Mr HAWKE: I take the member for Griffith's interjection. 'Are we trying to insult people?' No. This is a fair budget for hardworking people and average full-time income earners are hardworking people, and they deserve a tax cut. They deserve to not move into a higher category of tax, and we have to do what we can afford at the moment. Given the debt and deficit legacy that we have been left with by Labor, these are all affordable measures. They are real money. They are real, costed measures that will deliver for Australians. It is our 10-year tax enterprise plan that will grow jobs, grow the economy and deliver the growth that Australia needs. It is the Labor Party that does not understand this economy and cannot be trusted with the serious job of running a serious economy.

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (15:32): 'Ultimately, the Prime Minister has not been capable of providing the economic leadership that our nation needs.' It was true when the now Prime Minister said that before he became Prime Minister, and it is still true now. What we saw in last night's budget was continuity with change. That is exactly what we saw in last night's budget. It was continuity with change, certainty with chaos, calm
with fear—Turnbull yet Abbott. That is exactly what was presented to us last night. It is even affirmed in the documents that were given out last night.

The poor Prime Minister! Clearly, people had not told him what was in the budget. He was asked a question by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition about the impact of the budget on someone earning a million dollars a year compared to the impact on a single mum who is earning $87,000 a year with two kids in high school. The person earning a million dollars, after what was confirmed last night, will end up nearly $17,000 a year better off. The single parent working on $87,000 a year ends up $4,500 worse off. Nobody told the poor old PM. On page 8 of the budget overview it said:

The Government is committed to ensuring that the $13 billion of unimplemented expenditure savings measures are passed by the Senate or alternative savings measures identified to continue on the path to a balanced budget.

What the Prime Minister needed to know is that that means the 2014 budget is still here and the 2015 is still here. The cuts that brought down the previous Prime Minister and caused the end of the Abbott government have all been adopted in black and white last night by the Turnbull government. The very least those responsible for these decisions could have done was tell the Prime Minister, but the poor bloke stood up today with absolutely no idea as to what has been put in his own budget. Not only that, those opposite have been getting up and thinking that the changes to the corporate tax rate that were announced last night were about small business. Nobody told them what was in the budget!

I reckon the Prime Minister did know about this one. I think it is fair to say that he was onto this. So desperate was the Prime Minister to provide a tax cut for big business that he decided to use small business as Trojan Horse. Not surprisingly, those opposite will only talk about what happens to the definition of small business in the first year.

Ms Henderson: You don't understand it.

Mr Burke: You might not understand what is here. If you do understand what is here, you are mad for supporting it. What they have done is all listed under the claim in the title of this document, Making our tax system more sustainable. The sustainable one is the one they have not costed. On page 17 of that document, they take the definition of a small business to one with a turnover of $10 million a year, in the first year. In the second year, it moves up again. It is not only in this document. It is here in the budget papers. The definition then goes up to $25 million. The definition of small business the year after that goes up to $50 million a year. Until we get to the 2022-23 income year, when the definition of small business is a business with a $1 billion turnover. As an attempt by those opposite to hide that they were providing a benefit for big business, it is probably best not to get to the billion dollar figure! By the time you get to the billion dollar figure, I reckon the public are on to you. If those opposite want to get a tax cut for their mates in big business, just own up to it, but do not claim that businesses with a $1 billion turnover are the little guy. Do not claim that those with a $1 billion turnover are the businesses where the person running the business knows every one of their employees by name. That is not a $1 billion turnover company. But that is a small business measure that those opposite backed last night.

You have a centrepiece of the budget and they do not know how much it costs. They describe it as a small business measure, but instead what they are delivering is the most extraordinary outcome for big business. With the company tax rate, the benefits go to the top
end of town. With the personal income tax rate, the big benefits go to the highest income earners. Budgets are about choices, and every ordinary Australian family and every average Australian worker knows in making those choices those opposite have not chosen them—they have chosen themselves and their mates.

Mr WHITELEY (Braddon—Government Whip) (15:37): Let us try to bring some calmness to this debate. We have had the duelling actors out and about for the last 15 minutes. I would not mind so much if they were actually good at it, but they are not even good at that.

The reality here is: these people opposite, who claim to be the representatives of the future of Australia, have no understanding of the importance of business in this country. When we talk about jobs, when we talk about our young people needing a future and needing employment opportunities—not just young people but, generally, people who are experiencing unemployment—we have to understand that businesses, whether they be small, big or huge, are the hope of the side. Business is the hope of the side, if we are talking about unemployment. But we know that those opposite with a socialism bent believe that the hope of the side is to simply have the government employ everyone. They want the government to employ. They are the people who think that that is the way to fix unemployment.

We on this side of the House support business. You can argue the toss about small, medium, large or huge, but the fact of the matter is: for our young people to have the opportunity into the future for a job, we need to make sure there is certainty and confidence in the business sector. We need to make sure that the business sector has a competitive taxation regime and that it has people working for it who are aspirational and are wanting to build a future for their families. What is wrong with that? What do those opposite have against business? Why is it that, every time this government or the community calls for certainty and confidence, incentives and all that go with building that into business, the Labor Party falls short of supporting it?

I do not know what they have against business, but they need to understand that business in this nation is the hope of the side. If we do not provide that confidence to business, if we do not provide them with the incentive to keep their businesses in Australia—because we are lagging behind when you talk about the competitiveness of the company tax rate in comparable countries and we are lagging behind when you talk about personal income tax rates. I want to be part of a government that understands that our businesses need to be competitive, because those businesses, at the end of the day, will provide the jobs for my kids and my grandkids. Those jobs do not appear out of nowhere. They appear through the hard work, the determination, the investment and the backing in of themselves of businesses all over Australia.

In those businesses, we have people who we call 'tradies'. They are the businesses where maybe a husband and wife team up to run their own little plumbing business or building business. One of the partners is doing the trade; the other is supporting them in the management of the business. They are often just partnerships. They are simply partnerships. They are aspirational Australians. They want to build a future for themselves, their children and their grandchildren. They do not want to be necessarily depending on an age pension when they get to that age. They want to be self-sufficient. And what do we have today? We have a Labor Party that says that anyone who is earning $80,000, or even $79,000 today and creeping over $80,000 tomorrow, should not have a very small sense of taxation relief. We
are only talking here about $300-odd as a maximum—the difference between $80,000 and $87,000. Can we put to rest, once and for all, this nonsense about someone earning huge amounts of money getting a $17,000 tax cut? That is absolutely ridiculous. The Prime Minister put that to bed, but you guys over there will continue to perpetuate this deceit to the Australian people. But I am sure that they are up to it.

Having Labor talk about their support for budget repair, as I heard the earlier speaker say, is like Hannibal Lecter talking about his support for vegetarians. Really, these are the very people—and most of them are still here—who were part of a government that trashed the national economy and that left us in high levels of debt that this country has never ever seen. And they stand here today and suggest that they have the answers to repair the budget! Anybody with any common sense who is listening to this or reading this today would know that you cannot trust the person who lit the fire to come back and put it out.

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler) (15:43): I rise to talk particularly about infrastructure and the failure of this government to understand that infrastructure is the key to future jobs and economic growth. This is a budget that absolutely fails. It is a budget that has a $1 billion cut to infrastructure investment over the forwards alone. It is a budget that, in four years time, will see the amount of money that is allocated to rail that is not an equity injection through the ARTC fall to zero dollars.

This is a Prime Minister who came to office saying that he was going to talk about cities and urban policy. What we have seen is that his 30-minute city policy did not actually last 30 minutes. It is a 30-minute policy! In last night's budget, not a single new project was approved—not a single new project anywhere in the country. There was no money for the Cross River Rail project. There was no money for light rail or heavy rail in Adelaide. There was no money for Metronet in Perth. There was no money for new major road projects. Just simply, there was a continuation of their magical infrastructure re-announcement tour around the country.

It is coming to an end because projects are being opened. The regional rail link down in Geelong, Bendigo Ballarat is now open. It is functioning. Projects like the Moreton Bay rail link will be opened in the next month. They were promised, funded, built and opened under a Labor government—opposed by those opposite. There is no money for western Sydney rail and no money from major road projects. We have just heard a speech from a Tasmanian. Tasmania gets under two per cent. That is its total percentage of the infrastructure budget: a cut to the rail revitalisation program and a cut of $100 million to the Midland Highway. Victoria's percentage, to be fair, has increased. It is now up to 9.6 per cent. It is just a pity that they have 25 per cent of the population. One in four Australians are getting less than one in 10 of the dollars.

Those opposite speak about Infrastructure Australia and processes and they raise the east-west link—come in spinner. It was a project that was to produce 45 cents of benefit for every dollar invested. I have a proposition for everyone over there: you give me $100 today and I will give you back $45 tomorrow and we will call it a good deal. That is the proposition. What is more, they cut the Infrastructure Australia budget. It falls by 25 per cent in two years. One in four dollars will be cut from the Infrastructure Australia budget. What we saw last night was not budget 2016; it was fudge-it 2016, because the dollars simply do not add up. If today you are not planning for the infrastructure of tomorrow, the investment will fall off the
cliff. We have already had under this government a 20 per cent decline in public sector infrastructure investment on their watch.

**Dr Leigh:** Twenty per cent!

**Mr ALBANESE:** Twenty per cent—one in five dollars—gone. That will result in lower future economic growth, lower returns in revenue, slower growth, fewer jobs. Is it any wonder that the steel industry is in trouble when investment has dropped off the cliff? This is a government that has no agenda for infrastructure and, in particular, has no agenda for our cities: $50 million for planning, that is it. What a joke of a policy. It is no wonder they are not taken seriously.

**Mr HOGAN** (Page) (15:48): Budgets certainly highlight values. That was demonstrated again last night and by the conversation that we are having in this chamber today. The main highlighted value for me in the budget last night was our respect for and acknowledgement of the importance of small business in our communities and our country. I understand, and I know this side of politics understands, the importance of unions and the importance of worker protections. That plays a role in business and in private enterprise in looking after those rights. But what those opposite do not understand is that the important thing in all of this is a healthy private sector. As you know, Deputy Speaker Vasta, small business is the biggest employer in this country by the proverbial country mile. It employs more Australians than big business and it employs more Australians than the public service. Let us add to that that the public servants in this country are paid for by the taxes from the private sector.

What do we as a government have to do? Our primary role to have a strong economy is to have a strong private sector. This tax cut is about that. Not only do we need to have small businesses employing and growing, we need them to be competitive in a global world. I know everyone on our side of politics understands that taxation is competitive. There are some businesses that may have to operate in a physical location, but in this increasingly digital world, in this increasingly global world, taxation is competitive. If we were to have our business tax rates at a higher level than those of our competitors it would discourage people from setting up business. That is an absolute fact. I recall the example of Ireland. Labor would have been proud of Ireland in the early eighties; it was a high-taxing, high-spending government. Then the Irish worked out they were going broke, so they lowered the company tax rate from what was something like 60 per cent to 10 per cent. What happened almost instantly, over a period of about three years, they started collecting more money. They started collecting more money at a 10 per cent tax rate than they were at 60 per cent.

**Opposition members interjecting—**

**Mr HOGAN:** Those opposite do not fathom this; that is why I am getting interjections. They do not get that what happened after that was that Ireland became the IT centre of Europe. It became the IT centre of Europe because that was the emerging business, the emerging industry, of the time. Those businesses said, 'Let's move somewhere where there is a business friendly environment.' What happened then of course is that there was much more employment, and things were going very well in the private sector.

Another thing that I am very proud that our government has done is clamp down on multinational tax avoidance. It is something that the other side has talked about. They were in for six years and did nothing about it; we have been in for two and are now doing a lot on it.
While we believe in competitive tax rates, we certainly believe that businesses and multinationals should pay their fair share. So it was great to see in the budget that the government I am very proud to be a part of has brought in a diverted profits tax. We, by reinforcing the ATO and giving them more resources to do this, are budgeting to collect nearly $4 billion over four years to make sure that multinationals pay their fair share—because, if you are making profits in Australia, you should be paying tax in Australia, and that is what this measure will ensure.

I am running out of time, so I will touch on a couple of things that I am really happy about. In our youth employment package of over $800 million, business will be working with government. Businesses take a big risk. Those opposite would not know that, but I have employed people. When you employ people, it is a big commitment. You know that they are not going to be productive at the start and that you will have to train them. There is a big expense when you take someone on. Again, those opposite would not know that, but we do because most of us here have employed people. We are going to work with small business and, together, put in place internships, skills training and a bonus wage subsidy to encourage small business to employ people.

On infrastructure, employment and competitive taxation it is a great budget and I am very happy to be part of the government that brought it down.

Dr LEIGH (Fraser) (15:53): In mid-2009, the then Leader of the Opposition, Malcolm Turnbull, decided he would bring back an old stunt from the Liberal Party—the notion of a debt truck. He put a debt truck on the road, sat at its wheel and said that under Labor gross debt might go to $315 billion. That, he thought, was so terrifying that the Australian people had to be warned about it. Well, it is instructive to look at the budget papers to see where gross debt will be under the Turnbull government. Under the Turnbull government, gross debt is going not to $315 billion but to $624 billion. Gross debt will be nearly twice as large as when Malcolm Turnbull got his first debt truck. I have news for the Prime Minister: it is time to trade in his debt truck and buy a debt B-double.

The fact is that, when this government came to office, the deficit—the gap between what government raises and what government spends—was $30 billion. Now it is projected to be $37 billion. A coalition that came to office promising a surplus in its first year and every year after that is now projecting red as far as the eye can see. This government, which said that it would have debt and deficit at its heart, has delivered an additional $123 billion of net debt. That is an extra $5,000 of debt for every man, woman and child in Australia. Does the government take it seriously? When asked about this by Leigh Sales, the Treasurer said: Well, you're asking me about politics, Leigh. You're asking me about politics. What I'm talking about is what is actually happening with the budget.

You can only shake your head when you hear a Treasurer who has had more positions than a game of Twister on the issue of debt and deficit say that.

There are things to like in this budget. There is the low-income superannuation contribution. It is under a new acronym, but it is a Labor policy re-announced. There is tobacco excise, which is a good revenue raiser and good health policy. There are the measures on restoring some staff to the tax office—it is a veritable Xerox-led recovery. The trouble is that those opposite have been railing against many of these measures for the past few years. They cheered when the former Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, attacked Labor for suggesting
that we might put more resources into the tax office to get more revenue out. The then Prime Minister, Tony Abbott said:

So far the only idea they have come up with is to spend $100 million on the ATO to raise $1 billion. Well, next time they will be telling us to spend $1 billion on the ATO to raise $10 billion. That is the problem.

It does not seem to be the problem in the glossies. When I look at the glossy I have here, I see a lovely little picture. It shows investment in the tax office of $679 million and revenue from the tax office of $3.7 billion. It looks pretty much like what former Prime Minister Abbott was deriding. We also have some suggestions in the glossies that this government is going to crack down on profit shifting to tax havens. It is funny that it does not actually put names underneath the tax havens. You might think some of these islands could be named—for example, Bermuda or the British Virgin Islands. What is the one I am missing?

**Ms Butler:** The Cayman Islands.

**Dr LEIGH:** The Cayman Islands—that is right! The government could well name them, and that is something that I am sure we can follow up.

The budget not only fails the government's own test of debt and deficit but also fails Labor's tests of whether it deals with growth, innovation and inequality. Labor recognises that our living standards have fallen four per cent since this government came to office, and a budget which rips $1 billion out of infrastructure investment is not going to spur that growth. We recognise that wage inequality has risen, with wages rising three times as fast for the top tenth as for the bottom tenth. And, yet, what are people being offered? There is no tax cut for the bottom three-quarters of workers. Workers earning between $80,000 and $180,000 get a tax cut which is not a sandwich-and-milkshake tax cut but a sandwich-or-milkshake tax cut—a mere $6 a week.

On the subject of innovation in Australia, just six per cent of ASX 300 firms think that they are highly innovative. In the budget we see an entrenchment of cuts to schools, vocational training and universities. It is exactly the opposite of what you would want to lay the plan for strong growth. There is nothing new in the budget about renewable energy, which must be an innovation sector for the Australian economy. This is a budget that is designed to get a political party through an election. It is not an economic statement designed to set a nation up for the decades to come.

**Mr SUKKAR** (Deakin) (15:58): What an outrageous MPI put forward by the shadow Treasurer, the man who will be known for his black holes. Bowen's black hole on the eve of the last election worked out to be about $30 billion with an $18 billion deficit, and that turned into a $48 billion deficit because of the Bowen black hole. This week, again, we see that the Labor Party cannot add up rudimentary numbers—$19½ billion is how far wrong their costings were on tobacco excise. I know some people have referred to that as a 'rounding error' and in Labor Party terms it probably is a pretty small error. Nothing that those opposite say is taken seriously by the Australian people because the Australian know that they are the party who inherited the books in the black with money in the bank and, in six short years, they absolutely trashed this country's finances. What have they done for the last three years in opposition? At every single opportunity they have tried to block our savings measures and our attempts to repair the mess they left us.
So, on the eve of the election, when Labor gets up and are foreshadowing $100 billion of tax increases, it is understandable that the Australian people are very, very frightened, because the extra $100 billion—it could be more; it could be $150 billion by next week, at the rate they are going—is not to be raised in order to retire their debt; it is not to be raised to reduce the interest bill that this country faces—$1 billion a month in interest. No, these taxes are to be raised just to chase ever more spending, because the Labor Party cannot say no to anybody—any group that comes, cap in hand. Particularly, paymasters in the union movement get paid. And who pays the price? It is the Australian people who pay the price. And who will pay the price for what is in in the budget reply speech of the Leader of the Opposition tomorrow night? I suspect it will be people in small business—the forgotten people, as far as the Labor Party are concerned.

Who could argue against tax cuts for people in small business? They pay the rent first, they pay the suppliers second, they pay their employees third and then, if there is anything over, they pay themselves. So, anything this government can do to help those in small business, we should do. For that reason alone I wholeheartedly, absolutely have the zeal necessary to argue for this budget. That is why I say that what the shadow Treasurer has put up today is consistent with his charlatan approach. He is a charlatan; he is a shyster, because he is the man who had a $30 billion black hole on the eve of the last election. I say, leave him there forever. He is a great successor to Swannie, the man who delivered four budget surpluses. I think a really good young staffer may have written that speech for him. Gee that was a good speech; we have got a lot of good material out of that over the past few years.

But where were those four budget surpluses? They never existed, because Labor cannot make the decisions that are necessary. They can never make a difficult decision. There is not one dollar that they will not spend, but we know that every dollar they spend is a dollar that they rip out of another Australian person's pocket. And I suspect that tomorrow night we will see ever more personal income tax increases, ever more small business taxes, ever more taxes on business more broadly. That is not the approach of this government, and it is not the high road to jobs and growth. As Margaret Thatcher said, at the end of the day socialists run out of other people's money to spend, and there is no more money for the Labor Party to forcibly remove from the Australian people's pockets.

We will be the people who defend those who want to get out, want to work hard, want to get ahead, want to invest. We will not increase capital gains tax by 50 per cent. Australia will have, in effect, the highest capital gains tax in the world if Labor is elected on 2 July, and, in effect, a capital gains tax rate of 70 per cent. We will not adopt that approach. We will stand with hardworking Australians. We are the party you can trust to run a strong economy, a strong budget, and ultimately that will be the foundation for the jobs growth we need in Australia to grasp all the opportunities for the future.

Dr CHALMERS (Rankin) (16:03): Honourable members would not be aware of this, but on Monday night in the Gold Lotto draw a couple of terrific people from Logan City, where I represent, won first division. I think they won about $1 million. I want to congratulate them—Nicholas and Cassi, who own News Extra Logan Central, a couple of doors down from my office. The reason I raise this is that it has proved once and for all that in budget week you have a greater probability of winning division 1 in the Gold Lotto than of getting a fair go.
from the Turnbull government. We know that because of the two defining features of this Turnbull budget.

The first one is that 73,977 people in my electorate will not get a cent by way of a tax cut from this government—that is 82 per cent of my electorate—but a millionaire will get a tax cut of almost $17,000. That says it all. The other defining feature of this budget is that the government are so desperate, as the member for Watson and others have said, to give big business a tax cut—at the same time that they are pulling money out of schools and hospitals—that they are going to redefine every business in Australia, even businesses that are turning over up to $1 billion as a small business. These are well-known small businesses like Porsche Australia, well-known small businesses like the Gladstone Port, which is the biggest port in Queensland, and well-known small businesses like Warner Bros and like Sensis—all redefined as small businesses by those opposite in their desperation to give big business a tax cut and hope that the people in my electorate, in Hunter, in Holtham, in Lalor and in other electorates will not cotton on to the fact that they have prioritised the biggest businesses in this country over schools and hospitals and tax cuts for people we represent in this place.

This is a really stark illustration of what they actually believe on that side of the House. The Prime Minister can wander around trying to be this cuddlier version of Tony Abbott all he likes, but the thing all of them over there have in common is that they still cling to this idea that has been long discredited: trickle-down economics—that if you pile lots and lots of money in to the wealthiest people in our community—

Mr Fitzgibbon: The Donald Trump model!

Dr CHALMERS: then somehow people at the very bottom will get the scraps, and that passes as an economic plan. On this side of the House we say, what rubbish. Trickle-down economics has been discredited. The only people who still believe in it, as the member for Hunter said, are Donald Trump and those opposite. And that is what this budget is really about.

The measures in this budget fall into three categories. The first one is all those Abbott obsessions that they are still clinging to. Page 8 of the budget's overview says:

The Government is committed to ensuring that the $13 billion of unimplemented expenditure savings measures are passed by the Senate—

That is the cuts to hospitals, cuts to Medicare, cuts to higher education, cuts to family tax benefits, all still there—all of the horrors from the 2014 Abbott-Hockey budget. The second set of measures are those that have been written and authorised by the big end of town. I read a story online this morning that said that the business community has come out in support of the budget—

Ms Ryan: I bet they have!

Dr CHALMERS: Yes. As the member for Lalor says, I bet they have. They wrote the thing, and they handed it to poor old Slo-Mo over there, and he announced it at that dispatch box last night—big business tax cuts, big tax cuts to the wealthiest Australians and these sorts of things, all written and authorised by the big end of town.

The third category of measures are those humiliating backflips. After campaigning against Labor policies for months, saying they would tear down the economy and they would ruin people's retirement aspirations, all of a sudden they have been adopted. To hear the Treasurer
stand up here in question time and talk about a consistency of view after reinstating the low-income super contribution that they abolished, it is just entirely laughable.

The last point I want to make is about the fiscal situation. The Treasurer of Australia has done to the Australian budget what the Deputy Prime Minister of Australia is doing to the carp in the Murray. We know this because in the Treasurer’s own budget we have net debt blown out by $109 billion, debt continuing to rise and tax continuing to rise as a share of GDP. Debt spiked at 12.8 per cent under us; it is now 18.9 per cent under them. There are huge debt and deficit blowouts. Tomorrow night we will see the contrast. Some of the speakers over there have pointed out that there is a sharp difference, and there is. We will put people first in our budget response tomorrow night, in the election campaign and in the government that we form after the election. Those opposite will continue to pursue policies which are written and authorised by the big end of town.

Ms PRICE (Durack) (16:08): I note the word ‘failure’ is used in this MPI today. We on this side of the chamber know a thing or two about the failure of those opposite as we were left to fix the economic mess created by them some three years ago. I am very pleased to rise in this House today to speak on this so-called matter of public importance, although it is highly misleading. Why is that? Let’s look at the facts. We have heard a few of them today. We know that the gross debt that the last Labor government left behind was $310 billion and that the net debt was $191.5 billion, with a very healthy trajectory. We heard recently about their black spots as well. So, clearly, they are not getting any better with their money use. When those opposite were in charge of the country’s purse strings they were true to form. They funded everything and anything, from the pink bats disaster to Mr G’s performing arts schools, which, if left unchecked, would have left a massive tax burden for generations to come. However, we on this side are left to fix the mess. Last night’s budget illustrates that the Turnbull government has an economic plan that ensures that Australia successfully transitions to a stronger and more diversified new economy.

To the hardworking Australians: the adults are in charge and we are looking after you. We, the Turnbull government, delivered last night’s budget, which is about two things: jobs and growth. It is worth repeating: jobs and growth. More jobs for the good folk of the Kimberley, the Pilbara, the Gascoyne, and more jobs and economic growth for the people of the Midwest and Wheatbelt. These are all areas in my large electorate of Durack.

Our transition to a diversified economy includes policies such as the National Innovation and Science Agenda, which will be Australia’s way forward. Science, health, research, IT and defence are just a few of the industries which will be boosted through our agenda. As we transition out of the construction- and mining-led economy, the people in the north-west of my electorate know only too well the importance of creating new industries and investing in the jobs of the future. These are the people who have been hit the hardest from the slowdown of the mining construction boom.

The assistance for middle-income earners is music to the ears of the hardworking people in Durack and it also provides an incentive for people to work harder and to earn more. I am sure you can recall that I have said on many occasions that governments do not create jobs; businesses do. There was the announcement last night that small and medium sized businesses with an annual turnover of $2 million will have their taxes significantly reduced to 27.5 per cent. This is exactly the sort of environment which will assist our backbone of the country.
Small and medium sized businesses will be able to create the jobs that we desperately need in our economy. What we do know is that within 10 years our company tax rate will be down to 25 per cent, which is good news all round.

There are some great announcements in the budget regarding young people. The one I am particularly pleased about is the $1.4 billion announcement with respect to more education funding. This particular fund is going to ensure that all students in all schools around Australia have the bare basics for their education and for their long learning for life. For things like literacy and numerously—we have all got terrible examples of young people leaving school without the basics—we will ensure that these issues are covered off.

In other good news regarding young people—I do not consider it a failure; I think it is an absolute success—we hear that young people often cannot get their first foot on the ladder. They have no experience, so employers will not employ them. I hear this time and time again. You hear from employers: 'Well, I don't want to give a young person a go, because they are inexperienced.' We, as the government, have not failed. We have come to the rescue. We have said, 'Why don't we be the broker in this situation?' I am very pleased that we have announced our Youth Jobs PaTH initiative, with some $750 million, which, over the course of four years, will see thousands of young people given an opportunity to get their first foot on the ladder. We start with skills training, and that will begin from April 2017, moving to an internment placement initiative where we will see up to 30,000 young seekers each year being eligible to undertake an internship. Following that, there will be a youth bonus wage subsidy to the employers who are willing to take a risk with those young people. We are going to back employees and employers, and we are going to create the jobs for the future.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Craig Kelly): The time allotted for this discussion has concluded.
(1) agrees with the recommendation of the report of the Committee of Privileges and Members' Interests presented on 17 March 2016 about whether the former member for Dobell, Mr Craig Thomson, deliberately misled the House;

(2) finds Mr Craig Thomson, the former member for Dobell, guilty of a contempt of the House in that, in the course of his statement to the House on 21 May 2012, as the then member for Dobell, he deliberately misled the House; and

(3) reprimands Mr Thomson for his conduct.

On 17 March 2016, as committee chair I presented to the House a report from the Committee of Privileges and Members' Interests as to whether the former member for Dobell, Mr Craig Thomson, deliberately misled the House on 21 May 2012, having regard to the findings against Mr Thomson made by the Melbourne Magistrates' Court on 18 February 2014.

The committee recommended that the House find Mr Thomson guilty of contempt of the House because his statement of 21 May 2012 contained factually incorrect material which he must have known was incorrect and because Mr Thomson's conduct amounted to improper interference with the free exercise of the House of its authority or functions. The committee also recommended that the House reprimand Mr Thomson for his conduct. This motion gives effect to the committee's recommendations, and I commend it to the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Craig Kelly): Is there a seconder for the motion?

Ms BURKE (Chisholm) (16:16): I second the motion. I would like to put on the record the appreciation of all the committee members of this very difficult issue. When it was moved in the House by the Leader of the House he said:

I simply place on record for the House today that we think deliberately lying to the House is something that the whole parliament should want to deal with and deal with very severely if we are to maintain a reputation, as any parliament, of putting the truth ahead of the personal political salvation of one member of parliament by lying.

I think the entire committee struggled with this issue because it is a fairly momentous occasion to find someone in contempt of this parliament. But everybody came to that unanimous conclusion.

We sought to deal with it in a sympathetic manner to the individual at hand, regardless of what we thought of the individual given his circumstances. We put this above politics, because a parliament is above politics. Some of my learned colleagues could not leave behind their legal hats. We did need to continue to remind them that we are parliamentarians; we are not a court of law. I think it has been summed up very well in the report when it says:

A member's right to freedom of speech is an important privilege which enables the House to function properly. The Parliamentary Privileges Act confirms the exemption of members from legal action founded on what they say during proceedings, but not from their responsibility to appropriately exercise that right. If members' freedom of speech is to be respected by the community, then members must exercise responsibility when they draw on that privilege.

I thank the House.

Question agreed to.
BILLS
Supply Bill (No. 1) 2016-2017
Supply Bill (No. 2) 2016-2017
Supply (Parliamentary Departments) Bill (No. 1) 2016-2017
Tax and Superannuation Laws Amendment (Medicare Levy and Medicare Levy Surcharge) Bill 2016
Water Amendment (Review Implementation and Other Measures) Bill 2015
Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility Bill 2016
Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2016
Assent
Message from the Governor-General reported informing the House of assent to the bills.
Tax Laws Amendment (Tax Incentives for Innovation) Bill 2016
Tax Laws Amendment (New Tax System for Managed Investment Trusts) Bill 2015
Income Tax Rates Amendment (Managed Investment Trusts) Bill 2015
Medicare Levy Amendment (Attribution Managed Investment Trusts) Bill 2015
Income Tax (Attribution Managed Investment Trusts—Offsets) Bill 2015
Financial System Legislation Amendment (Resilience and Collateral Protection) Bill 2016
National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment Bill 2016
Returned from Senate
Message received from the Senate returning the bills without amendment or request.
Social Services Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous 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) Schedule 1, page 3 (lines 1 to 13), omit the Schedule.
Mr WYATT (Hasluck—Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care) (16:20): I move:
That the amendments be agreed to.
Question agreed to.
Tax and Superannuation Laws Amendment (2016 Measures No. 1) Bill 2016
Consideration of Senate Message
Bill returned from the Senate with amendments.
Ordered that the amendments be considered immediately
Senate’s amendments—

(1) Schedule 2, item 3, page 24 (before line 1), at the end of subsection 9-26(1), add:
Note: This subsection does not apply to supplies made by a non-resident through a resident agent if they have agreed it is not to apply: see section 57-7.

(2) Schedule 2, page 25 (after line 14), after item 3, insert:
3A Section 9-39 (after table item 8)
Insert:
8AA
Resident agents acting for non-residents
Division 57

(3) Schedule 2, page 25 (after line 28), after item 5, insert:
5A After section 57-5
Insert:
57-7 Agreement to apply this Division to all supplies through a resident agent
(1) Subsection 9-26(1) does not apply to a supply made by a *non-resident through a *resident agent if:
   (a) section 57-5 would apply to the supply if that subsection did not apply to the supply; and
   (b) the non-resident and the agent have agreed in writing that that subsection will not apply to any supplies made by the non-resident through the agent; and
   (c) the supply is made no earlier than:
      (i) if the agreement specifies a time (not earlier than the start of the day the agreement is made) as the time the agreement takes effect—that time; or
      (ii) otherwise—the start of the day the agreement is made.
Note: An agreement under paragraph (1)(b) prevents subsection 9-26(1) having the effect that the supply would not be connected with the indirect tax zone (that subsection could otherwise result in the GST on the supply being reverse charged to the recipient under Division 84).

(2) If the *recipient of the supply is an *Australian-based business recipient, the recipient must be given a notice in the *approved form by:
   (a) if the agreement referred to in paragraph (1)(b) specifies that the *non-resident is to give the notice—the *non-resident; or
   (b) otherwise—the *resident agent.
(3) The notice must be given no later than 7 days after the earlier of:
   (a) the first day any of the *consideration for the supply is provided; or
   (b) the day on which an *invoice for the supply is issued.
Note: Subsection 286-75(7) in Schedule 1 to the Taxation Administration Act 1953 provides an administrative penalty for breach of subsection (2) or this subsection.

(4) If the *non-resident and the agent agree in writing to terminate the agreement referred to in paragraph (1)(b), this section ceases to apply:
   (a) if the agreement to terminate specifies a time (not earlier than the start of the day the agreement to terminate is made) as the time the termination takes effect—at that time; or
   (b) otherwise—at the start of the day the agreement to terminate is made.

(4) Schedule 2, Part 1, page 29 (after line 2), at the end of the Part, add:
Taxation Administration Act 1953

17A At the end of section 286-75 in Schedule 1
Add:

(7) You are also liable to an administrative penalty if:

(a) you are required under subsections 57-7(2) and (3) of the A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999 to notify another entity by a particular day; and

(b) you do not give the notice in the approved form to the entity by that day.

Mr WYATT (Hasluck—Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care) (16:21): I move:
That the amendments be agreed to.

Mr WYATT: by leave—the Turnbull government is committed to ensuring everybody and everyone has to pay their fair share of tax on what they earn here in Australia, especially large corporates and multinationals. That is why we have implemented these important measures that takes steps to restore tax neutrality in levelling the playing field for Australian businesses.

Schedule 1 applies the goods and services tax to digital products and services imported by Australian consumers. It levels the playing field, ensuring that GST will be applied equally to the sales of digital products and services to Australian consumers, no matter where the seller is based. GST will be applied using a vendor registration model, where overseas vendors selling digital products or other services such as apps and downloads of digital content will be required to register, collect and remit GST on their sales to Australian consumers.

The aim of the measure in schedule 2 is to ensure that cross-border business-to-business transactions do not unnecessarily get caught up in Australia's GST system. The government amendments agreed to in the Senate will allow parties to opt out of schedule 2 by agreement, effectively allowing non-resident businesses to remain connected with Australia's GST system, if that is their preference. The amendments will ensure that these transactions are not subject to more complicated GST treatment than they face currently. This issue was brought to the government's attention after the bill was introduced to the parliament. The measure ensures that fewer non-residents are unnecessarily drawn into Australia's GST system, reducing the cost of compliance for business and simplifying administration for the Australian Taxation Office.

Schedule 3 of this bill makes key reforms to farm management deposits to improve Australia's tax laws for primary producers. Farm Management Deposits scheme allows primary producers to set aside pre-tax income from primary production in a special account that can be drawn on in a future year. This schedule doubles the amount that can be held in a farm management deposit to $800,000 in recognition of the increasing scale and cost facing many modern farming businesses. The change also allows a primary producer facing severe drought to withdraw all or part of their deposits early, when they most need them without losing the tax benefit. These changes provide primary producers with further flexibility to use farm management deposits as offset accounts for other business loans they hold. Currently, farm management deposits may not be used as mortgage or other interest loan offset. The government is removing these restrictions to allow farm management deposits to be used as an interest loan offset. The farm management deposit changes were announced in the
agricultural competitiveness white paper on 4 July 2015 and are the product of extensive stakeholder feedback and consultation.

The amendments to GST and the farm management deposits are both important measures to the Turnbull government's economic plan for jobs and growth.

Question agreed to.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S SPEECH

Address-in-Reply

Debate resumed on the motion:

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

Mr RIPOLL (Oxley) (16:25): Today's address-in-reply is my last opportunity to speak to the parliament and say a few words of thanks. When I was first elected in October 1998, Oxley was a very different place and I was a very different person. Just as the electorate of Oxley in the western corridor off Ipswich and Brisbane has grown and developed, so have I. For a start I had a full head of hair—well, almost—and there seemed to be more time to do things and interact with people; and the parliament seemed to be a much more generous place. Perhaps it wasn't, but there certainly was more camaraderie and a different kind of exchange than I experience today. But maybe it is just me. Whether it is social media or a quickening pace of life or just the characters and institutions changing over time, this place certainly does feel different.

It is incredible honour and privilege to be elected to serve our national parliament and represent my own community. Personally, I have always felt very lucky to represent the community which I grew up in and was shaped by. Having that honour to serve my country and my community for even one term would have been enough, but to have that distinction for six parliaments and almost 18 years means that I also feel very humbled. I feel humbled by the experience and thankful for it. When you are young migrant boy growing up in Inala, learning to speak English, you can only ever dream of bigger things and of making your parents proud that the decision they made to come to Australia was in fact the right one.

Hard work is never easy for anyone wanting to do something different. None of us get to this place, or anywhere else for that matter, without some hard work, some long hours, lots of support and a real dedication and passion for a cause and a belief. For me, that core belief was the Labor Party and what it represented, although that is not where I started. For me, working life began in the Royal Australian Air Force and then as an apprentice electrician and night school to finish year 12 before getting my electrical ticket, followed by a whirlwind ride to university to study business and find my real passion in politics and community.

It is interesting when you look back at the opportunities, the forks and the road and all the places you took a wrong turn, but, regardless of all of that, the road I took still led me right here, albeit a little sooner than I expected—helped along by the unlikely loss of Oxley for Labor in 1996. All of you, I am sure, remember the previous member for Oxley as she certainly was a riot and created the opportunity for a fresh candidate in Oxley. I do feel very proud that I had that chance to win back Oxley for Labor and for my community.
I want to say thank you to the Labor Party and all of its members—that very large and broad church made up of so many wonderful people and fascinating characters. At its core it has a belief in helping people, lifting people, giving people more opportunity and helping people help themselves. That is what I believe. It is simple but it is a great set of core values and one that can carry the Labor Party forward for another hundred years. I want to sincerely say thank you to my supporters and branch members in the seat of Oxley, who have been tireless campaigners, workers, sausage sizzlers, letterbox stuffers and, in the old days, folders and envelope lickers. How times have changed—all replaced by fast and very efficient machines, but it is certainly not as much fun. There have been many of you, and too many to possibly mention by name, who I thank for your hard work and your commitment to our community—well before I came along, during my term and I know well and truly after I leave.

I have many great memories filled with very large characters. They have made my life very exciting and challenging and at other times just plain torturous as hell. But all of it—the special people, the challenging processes, the endless meetings, the sometimes pointless debates and the ongoing campaigns—have made me who I am today. Again, I say thank you. Special mention and thanks must go to my fabulous staff. A very dedicated and wonderful group of individuals, they deserve recognition for their skills and talents. I am very lucky to count many of them as friends. I have been very lucky from my first days in the job to have great people who have supported me, understood the community and their needs and managed to keep me on track. They have come and gone and come back; many have gone on to greater things. I wish all of them very well for the future. Thanks to the current crew: Winston, Chris, Maxine, Naomi and Paula and, of course, Pam and Amy who have recently moved on to greater things. I want to thank the federal parliamentary caucus and all my friends. My dad was fond of saying that, if you can count your real friends on one hand, you are very lucky. In my case, I feel exceptionally lucky. We all have friends, especially in politics, but it is only through the passage of time and life’s difficulties that you get to count them properly.

The caucus has been an experience. If we are meant to be a reflection of the broader community, then we are that on steroids, and it is a good thing. The caucus has changed incredibly in the past 18 years. We have changed in the way we do business and in the way we interact, but we have not changed in the way that we bring our passion to and always fight for a better deal in the parliament. I am proud to have been part of a group of people that believe so strongly in a set of core values. I want to especially thank Labor leader Bill Shorten for his respect for our caucus, and for his leadership over the past 2½ years. Back then, no-one would have given us a chance, yet here we are today, on election eve, and we are in the game. Bill, you have achieved something that many thought impossible: you herded the cats and got us to sing in tune.

My caucus colleagues can also breathe a sigh of relief, as I will not be writing any tell-all books or complaining about events of the past. I have nothing to complain about. Not everything went to plan and not everyone held up their end of the bargain, but that is life. We will make decisions based on our views of and our belief in what is right at the time, and I respect that. I can say that it has been interesting to be in a caucus that like to write books about policy, about ourselves and about different versions of history. I have collected all of them, and I even promise to read them—one day! I appreciate the time I have had here and all
my incredible colleagues, even if there are one or two whose names, when mentioned, still cause a small reaction. I will leave the caucus with some great memories and some great friends. Thank you very much.

I have also had the great fortune of political and local support from communities in my region. They have become more like friends, and I feel very much part of their world in so many different ways. I am very lucky that the western corridor of Ipswich and Brisbane is not only my home but also home to many migrants wanting a better life for their families. It has never been easy for migrants to make a new life in a foreign country, but the electorate of Oxley continues to be a great place to forge a new beginning, just as it was for my family back in 1971, when we moved to the Wacol migrant camp—when we had those sorts of things—and then to our housing commission home in Inala. I say to my many communities and friends from New Zealand, the Pacific Islands, Samoa, Fiji, Vietnam, India, Croatia, Serbia, Macedonia, Laos, Thailand, China, Africa, Sri Lanka and many parts of Europe, just to name a few that have made Ipswich and Brisbane their new home: welcome.

There is a lot we can learn from each other as we adopt each other's culture and history. There is no greater evidence of that exchange than the many restaurants, events and celebrations we see in the western corridor. How poor Oxley would be without the Vietnamese Children's Festival or Moon Festival; Chinese New Year; Pacific Islander events; the Indian festival of lights, Diwali; or our own Christmas celebrations. I have always had the view that, when you come to Australia, you need to learn the language, learn the customs, obey the laws and become a little bit Aussie. My view is that, through that process of 'Australianisation', we must also keep our identity through links to the home country, retain our first language and maintain our culture. That is the Australia of today and the Australia I am proud to call home. I sincerely thank all my communities, who have taught me so much about their countries, their people and their culture.

I want to thank the many and varied RSL branches and subbranches for their work and support for our veterans and for the great work they do in commemorating Anzac Day and Vietnam Veterans Day, and in supporting commemorations for our allies. You have been a great source of community grounding and pride, and helped to bind our history with our present.

As I said earlier, Oxley has changed a lot. When I grew up in Inala, there was an enormous piece of land just behind our house. My dad used to say, 'One day that'll be a big suburb.' That endless piece of bush is now a suburb called Forest Lake and is home to more than 25,000 people. The even bigger bit of bushland now called Greater Springfield was state forestry land and a tip at the end of Logan Road. Today it is a thriving satellite city of more than 30,000 people. It is also my home. It has more than a dozen schools, dozens of restaurants, shops, a hospital, two state-of-the-art train stations, a water park to rival that of South Bank in Brisbane, a Greg Norman signature golf course—if that is what you like!—and a community that is thriving and, in time, will grow to more than 100,000 people.

In 1998, when I started campaigning for Oxley, the Ipswich Motorway was not much more than a bumpy goat track. At the time, I managed to secure an enormous commitment from Labor, $40 million, to get it started. Through successive leaders and governments, with support and opposition and alternative plans, we finally got our upgrade some 10 years
later—and for a mere $1.8 billion!—delivered well under budget and on time. It was worth every dollar, and the money could not have been spent in a better place.

In my first speech, I talked about my electorate, the people and who we were. Back then, I said:

Government must lay the foundations for a caring society. It must support us in our endeavours to support each other.

Further, I said:

We are not battlers in Oxley. We are pensioners, we are returned service men and women, we are families with sick children, and we are sole parents struggling on low incomes. We are casual and part-time workers desperate to find full-time work … We are all this and … more.

Some things may have changed, but in Oxley, like other parts of the country, much has not.

In 2011 my electorate, along with 80 per cent of Queensland, saw one of its greatest natural disasters in the form of a flood even more catastrophic than the great flood of 1974, with all of its devastation of our lives and our economy. That flood in 2011 resulted in the complete loss of my electorate office, and I understand I am the only member ever to have lost their electorate office to a natural disaster. What a great privilege! That was a very small price to pay, though, compared to the losses experienced by so many families, who lost their homes, their businesses and their jobs. In all this tragedy, we also witnessed some of the most profound and generous displays of community and of support from individuals, businesses and government. Neighbours helped neighbours, friends helped each other, and strangers helped those in need. Ordinary people rose up to become extraordinary heroes. This defining event in my electorate, through the western corridor, brought out the best in people and demonstrated what we can do as a community when called upon to help each other in times of need.

Finally, of course, I want to thank my family. I thank my mum and dad, Suzanne and Andre, who are no longer with us, for their incredible support. Belonging to three countries in a lifetime is a big challenge, but they did it, and they ended up where they felt most at home and at peace. I want to give special thanks to Margy and our three wonderful children, Tim, Emily and Madeline. I could not have achieved the things I have done without your support and commitment, and I am truly thankful. Being a part-time dad is a feature of this job for which there are no excuses; suffice to say that we choose the path we walk and gladly volunteer ourselves for this life. Our three children have grown into beautiful and good young people with a great outlook on life and all it has to offer. It would also appear that none of them harbour any political aspirations, for which I am truly grateful. Thank you and I am so proud of you.

In my life I have been called many things, not all nice. You might expect that with a name like Bernard Fernand Ripoll. But I call myself an Australian, French born of Algerian parents and with Spanish heritage—only in Australia! While a piece of paper may be the hard-copy evidence that stipulates a person's citizenship, and mine in 1974, of itself it can never confer the commitment felt inside one's head and heart. This is the commitment my family made to our new country, Australia, when we took up citizenship. But nor should that piece of paper ever take away your history, culture or sense of belonging to more than one place.
Finally, to our candidate in Oxley, Milton Dick: I wish you very well in the election on 2 July. I leave the electorate of Oxley in as good, if not, I believe, better condition than when I became its custodian for the Labor Party. I now you will do a fine job and that Oxley will continue to grow and help make all of its constituents better off for choosing it as the place they call home. Thank you.

Mrs BRONWYN BISHOP (Mackellar) (16:38): Can I begin by saying that timetables have got a little disorderly today, but, nonetheless, I know that I am to be joined by one of my daughters and my granddaughter on the floor, which is a great privilege. My other daughter, when I was first sworn in in the Senate, in fact, was unable to attend because she was doing her German orals and on this occasion she cannot be with me because she is away on business. But, nonetheless, I have my daughter Angela and my granddaughter Amelia with me, and many friends and former employees as well as current employees, and I find it wonderful to have them around me on this occasion.

I set out on this journey when I was 17 years old. I decided that I wanted to be a member of parliament. The reason that I thought that this is what I wanted to be was that I had been studying history—studying history for the leaving certificate, as it was. Studying history taught me that individuals could make a difference, but that difference could be for good or for evil. Hitler was a strong, powerful leader for evil. Churchill was a strong, powerful leader for good. So I decided that I really wanted to have a say in what happened to my country. This is a country I love greatly, and the more I have served the greater I love it. I thought that, if I wanted to serve, what I needed to do was to be properly equipped. I thought that, if I wanted to make the laws of the land, it was probably a good idea if I understood them, so I decided to study law, which I did. I still hold a current practising certificate as a solicitor to this day.

I joined the Liberal Party because it was closest to the things in which I believed, including the principles of free enterprise, which are as immutable as the laws of gravity. They tell me that the business of government is to do those things which the private sector cannot or will not do and to provide for those who cannot provide for themselves. That is the business of government. But it goes hand in hand with the philosophy of individualism, in which I also believe. That is distinct from the concept of the collective, which is the other alternate philosophy. The philosophy of individualism says that every individual Australian should have the opportunity to reach their maximum potential—not just the brightest in the land but also somebody most ordinary, somebody who has a disability or somebody who is disadvantaged. Very often, people who try to dismiss this philosophy say it is selfish—’It's all about me.’ No, it is not, because it imposes an obligation on each and every one of us to reach out our hand to our neighbour to ensure that that neighbour gets that opportunity. Collectivism, on the other hand, is all about ruling for the collective, and the individual can be sacrificed to the collective wish. And so it was those beliefs that I joined the Liberal Party, because, as I said, it was closest to the things that I believed in.

I joined the Young Liberals initially. That is, I guess, where Philip Ruddock and I first met. I was in Killara Young Liberals and he was in Pennant Hills Young Liberals. But, interestingly enough, the branch to which I belonged had a set of subrules that said that only a bloke could be the president. So I was a vice-president, but I set out to change those things. At that time, the number of women in this federal parliament was virtually nil. I think it is
interesting to realise that we did not elect one woman to this parliament until 1943, the year after I was born. When I was elected to the Senate in 1987, I became the first woman from any political party to be elected to the Senate for New South Wales. It took 86 years. But in the interim I worked my way up through the party ranks, through branch president, conference president, convention chairman and vice-president, and one of the dirtiest fights I think I ever had to be in was the fight to become president of the party.

It was the ordinary people in the party who saw that I should be elected to president of the party. I set up an office in Parramatta because I really believed that the people of the west of Sydney were aspirational people. They were people who believed that they could achieve and had a lot to contribute. I set up an office of the Liberal Party in Parramatta because I had seen the practice over years of sending out some nice young person from the north or somewhere to be a candidate out there, with nothing to connect to the wishes and the hopes and the aspirations; it had to come from within. Those people supported me very strongly and I did, indeed, become president of the party and kept my office there. When I stood for the Senate and was duly endorsed, I always said that I would open my office in Parramatta, and I did that. I was the first senator to move out of the CBD, because I believed that is where we needed to be, with the people. I regarded the great area of western Sydney as my electorate—all one million people of them—because Liberals were very scarce on the ground. I still have an enormous affection for the people of Western Sydney and I am so delighted to see, these days, that we have a member for Lindsay and other members in the west of Sydney. I opened Jackie Kelly's first campaign at St Marys Band Club, and I knew we were making progress because we had two Liberals on the board of the St Marys Band Club.

It was a long journey, but it was a most rewarding journey. I remember, when I finally moved to the House of Representatives and became the member for Mackellar, Laurie Oakes saying, 'One of the hardest things you will have to do is stop being an Eels supporter and become a Manly supporter.' And he was right! But one of the things that I did manage to do was bring them together to have lunch. These days I am a very strong supporter of the Sea Eagles, but I still have very fond memories of Peter Sterling—with hair—and I still listen to my good friend Denis Fitzgerald, who was on the radio this morning talking about the problem of Parramatta losing so many points.

Nonetheless, when I was serving in the Senate we did change things with regard to the way things worked, particularly estimates committees. I remember being told that I had to go onto an estimates committee, and I said, 'What on earth is that?' I went along, and we sat there, and people asked questions—it did not matter what the answers were; they kept asking the questions—and then we wrote a report that said: we came, we sat, we went. It seemed to me that we should do a little more. So I went to see Harry Evans and said, 'Harry, what can we do to make this more enlivened and relevant?' and he said, 'Well, first of all you can write a reservation.' He said, 'You have the opportunity of getting a snapshot across every aspect of government once a year, and then at supplementary estimates; use it.' So we did.

One of the things I remember most was the Midford Paramount case. I first picked up that something was wrong when I read a report in the paper that said that customs officers had been in Malaysia looking at a factory belonging to Australians. I followed it through and found that this firm, Midford Paramount, which made every kid's pyjamas, school shirts and uniforms, had had $1.8 million worth of products seized because of some allegation that it has
not paid I think it was $83,000 of duty. It went on: they were prosecuted; four hundred people lost their jobs; the family and their customs agent were persecuted—and this seemed wrong to me.

We pursued it through estimates, and then I thought: this really needs to go to the joint standing committee of public accounts, where I also sat. But I had to get the agreement of the Senate to refer it—there was no way the government was going to refer it—so I had to do a deal with the Democrats and convince them. On the morning it was due to go to the Senate to be referred I saw some weak-kneed wobbling going on. I went in and saw a particular senator and said, 'Change anything you like in the wording of the motion—just vote for it.' We went in and we did vote for it, and the public accounts committee inquiry went ahead. That then gave me the opportunity to ask and cross-reference questions in the estimates and public accounts committees. It became the first electronically recorded evidence that was taken. At that stage we had been wheeling it around in truckloads because there was so much of it. The upshot of that case, which took four years—two parliaments—was that that family was awarded $25 million in compensation. It was a benchmark case, and it really did show that this parliament can really deliver for individuals.

Again and again in my office people would come to me, as they come to all of you, with a desperate case. You and I can pick up the telephone because we know where we can get an answer to the problem that they cannot. That is such an important aspect of all the work that we do—that understanding, that sort of knowledge and the contacts that I made through those estimates committees and the public servants who would come and give testimony. I heard that the tax office made a video to train people—I am not sure that it is not still around—on how to give evidence before an estimates committee. It spread. I even had inquiries from other countries in the Pacific about whether or not they could set up a similar checks and balances committee.

One of the things that was ironical was that at the time we had a boat bounty system. By doing our research we found that one of the people receiving a bounty was a New York Mafioso boss who was building a floating palace. We exposed this and then took it to A Current Affair with Jana Wendt, who somehow managed to get him to agree to be interviewed on the program. The interview was a fairly structured event, but afterwards all the sound equipment stayed live, and he actually made a confession or two. He thought the program had finished. We put it to air. So there were many ways in which you could bring about good outcomes for the country, so that these things did not get repeated.

There then came the time for me to look at the possibility of coming to this House. At that stage there was a lot of talk about my becoming the leader of the party and becoming the first female prime minister. Jim Carlton then announced that he would be retiring, and so I stood for preselection for Mackellar—that was in November 1993—and I was endorsed. I did not get a by-election until March, which meant I could not get in here until May. I do not think that Mr Keating or Dr Hewson much wanted me here at that stage.

I do remember one wonderful jibe with Paul Keating, who was quite an amusing man in many ways. I was opening something, and somebody bowled up and said: 'Paul Keating has just called you a firecracker, along with half of the other frontbench. What do you say about that? He called you a Catherine wheel. You roll and roll and roll.' 'Really,' I said, 'Perhaps all I can say is that Mr Keating reminds me of a sparkler. He is all froth and fire, and then he goes...'
out—and all that is left is a thin, black stick.' There were many sparring moments and enjoyable moments in the past. Back in the Senate, I used to spar with John Button quite a lot. He sent me a card from China. He said: 'Attended a public hanging. Thinking of you!' So there were many moments—and I guess I sent him a few back.

But then I entered this chamber. I had been a shadow minister in the Senate when Andrew Peacock was the leader. Andrew Peacock had been a very fine friend for many, many years and I believe he would have made a very fine Prime Minister. It was interesting that I was minister for Commonwealth-state relations, local government and something else and we fought that 1990 campaign saying we were utterly opposed to the introduction of the assets test. Andrew won 51 per cent of the vote. We did not get a result for weeks. Finally, Bob Hawke was returned. But it was a very fine campaign that Andrew ran. As I said, in my view he would have made a very fine Prime Minister. But it was not to be. He subsequently left the parliament and was very successful in business.

In May 1994, John Hewson called a spill. I was up in the Northern Territory. Alexander Downer said he would run. I got off the plane and there was a galaxy of people asking me what I was going to do. I said I would back Downer and not run myself. Mistake. However, one does make mistakes in this place, and through life. We subsequently went on to see John Howard become leader of the party and become a fine Prime Minister and lead the country well. I had the honour of serving in his first ministry as Minister for Defence Industry, Science and Personnel. As I have been cleaning out my office, I happened to find this defence industry strategic policy statement, which was the first defence industry policy that we made. I even found a copy of an old press release that said this was the first time we would see the defence industry as part of national security. I am so pleased to see the current white paper and the direction we are going in, because I introduced what were known as the Bishop rules for foreign firms doing business in Australia. They had to follow these rules in order to get contracts. I thought it was quite improper in our defence area that we could possibly deploy people and they would be unable to be supported from home. I thought we had a moral obligation to be able to supply our deployed troops at all times with kit, materiel, that we controlled.

And so the rules were these: any firm wanting to do business here had to have significant investment in facilities and plant; significant employment of Australian citizens; successful participation in major defence contracts demonstrating that the company was here for the long haul; a significant level of R&D investment and development in Australia; a demonstrated ability to penetrate their parent firm's market; and, lastly, no vertical integration—they had to be willing to take small Australian firms to be part of a contract. Those rules, because they were firm and believed, resulted in much investment coming into this country. The French put enormous amounts into this country. That was when they were still Thomson—before they became Thales. I remember Mr Fischer, who was the head of Raytheon, which was a very small outfit, making the statement that he would not have invested in this country if it were not for the rules. In defence we break every rule of competition—we are a monopsony purchaser, we collude, we talk with people overseas so that we can have interoperability. But we have to have a firm commitment to this country. It is a moral obligation, in my view.

That leads me to something of which I am quite proud, and that is the Bushmaster. The first thing I had to do was go and look at the three prototypes for the contract. There were three
putting in: ADI; a consortium of people who were utilising the model that was used in the townships in South Africa; and British Aerospace. And so out I went with my ADC. We arrived. I got in one of these prototypes and drove around the track. I thought, 'That's terrific.' We came back and we had a conversation. I said, 'I presume these vehicles can withstand a mine blast'—to which my then ADC, who these days is a colonel, said, 'No Ma'am, they're just a taxi.' I said, 'That's ridiculous.' So we went back and I said, 'I think we'll change the specification'—and that is what we did. That is how the V-form was developed, and it saved countless lives. I know that the whip saw it in action in Afghanistan when she was there. It is a magnificent vehicle that has saved many, many lives. And we did one other thing: we took out the regular transmission and put in an automatic transmission because it is less wear and tear. It was a hugely successful vehicle. We then sold 40 of them and started exporting.

Those things I am very proud of. But something that gave me great sadness and will remain with me forever is the Black Hawk disaster, in which 18 people were killed in a night exercise out of Townsville where two helicopters collided—15 SAS and three from 5th Aviation Regiment. I had been at the Opera House. I had come out, and I had the message about what had happened. I knew I had to get a message out there because I believed in our people. They were putting their lives on the line in training just as much as they ever would when deployed. I did not want any criticism saying that they had erred and were to be criticised. I knew I had to have that story out. So all the way home I was thinking of my words of praise for these men and what they were doing at the cutting edge and what skills they had. I got home before midnight and I hit all the radio networks, because I knew that story would run every half-hour and, if we were still up at six o'clock, I knew that people would regard it the right way—and they did.

But the aftermath—of having to talk to the men, of having to talk to their families, of seeing the inadequacy of the compensation scheme, of seeing the profound difficulties that were thrown up—was something that determined me that we had to provide much better for widows and children as well as for partners of serving personnel. So I brought through a package which indeed gave extra money for widows and for children, for their education. That began the process of seeing a much better compensation scheme for our serving personnel, and that was taken on by ministers subsequent to me.

It was a wonderful experience to be the Minister for Defence Industry, Science and Personnel, and it did have its amusing moments. I did get to fly an F111. When I went out to get my suit on, they said: 'Two things, Minister: no hairpins and no hairspray.' I said, 'Why is that?' They said, 'Hairspray is flammable, and pins, with G forces, can be damaging.' So off we went. We were up for an hour and a half. We broke the sound barrier, which is not all that exciting—really!—but we then went and did a mock bombing raid, which was lots of fun. We went in low—because the F111, of course, does low-terrain flying—dropped our payload and did a barrel roll, low-terrain flying. We came up, and the pilot said to me, 'Would you like have a go?' I said, 'Would I what!' So he let me take it. We went back and we came in for another raid. Pulling 4½Gs, I did the barrel roll, and it was just fantastic. Then I got out and I must say I was determined I was not going to be sick, because somebody had told me that Kim Beazley had been. But I went back and I walked into morning tea and I felt very pleased with myself that I had kept a solid stomach.
Then I went on to be the first woman to go to sea—and I use this preposition advisedly—in a submarine. When I came back, I used a different preposition and said on national television that I had done something else. My press secretary said to me, 'Have you any idea what you just said on national television?' And I said, 'I will remember well and long the difference between the prepositions 'in' and 'on'!' Having done that, I then found that a young female engineer had wanted to go to sea for the sea trials and she had not been permitted to, but, after I had been to sea, she was allowed to go to sea. The reason I went to sea was that I had had all these letters telling me what was wrong with the boats, and I thought, 'The only way I'm going to know is if I go to sea and take a look myself.' And that is exactly what I did, and I did find problems. Many of those things had been true, and we had to set about fixing them. Not long after that, I made a decision which I think has been very important, and that was to send women submariners to sea, and we have that today. There were a few retired admirals who were not terribly pleased about that, but it worked. The other thing that I learnt very well was that women at sea in ships works, as long as the company is about 30 per cent. The critical mass matters, and then the whole company improves.

Having had the excitement of all that, and firing cannons and all sorts of things, we then had to get back out on the track to win the 1998 election and again sell the GST, and I became the Minister for Aged Care. It was also the International Year of Older Persons. I thought, 'We have to do a lot of work here,' so I commissioned Access Economics to do research about the importance of the older population and the ageing of the population, with its resources, where the wealth was. The concluding paragraph said, 'Silver goes platinum,' meaning that the so-called grey generation actually was holding the wealth of the nation, was very important financially, should be thought of in those terms and was too valuable to waste.

I raised all the questions of employment of older Australians, and, when I became shadow minister for seniors, we put a lot of that into policy work. It began there, but I thought, 'Also we need to honour them,' so I created the position of Senior Australian of the Year, which we now celebrate every year. The first one was Slim Dusty, and he was a fantastic advocate. The third one was very important—Graeme Clark, the inventor of the bionic ear. He was such an idol because he was a man who had been told by his peers that what he was trying to do was impossible. 'Don't listen to him,' they said. But he persevered and he succeeded. When somebody said to him, 'Are you thinking of retiring?' he said, 'Certainly not; I have far too much work to do,' and he still does—an amazing man.

There was the difficulty in the aged-care area in that the standards were appalling—not in every home but in too many. I remember visiting homes and I would walk in and almost faint from the smell. We had a commitment that we were going to change things. It fell to me to bring in accreditation. Originally people thought that might be a cup of tea and a chat and, 'We'll do things better.' But I thought, 'No, no, no; we are going to have strict standards that must be adhered to, and, if you cannot meet the standards, you're out.' My opening statement was that, as Minister for Aged Care, I would be here to look after residents, not to prop up poor providers. That did not give me a good ride with certain parts of the industry, but it was the core of what I believed in—those principles of free enterprise and individualism. It was the individuals where the policy had to focus, and that has always been my guide.

So we went through starting the process of recruiting people to do evaluations. I worked with the Democrats, because I knew that I would have to get their support to get the principles...
in place. I worked with Senator Lyn Allison every step of the way, kept her in the loop. The day I signed them off, I asked her over and we drank a glass of champagne, because she believed we were doing something good. Well, we got them through and we started the process—and then we had Riverside and the nurse who had been putting a capful of kerosene into the bath and then putting through resident after resident.

I determined then and there that this home had to close. It had never been done before. We engaged outside lawyers because I wanted someone who had expertise in the field because I knew they would take me to court because what they stood to lose was millions of dollars. The day we closed it and moved them, it was an awful, awful day. But, once it was closed—and they did take me to court and tried to get an interlocutory injunction, which they failed to do—once we had achieved that, then the industry knew that it was for real. Every home did get accredited, and I now see people who are proud to work in the industry instead of ashamed, because we not only got rid of Riverside; we got rid of 200 others as well who had no right to be there.

From there on, it was back to doing important committee work—the adoption report, where I formed a firm friendship with people who are working in the adoption field as much as I am. There were other reports that were important as well, which I perhaps do not have the time to speak about.

But I do have the time to speak about that time as the shadow minister for seniors and then becoming the Speaker of the House. I have to say that becoming the Speaker of the House was a very proud moment. Perhaps I can say slightly differently that, with the juggling when you are being taken up to the chair, perhaps the risk is not anymore, as it used to be back in the early centuries, that you might lose your head because the king would order it but because maybe it was an expense problem or two. But nonetheless it was a wonderful opportunity.

I just want to say that it is so much more than presiding. That is the public face of it. I see the same people getting chucked out, really, from time to time—recalcitrants, Mr Speaker, that I had and you had, but nonetheless I have come to know and quite like from time to time.

*Government members interjecting—*

**Mr Champion:** Don't ruin my reputation!

**The SPEAKER:** I don't want to throw you out!

**Mrs BRONWYN BISHOP:** But the other aspects of the job I think are just as important and need to be more known. Firstly, there is the job as a minister. Within certain pieces of legislation, that is how the Speaker is referred to—and the Presiding Officer equally in the Senate—in running departments to run this place. There were very big issues that had to be solved in this building, about which I still cannot talk—big issues that were departmental issues and had to be dealt with.

Then there is the question of the international role and the diplomacy side, receiving ambassadors and attending various international conferences like the IPU and like the Pacific conferences, where our influence is so important, reaching out to women members of parliament, which was equally important, and assisting them with the troubles that they had.

I also had the opportunity to be of assistance with our very important free trade agreements. I was going to Japan and to Korea. I had spoken with Andrew Robb and said that, if I could be of any assistance in getting those through their parliaments—that is, the Japanese
and Korean parliaments—before Christmas, I would be honoured if I could assist in that way. Andrew briefed me, and I had a meeting with Prime Minister Abe in Japan and talked very much about the importance of those agreements going through before Christmas because advantages flowed from that. They were very concerned about the TPP at that stage and thought that perhaps that would be enough. I was able to talk with them and say, no, it was important that this agreement had advantages for both of us.

And then I went on to Korea, where the Koreans were very much concerned with a very bad ferry accident where 300 people had drowned, and they really were not interested in our free trade agreement as members of the parliament. And that is the difference. When a member of the executive speaks to a member of the executive, that is where the parlance takes place. But, when you go as the Speaker, you are talking to members of parliament, and it is a very important aspect that can be used in so many ways. So I was able to talk with the leaders of different parties in Korea.

I am pleased to say that both those agreements were signed before Christmas, and I had a little bit of influence in that. I would not for a moment think it was anywhere near the magnificent work that Andrew did, but I am saying that that diplomatic role in the Speaker's role is a very important one.

Equally, in South America, when I was there and I was in Peru, I got on very well with the speaker, who was very close to the parliament. She gave me an undertaking that they would indeed support us with regard to the Great Barrier Reef because we had supported them with regard to Machu Picchu. It did mean that I had to walk around Machu Picchu again, but I did it.

Mr Ewen Jones: In heels!

Mrs BRONWYN BISHOP: In heels? Well, nearly. So that role is very important too—as was getting up an urgency motion which we had passed ultimately by the entire IPU, including Islamic countries. It was to condemn ISIS and Boko Haram and what they had done with women and girls in particular. The Whip was with me, and we were very successful in getting that through. At the end, one of the Iranian women delegates, who was all in black, just came across and hugged me and said, 'That was so important for women and girls.' So there are moving moments. It is a very important role, Mr Speaker, and one I hope you will enjoy in those other ways.

That came to an end when I was asked to resign to protect Tony Abbott, someone whom I had assisted and worked with and respected for many years. There is much more than meets the eye in that saga, but not for now.

I want to say now how grateful I am to my family. I want to say how grateful I am to staff who are still with me and those who have worked for me previously; to the members of my conference, who supported me through the recent preselection—it was the outsiders who did not—and to the people of my electorate of Mackellar, an electorate I love with passion, the people I love with a passion; to surf-lifesaving, which is just such a wonderful, altruistic movement; to our Rural Fire Service; to so many service clubs, including Rotary, who all work—and we will still work—for the Red Cross and the Red Shield Appeal, which is coming up; and to the community which it was my honour and pleasure to serve.
There is so much more to be done. People are concerned about our country. They know that there are, perhaps, rugged times ahead and I truly believe that the principles of free-enterprise is the way for us to go. There is much more for me to do. This journey is not coming to an end. It is a journey I wish to continue and to continue to serve the people in this wonderful country of mine, Australia.

I say thank you to everyone in this House who has been of assistance: the attendants; the COMCAR drivers; the clerks, and it is lovely to see Bernard here as well, and it was my great pleasure to appoint a great clerk in David Elder. I say thank you to Luch, who was so good to me in my period. If I were a judge he would be my tipstaff! I say to my colleagues—so many of you have been kind enough to turn out—I have formed good friendships, ones which will be enduring. I am sad that the corridor of the BBs is no longer: Bruce Billson, Bob Baldwin and Bronwyn Bishop. It was our corridor. The white rose—the Don—was a dear and good friend and is much missed. There are many of you I call friends—my lovely friend from Bennelong, my lovely friend Ann from Gilmore, and Lucy from Robertson—people who I hope I will still be able to assist and work with.

In thanking everyone for the time and assistance they have given me, I simply reflect that as a woman in this wonderful country I am given an opportunity that most women in the world are denied: freedom. Today I am wearing a pendant that my father gave my mother in 1941, before I was even a twinkle. I remember—every day—that my father and his generation gave me and my generation a wonderful gift: freedom, and the right as an individual woman to say, 'I can aspire.'

I am so conscious of that, every day, that we—all of us—have an obligation to ensure that the next generation—my daughter's generation and my granddaughter's generation—have at least as good a gift as the one that was given to me. That is an awesome task and one that I know those of you who will continue to serve will carry out, because we love the country Australia.

Thank you, one and all. I will miss this place. But, as I said, it is not the end. It is, simply, a change of course, and I look forward to serving further. Thank you.

Ms MacTIERNAN (Perth) (17:19): After so many lengthy careers that we have been seeing off, in this place, over the last week, it feels a little self-indulgent to be delivering a valedictory after such a short stint in this place. But I feel that I owe it to the people who elected me, three years ago, to give an account of myself and I cannot resist putting my two bobs worth in to the general philosophical issues that face us.

I give my thanks to the punters of Perth for backing me. It truly has been a privilege to work with you and represent you in this place. I like to think that I have thrown everything at ensuring you have a voice in this place, and it is great to have had a role representing our great state of Western Australia more generally. I believe I have done that enthusiastically, sometimes to the chagrin of some of my colleagues from other states, but that is absolutely necessary.

Why am I going? Some of you will be aware that I was happily ensconced as the mayor of Vincent when I was asked to stand for Perth, shortly before the last election—after the much respected Stephen Smith unexpectedly retired. I was a little hesitant, but I agreed to do it for a number of reasons. Firstly, I felt I owed it to the party, which had given me great
opportunities, to make sure that we held that critical seat of Perth and that we could rebuild our party in Western Australia. Secondly, I knew that dealing with climate change was the great moral challenge of our time and that was at the very heart of the contest at that election. I did manage to hold onto that seat for Labor, and I can take some pride in being part of the team that has seen off a great—but certainly not the only—political obstacle to meeting that moral challenge of climate change. I also take some pride in the campaigns against some of the very dark places to which this country was being taken in the first two years of the current government and in our campaigns to see off much of the destructive 2014 budget. These battles are not over. It is extraordinary that last night's budget made no reference and no commitment to tackling climate change. How can you have an economic plan that ignores the greatest economic threat to our country? Given this, if I had been at the start of my political career I would have been very excited at the opportunities that I have been given.

You can never complain about being given the great honour of being elected to this place. I absolutely love the job when I am out and about, but I do not think I have been able to influence policy to the extent that I need to keep my motivation up. So I will hand on the baton to the very able Labor candidate, Tim Hammond, who will have more time to patiently build up influence in this place. I am certain that Tim will join the long line of members for Perth, who include, in my lifetime, Tom Burke, Joe Berinson, Ric Charlesworth and, of course, Stephen Smith, all of whom have served in this place with great distinction. I am very pleased that we are fielding a fantastic Labor team at the next election, led by Patrick Dodson, of whom we are also very proud. I will be working very hard to see Anne Aly, Matt Keogh and Tammy Solonec—all people I highly regard—elected to this place.

I do want to say that I think there is a problem with the way we distribute power within this parliament and within the major parties. I have to be frank: often in this place it feels like one is just an extra in the pyramid-building scenes of that *Ben Hur* blockbuster—do you remember all those little people just rushing around? I am realistic. I absolutely understand there will always be a decision-making hierarchy, but I do believe that members should be considered more than just bums on seats. I do think that, even within our parliamentary system, there are other parliaments where members are accorded a greater and a stronger role. At the highest level—and I think this issue was raised by the member for Fremantle this afternoon—critical issues like war powers are issues where there should be engagement with the parliament. At a day-to-day level, there are parliamentary structures that could be so much better at giving members more of a role in this place, a greater role than being an extra. There are other parliaments, for example, where backbenchers can raise grievances with ministers that ministers must respond to, where bills undergo a consideration in detail process which is actually considered in detail and where ministers actually respond to questions raised by members. Likewise with the estimates process, which, I have to say, in this place is a meaningless farce. We have delays in answering questions in writing and a culture of resisting the release of documents which make it very difficult to do the forensic work that enhances accountability. The committees, as advisory committees to the minister, really largely fail to provide any greater accountability in government. Just at the edges, there are a number of processes that could be changed to ensure that being a member in this place is more meaningful and to give more people the opportunity to participate. Of course, I believe a cultural change also has to be made across the party hierarchy to ensure that we respect all
members and allow them to really share in the engagement in the contest of ideas in this place.

However, although I think the committees are a pale copy of what they should be under the Westminster process, they can help educate members about important matters. If you are on a committee, you get to see a great many people and details about this country that are important in ensuring that we know more about the community that we are representing. Under the right leadership, committees can create a collegiality across party lines. I think that collegiality is indeed very important if we are to persuade the public that this place is truly a forum for the contest of ideas and not just a bad rerun of Celebrity Survivor. We are going to have to do more to transform our parliament.

Outside our parliament, collaboration is the new norm. We all get up here in this place and we really like to talk about how we see collaboration and innovation occurring in our community and in the private sector, but we are very much, in my view, in danger of becoming irrelevant if we stick with our unreformed 20th century adversarial model. I know it is not easy to make profound structural changes to the way in which we do government, but, as we demand innovation and agility from the private sector and from the community generally, we must acknowledge that we need to change. We must acknowledge that we are simply not optimising the performance of those in this place and we are discouraging many other talented Australians of goodwill from joining us. We have stuck doggedly to structures devised more than a century ago, with an odd tweak here and there. Quite frankly, I think that we need a more radical makeover to enable us to meet the needs of our community. I accept that rethinking democracy is put at the very edge of political life. It is seen to be self-indulgent navel gazing, but I do not think it is. I sometimes think that we in political life are a bit like the taxi industry—we are batting away attempts to reform our models and one day we will see ourselves blindsided by an Uber. We truly risk losing our community's commitment to democracy, unless we are able to do democracy better.

I do hope that the Parliamentary Friends of Democratic Renewal, which I co-convene with a very bipartisan Craig Laundy, will continue in some form, because we can do better and must do better. I want to particularly commend Luca Belgiorno-Nettis for his generous support of the new democracy movement. Although this is a somewhat unfashionable cause, I think it is one that is critical for us to address because we are going to have to do a lot better in dealing with the great challenges to our civilisation that will accelerate over the next 20 years. It is not just climate change; it is the new social landscape that technology and science is creating. It is an exciting time, generally, to be an Australian, but there are very real challenges, particularly in ensuring that, as more tasks—skilled and unskilled—can be performed without human labour, we think about how we distribute the fruits of that productivity. How are we going to be able to protect the dignity and the livelihoods of each citizen when the demand for labour radically declines? This will require a dramatic remake of our economic structures and big, big thinking. I am not sure that we have really commenced that task or that we are aware of how rapidly that challenge will come upon us.

There are many things I feel that I have left unfinished. One is the need to grasp the nettle in respecting that most Australians want the opportunity to die with dignity and that it is wrong that we deny them that right. I know that there are colleagues on all sides who will
continue this fight, and I want to acknowledge the work in particular of Dr Richard Di Natale in that regard. I can assure him that I will be supporting this cause from the outside.

Let me also reflect on some of the happier stuff. Some of the best parts of the job have been getting around this beautiful country and seeing the creativity, enterprise and compassion of so many people. This has involved meeting people like the Rusca Brothers in the Northern Territory—Aboriginal entrepreneurs who are creating extraordinary opportunities for Aboriginal people to carve out independence while maintaining culture. It has also involved meeting Australian manufacturers like Hoffman Engineering and the Centre for Advanced Transport Engineering and Research in Perth—an outfit that produces ultrasonic rail testing equipment for around the world—and Redarc in Adelaide and Textor Technologies in Melbourne. All of them are exporting sophisticated, innovative products around the world. They give me great confidence that we can be a manufacturing nation. We need to support our manufacturers. Again, I am proud to have been on the team that has fought hard to ensure that we use our defence procurement to maximise capacity in building an Australian industry. We just need to make sure that Western Australia gets its fair share, and a state Labor government will help us wrest some of these projects back from South Australia. I am sure my colleagues, including the member for Forrest on the other side, will support us in that.

It has been brilliant to see the work of CSIRO and the science institutions around Australia. I would strongly encourage them to continue to have that engagement process with parliamentarians, where they come here and show us what can be done, for example, with the 3D printing of titanium and how we can produce aircraft parts in that way or how they can manufacture grain so that we can produce bread and other grain products that reduce the incidence of bowel cancer—and many, many more things. There are fantastic programs across the scientific field. This is what is going to build the necessary support in this place for investment in science and technology.

While travelling around I saw the great visions in our agricultural areas—Jack Burton at Yeeda, Bruce Cheung with Pilbara Beef at Pardoo Station, as well as the Kimberley Agriculture Investment group in Kununurra, who are doing amazing things. They are focusing on proper scientific research and strategic positioning within marketplaces to ensure that not only do we have an industry that produces commodities but that we value add and market Australian food, not just an Australian commodity.

I want to acknowledge the work that we have done with union members and their officials. We see a lot of negativity about our union leaders touted in this place; but, overwhelmingly, these are people who have a passionate commitment to Australian industry and an absolutely passionate interest in ensuring decency in the workplace. These are overwhelmingly good people, many of whom are also doing fantastic work in the international space. I want to give a special mention to the Transport Workers Union. I have a very strong and long history with the Vietnamese community, and I think it is fantastic to be able to see the work that the TWU has been doing with Vietnamese unions to help them gain justice and human rights for the people in Vietnam.

One of the great delights and indeed comforts as I depart has been to come to understand the extraordinary quality of so many of the colleagues that I am surrounded by—and I say this very genuinely. I am not the type given to howling, even though I am feeling a little bit...
emotional now. These are people who are smart, hardworking and, most importantly, deeply concerned about the people that they represent, who are fighting with intelligence and passion for an Australia which offers a place in the sun to every one of our children and who resist the growing economic and social inequality that will undermine the very fabric that is Australia. I want to give a very big shout-out to team 2013. It has been absolutely great to watch these people over the last three years grow so spectacularly—not in size, but in their ability to really show us their passion and commitment for their communities. I know that I leave this place in strong hands.

I have to say that I believe the structural reform in Labor around leadership has been a success. It has made us focus on policy to capture the public imagination rather than the constant search for a new messiah. It has contributed to Labor embracing gutsy meaningful policies that will take this country forward, particularly in climate change, industry and taxation reform.

I am also proud that Labor has committed to settle the boundary issue with Timor-Leste in accordance with international law. That is an issue very dear to my heart. I hope that we will soon achieve a similar positive change for another small, struggling nation and respectfully recognise the Republic of Macedonia.

To Bill and the team, I just want to assure you that I will be backing you 100 per cent, all the way to the next election. Your victory would be a good thing for this country.

Now I would like to give some brief thankyous. Everyone says this is a really dangerous thing, but just let me name a few people. It is a bit like being at school in this place sometimes. That is true in more ways than one, but one way is that you can make great friends by the random assignment of seats. I will particularly miss my fellow GI Geraldine, particularly through our period of immersion in the Army, Gai Brodtmann. You have been fantastic, Gai, and you are a good cook—it is much better than my takeaway. I will also miss my equal first favourite Muslim, Eddy Husic. I have put money on you at Ladbrokes, Eddy, so I am going to be following your career. There are many others, but it has been great to work with my fellow pro-Macedonian, Stephen Jones. I thank my fellow independent, Andrew Leigh, and Nova Peris—we are a little group. I also thank Melissa Parke for all her friendship and support. My most unexpected comrade is Joel Fitzgibbon. Is he here? Has he disappeared?

**Opposition members:** He’s here.

**Ms MacTIERNAN:** I sometimes think he was the officially designated 'Alannah whisperer', assigned that very thankless task of keeping me in line.

**Mr Husic interjecting—**

**Ms MacTIERNAN:** That is right. I was his next job. Anyhow, whatever the motivation, Joel, I have really appreciated the advice and friendship. You and I share some very fringe views on things like foreign policy and also our never-to-be-forgotten Thelma and Louise trip through WA’s wheat belt.

**Mr Fitzgibbon:** We never did make it to Russia!

**Ms MacTIERNAN:** We did not—but later, who knows? I will not single out the many shadow ministers I have enjoyed working with and whom I deeply respect, but I will mention a few staff: Damian O’Connor from Albo’s office, who is a great guy; Mocca and Ian
McNamara from the leader's office; and Bronwyn Taylor from Tanya Plibersek's office. They have just been fantastic to us and I really appreciate it. To all of the very kind attendants here in Parliament House constantly getting us glasses of water and finding my lost glasses, I really appreciate that. To the very welcoming and amusing staff in the dining room, thank you, and thank you to the COMCAR team.

Returning to Perth, I want, first of all, to thank all the branches. We have a magnificent set of branches in Perth. Many of the members there I have worked with literally for decades. I want to thank them—you do keep the dream alive. I thank my great staff. I cannot mention all of them by name, but Colleen Thornton-Ward has been with me for three years. She is totally OCD in keeping books, which is a very useful thing, as we all appreciate as members of parliament—so Colleen, great stuff. Karissa Domondon, who has been there for the whole three years, has done a great job in research and is about to embark on a stint in New York. I say thank you to Prue, Ryan, Tess and the many others over the three years who have come and gone throughout that lively place that is our office. It has always been so engaging, and open and welcoming to the public—you have done a great job. But, of course, I have to give a special thanks to Mark Scott. He was an unbelievable find, entering our office posing as a constituent, and was so good that we just had to offer him a job. Mark, you have given a huge amount and thank you very much. But, to all of you guys, we have had a great time together.

'I love youse all,' as we like to say in Perth.

Of course, my extended family have been very generous in their support over the many decades, one of whom, my sister, Anthea, is in the gallery today. They now will rightfully expect that I will give them more attention after 25 years of elected office—although, I have to admit, some are now having reservations. My grandson, Atlas, was confidently telling me on Sunday that I was leaving parliament to spend more time with him. I had to say, 'Well, kid, be careful what you wish for. I am going to be the ultimate tiger grandmother. There will be two hours maths homework each night and no electronics. You will be learning Chinese and there will be compulsory piano practice.' I now understand that he and his sister, Umi, are trying to persuade me to stay in politics, but I am going.

I love this wide brown land—this land of an ancient people whose connection with country adds value to us all; a land that has a proud history of pioneering institutions of egalitarianism; a country of good, fair-minded and generous people. I just want to say: good luck to you all that remain to guide this great country forward. Thank you.

Mr TRUSS (Wide Bay) (17:44): May I thank the House for giving me this opportunity, during the debate on the address in reply, to say thank you and farewell to my colleagues in the parliament and to the people of Wide Bay. I am very grateful to those people for having elected me to the parliament over the last 26 years. Wide Bay is one of the original Federation seats. In all that time, there have only been two members for Wide Bay who have been ministers. The first was Andrew Fisher, who was the Labor Prime Minister of Australia and, indeed, the first Prime Minister to actually have a majority in Australia, back in about 1910 to 1913. I am the second, and I had the privilege to become deputy Prime Minister. So it has been a long contribution for me in the parliament. There have been many highlights, things that I would like to have done better and things that I think have made a difference to the country, which have left me with many enduring and very important memories.
My time in the ministry was interrupted by a period in opposition. Opposition is not a particularly rewarding or fulfilling experience. For those that are new to the House and having their first experience in the parliament as members of the government, I hope that they will appreciate very much this time, how valuable it is and how often you will want to keep it. I did not really think it was a great problem for me to have my first six years in opposition, because it is a learning time. You learn a lot from opposition as well. Then followed the better times. I had then a succession of opportunities in the ministry. Indeed, there has only been one Queenslander, Sir Littleton Groom, who has spent more time in the ministry than I have, and that was 100 years ago. So I think most people have forgotten that.

My 26 years in the federal parliament were proceeded by 14 in local government, so it is now 40 years in elected office, and that is a long time. I enjoyed my time in local government, and particularly the seven years as mayor. It was a time when a lot of things were happening in Kingaroy, with the development of the Tarong Power Station. We built a new airport, raised the dam wall, brought in the first shire plan. It was indeed a period of substantial progress and development for the region. I had also been actively involved in agricultural politics, if you like. I was President of the Australian Council of Rural Youth. All of that, I guess, provided me with a wonderful background and an opportunity to engage with my local community.

My first ministry was actually Customs and Consumer Affairs, and in my first cabinet submission I brought forward a proposal for Australia's first country-of-origin labelling laws. I recall it quite well. I did not have any trouble in cabinet getting it through. In fact, as I walked in the door the Prime Minister was already telling everybody that it a good submission and that it was one we had to have. So I did not have to use any debating skills to get it through. Of course, I think that legislation set in place the concept that Australian consumers had a right to know where their products were coming from and also that that would be clearly identified for them. I still do not think there was all that much wrong with it, other than that it was never properly policed. That is a real issue with the federal-state arrangement, because the responsibility for policing these regulations actually rests with the state, even though the Commonwealth passed the law, and the states generally pass it onto local government. But most local government have never realised that it is their responsibility. So nobody was looking after it. So I wish the new minister great success with the new laws, and I hope that their quality will be reinforced by the fact that they will be appropriately policed and that, therefore, people will know in fact what is happening.

I then became the minister for Centrelink in the Social Security portfolio. I was the first minister with specific responsibility in that area. It was a challenging time, because this new organisation was set up with a board and a corporate type structure, yet the people who were working in it were former social security department employees and former Commonwealth Employment Service employees, and they were not feeling all that cooperative towards this venture. But, after we won the next election and people realised this organisation was here to stay, we did, I think, build a very worthwhile organisation, and it is obviously part of Australia's social infrastructure at the present time.

One of the difficulties we had to face was trying to get the call centres to work. There were long delays. I, at one stage, as minister, had come to the conclusion that call centres of this scale could not be made to work. I visited New Zealand, where they had a fraction of the staff
doing twice as much work and had happy customers, and I realised that our problem was management and the way in which it was run. So we did have some good years, but I think there is probably a need again now for some extra staff in Centrelink, because the call centres have become so busy. It is, I understand, just about the biggest call centre network in the world.

The other really great thing about the Centrelink call system is that so many of the call centres are in regional communities. They are major employers, but they are very successful centres because, by country standards, the jobs are well paid and they attract good people. Many of the Centrelink staff have been there in those call centres for decades. That means they understand their work as well.

I then moved into the portfolio of agriculture and, having come from the farm sector, it was not one that I was particularly looking forward to. I had been on the Graingrowers' Association State Council with Ian Macfarlane. We were the two youngest members on the state council. I can recall one occasion when Ian Sinclair was the minister and we invited him to address our state council. We gave him a terrible time! I felt embarrassed by the grilling that he received. I said to myself then, 'That's one job I never want in my life.' Of course, when I became minister I experienced a few of those grillings myself. Farmers expect a great deal of their agriculture minister, particularly if they are a National. It was a time when we enjoyed some good seasons, but then followed the millennium drought—probably the worst drought in our nation's history. As a result of significant government initiatives in areas like the establishment of exceptional circumstances assistance, which became a multibillion-dollar program by the time it was concluded, many farmers were able to see their way through that drought and were able to actually then go on to have prosperous years subsequently. In spite of the pain and hardship at the time, I think that was a worthwhile initiative. It certainly helped many people who otherwise would not have survived that drought.

We also had major restructuring in the dairy and the sugar industries in particular. Again, they were very difficult times. The states undertook this deregulation, not the Commonwealth, but we were expected to help out those who were damaged and hurt by the restructuring arrangement. It would be true to say that the dairy industry, particularly in states other than Victoria and Tasmania, has never really fully recovered from the arrangements that were put in place at that time. But, again, the Commonwealth was there. A $2 billion assistance program was funded by the levy on milk. It was something that had never been done previously, but I think it did help many people through those problems where otherwise they could not have succeeded.

The sugar industry also received a lot of assistance and had a quite miraculous turnaround. The assistance, over $400 million, was offered and provided when the price was down to 4c a pound—just an absolutely rock bottom price way below the cost of production. As soon as we introduced the assistance and made it available to farmers in the industry, the price of sugar gradually went up. Within about 12 months, it was at 18c a pound—the best prices they had ever had. So it was a very successful program, but I suspect the taxpayers' money did not make all that much difference in the end to the revitalisation of that industry.

There are many other memories, particularly in the live animal trade with the famous Cormo Express incident, where we had 57,000 sheep on a ship for three months looking for a home after they were rejected in Saudi Arabia. If I was to start telling that story today, we
would be here for a very long time. I may one day write a book, and it might take the whole of the book to tell the Cormo Express story. It is an extraordinary story of interaction between countries, saving face and the importance of the industry. But we learnt a lot of lessons from it all, and I think the trade has been very much the better as a result.

I was trade minister, in a pretty unrewarding period. The world was still trying to make a success of the Doha Round, but it was getting nowhere. Clearly, it should have been put to death at that stage, rather than waiting another seven or eight years. As I said previously, while some preparation work was done by others, Andrew Robb's role in his couple of years as trade minister was simply without precedent and deserving of enormous credit. While I had a role in the establishment—the starting up—of the China and Japan free trade agreement talks, we had only dealt with the easy issues by the time that I left, and there was a long gap then before they were able to come to a conclusion.

Perhaps the most exciting and interesting portfolio from my perspective was transport—a portfolio I held in government and in opposition for almost 10 years. It is an exciting portfolio because you are building a lot of things. The $50 million infrastructure program that the Abbott government implemented has, I think, been the most important infrastructure initiative a federal government has ever taken. It was really exciting to be involved. There were big projects in every capital city, but there were also important projects in regional committees. Big projects like this, inevitably, are going to cross governments. I guess one of my regrets at leaving now is that so many of the projects for which I turned the first sod I will not be there for the conclusion. And I acknowledge that I opened projects that the previous government had started, because they go that long. They need to have a degree of bipartisan support. That is why the events of the Melbourne East West project and the Brisbane BaT tunnel were such shattering blows to the construction industry. The reality is: we have to honour contracts. We have to proceed even if we sometimes think that there are better options. We do need to maintain the confidence of the sector.

We committed to complete the Pacific Highway project by 2020, and we will do that. The last section is underway. That was a particular thrill—to advance the 80/20 funding and to make it all happen. In my own state, there was the $8.7 billion committed for the Bruce Highway. Perhaps the best news story out of all of that was the award that the Queensland government recently received for the safety outcomes as a result of the work on the Bruce Highway. That was an average of 55 fatalities a year on the Bruce Highway. That is now down to 17, even though the volume of traffic has doubled. It is not just big expensive four lanes; it is also wider centre lines and more safety rails, and things of that nature. That is the real result of investment in infrastructure. It is the kind of social outcome that you get on top of the economic outcome.

But that portfolio has a lot more than roads, of course. The aviation sector is perhaps its most challenging area. There are a lot of characters in aviation. We have some of the most remarkable aviators in the world. Our history is dotted with famous people. One of them, of course, is Dick Smith, who would deserve a chapter in any book about Australian aviation. But he can also be a bit of a trying character, as ministers for aviation find out very quickly. Indeed, when I was first appointed Minister for Transport, I was in China at the time with my previous portfolio. We did not have mobile phones with message banks in those days. So it was only when I got back to Sydney that I turned on my phone. The very first message on the
phone was from Dick Smith. He had my mobile number. He has everybody's mobile number! He was calling me to offer his services and to tell me that he wanted to make a further contribution to the aviation industry. He is a great character, and I admire him enormously. But he has been given plenty of opportunities in this field, and he has made a contribution. I think it is, perhaps, time now for others to be making that contribution. I think the member for Mackellar, who just spoke, might be one of those who might agree with me on that score.

The aviation sector also has had its challenges. We did the big security review under Sir John Wheeler and then the review of CASA. CASA really has needed reform and to have a culture change. I think that is now well underway. I think the most moving part of my whole time in the portfolio was the loss of MH370. One of the things I regret most is that I am leaving the office and the search is nearly completed but we have not found the aircraft. Even though the experts have agreed that there is a 95 per cent chance that we are searching in the right area we have not found it. That is a tragedy for the families and it is a tragedy for the industry not to be able to get finality about what has happened. While there are plenty of theories—another chapter in my book—it will never be properly resolved until we are able to locate a significant part of the wreckage. It was particularly moving to be involved with the Australian families who were affected by MH370, particularly one family that lost loved ones on both MH370 and then in the subsequent MH17 disaster. Everyone felt especially for them.

I had given all the families my mobile phone number, so I was able to keep in regular contact with them. I am really sorry that I have not been able to make the calls to say it is found and we now have the answers.

It has been a pleasure always to be a part of the National Party. I have very much enjoyed the camaraderie of my colleagues. I have appreciated the privilege of being a leader and having the opportunity to work with some really, really great people. My interest in politics, though, I have to honestly attribute to Gough Whitlam. Like many people on both sides of the House, he got me interested in politics. However, I was not attracted to his version of the way in which the country should be run, and at that time joined the Nationals. In fact, I still have my original membership receipt from the old Australian Country Party. It is not as though I have it framed on the wall; I found it in the clean up that is going on at the present time. I became, therefore, an active member of the party way before I was even interested in political office. I think I have attended pretty well all of the state conferences since that day. I am grateful to the many people within the party who have nurtured me and given me opportunities. Next Saturday there is a meeting of the Wide Bay Divisional Council. I think it will be the first one I will have missed in 30 years. The party has meant a lot to me at branch and local level. I have held most of the offices, and the support has been much appreciated.

I have also appreciated the relationship I have been able to have with the Nationals in other states. We are an affiliation of state parties rather than a national party divided into state branches. That can be tough. Our state branches are very independent. They do things their way and it works for them in their way, but it has always been a major task for the Nationals to run a national organisation that works effectively.

Some may consider us to be a conservative party but we have been a progressive party. We had the first woman national president and state president of a party, and there have been quite a number since. The first Aboriginal ever elected to parliament came from the National
Party in Queensland. We have been at the forefront also of social issues, although often taking, I acknowledge, the conservative side.

I think it is a party that still has a great deal to contribute. There have been those who have predicted its doom for many, many decades, and we have been through some difficult times. While many people think Wide Bay is a relatively secure seat, there was one election that nobody expected me to win. That was the one immediately after the gun laws were introduced, which we have been recognising recently. They were very popular through most of the country but devastating for our constituency. Indeed, the party lost close to half its membership during that period, and since our party is based very much on grassroots membership that mattered a great deal to us and affected our capacity to do things at the time. It was a long recovery, but bit by bit we have grown and become strong. I am pleased that the party I am leaving behind is bigger than the one I led when I first became leader. It is substantially larger, and I hope that at the election coming up it will be even bigger and able to make an even more substantial contribution to our country.

Our objective in particular has always been to help those people who live outside the capital cities and to address disadvantage for those who live in the country. There has been an enormous amount achieved. We have obviously got better roads and the installation of the NBN. The wireless and satellite coming on-stream last weekend has regional Australia with telecommunications of very similar quality to what people have in the middle of the cities and at about the same time. I can remember with the member for Maranoa when the big issue was can we just get local calls to our business centre? That was a huge issue. Now we can call the world for the same price as anyone else in the country. So we have been able to achieve a great deal.

There is still too big a gap between the country and the city. It is a big continent, and 80 per cent of the people live in the cities, but a lot of our national wealth, probably the majority of our national wealth, is still produced in the country. Even though I know we are transitioning to a broader economy, never forget that the traditional industries located in regional Australia are going to be a vital part of the economy in the future. We still have hundreds of years of supply of minerals that the world wants and will be paying higher prices for in the future. The only reason why we will not be making a lot of money out of coal for generations ahead is if we decide of our own accord not to do it. I think that would be a silly thing to do. Iron ore and others are the same. But our wealth is also in agriculture, where I think there are enormous opportunities in whatever economy. In my maiden speech, I made reference to the fact that we were living in the fastest-growing sector of the globe. I predicted:

Within my lifetime this South East Asian quarter will be the most important economic arena in the world. It has a huge population and escalating demand. There is only one country in this area that has a land mass which even approaches Australia and that is China. It reproduces our population every 42 weeks.

Australia has bountiful resources and is a natural supplier of raw materials, primary products, food and fibre, education and tertiary services for this next economic beehive of the world. We have another opportunity for national greatness but only if we are prepared to grasp it, to encourage industry and initiative, and to support those who are prepared to give it a go.

It was a bit controversial, actually, to talk about coming closer to Asia 26 years ago, but I do not think anyone would any longer call those comments visionary. It has already happened.
with the free trade agreements. The opportunities that are there are just so enormous that our capacity as a country to remain strong and to continue to deliver a quality of life to our people is simply abundant.

But we do need to remember that people who live in rural areas are also Australians and we have a right to expect a fair share of our nation’s growth and prosperity. Currently, the APN newspapers—70 of them—are running a campaign demanding a fair go for rural Australia. I would be a bit more sympathetic to them if they would do something to stop the running down of their own local news desks, getting rid of their printing presses and taking everything on syndication from the cities—in other words, if they were doing their bit to maintain strong country communities—but they have raised some very valid points over the last few days. For instance, it is simply not reasonable for people to accept a situation where the life expectancy of a child born in my electorate is five years lower than someone born two hours down the road in Brisbane. It is unacceptable that the average income in my electorate is half the average income in Canberra. It is unacceptable that we should have unemployment rates double that of Brisbane. It is also unacceptable that you have eight times less chance of reaching level 12 from level 10 in Maryborough than you have in Brisbane.

We have made a lot of progress, but these are social justice issues that are on our own doorstep. We are often very good at saying what should happen in other parts of the world, but these are some things we need to do in our own country. I acknowledge that progress has been made, and I do not regard my time here as a total failure. We have made a lot of progress, but there is still a lot more for my successor to do when he comes into the parliament. As a country, we offer so much and we need to share it with all Australians, including those who live outside the capital cities. When I hear people in the cities complaining about having to pay $2 million for a house, I say to them: ‘Well, come and live in my electorate. You can have a whole street for that!’ If they are complaining about traffic jams, I can show them a road to their office where there will be a couple of traffic lights but there will not be any congestion. You can walk where you like, ride your bike where you like and enjoy the lifestyle that a country community can offer.

Finally, let me say that one area where I think we have so much more to do is the lot of the Australian Aboriginal people. We really have not been successful in bridging the gap. There have been plenty of pious words spoken and there have been plenty of attempts to try and do something—I am not questioning the integrity and the determination of everybody. There is a sincerity about trying to do something to improve the lot of the Australian Aboriginal people, but we have not been successful. I have been here for apologies, I have seen land rights and I have seen the setting up of companies and grants to buy land. I can remember Ian McLachlan saying at the time when the government introduced an annual payment so that Aborigines could buy land, ‘With this amount of money, the Aborigines should be able to buy the whole of Australia within one generation.’ It has not happened, because so many things have not been well managed. We have to address the issues. I think Nigel Scullion is just about the best Aboriginal affairs minister we have had in a long time because what he is trying to do is to get Aborigines to school and get them involved in their communities. The reality is that Europeans, other Australians, cannot make this transition for Aborigines. They have to want to do it themselves. They have to have the determination to make things better. I have a significant Aboriginal community in my electorate. It is a town of about 2,000 people. It has
every imaginable facility. It is, without question, the best-equipped country town in my electorate, but it is still a place where there is serious violence and a lack of industry and where things fail the moment the subsidies stop. We have to help those people. Most of the girls are pregnant by the time they are able to be pregnant and the boys rush off to Musgrave Park in Brisbane. The families have broken down. Some structures are there, but the elders no longer have authority. There are some really beautiful people, and I think, Aborigines themselves have to want to take control of their own destiny and do it for themselves. It is going to be a challenging task because we have not made enough progress in the past. We need to in the future.

Finally, I want to say thank you to all of those who have been good to me and have helped me during my time in the parliament. There are so many colleagues and friends and so many people in the parliament itself. I think frequently of those who greet us at the door, always with a friendly smile, reinforced these days, unfortunately, by bevies of security. There was no security when I came into this place—well, I guess there was, but we did not notice it—26 years ago. There was no screening at the doors et cetera. I think it is a pity that we have had to get to that stage, but that is a new part of our life.

To the Serjeant-at-Arms and the Clerks, thank you so much for your support—you have been great friends to us all—and Tim and the dining room staff and the cleaners, particularly the cleaners in the ministerial wing; they were always cheery, and maybe the ministerial wing is dirtier than the other places so they are needed there more often. They have been great, as have the people in No. 34 Squadron and the COMCAR drivers—and in my case I particularly acknowledge those who have undertaken the seven-hour return journey to get me home in the middle of the night from Brisbane when that has been necessary.

I acknowledge particularly my staff. In Canberra I have had only two chiefs of staff, and they are David Whitrow and Cheryl Cartwright. I think they are both here tonight. They have been loyal and faithful over a long period of time. But it has been a really great team, some of whom have gone on to be very successful in other careers subsequently, and I congratulate and thank them for all they have done. I would like to particularly mention Cecil Werder, who has been on my electorate staff for all 26 years that I have been in the parliament. Indeed, I inherited her from my predecessor. She is going to retire as well, and who can blame her?

MaryAnn Boldery has been with me for most of the 26 years, other than a break for children. She worked for my predecessor as well. I might add that the third staff member who I inherited from my predecessor was my wife, Lyn. As some of you probably know, the first thing I did was sack her!—because I believe it is not a good idea for members' families to be a part of the staff. So I guess I have had a free staff member ever since, and she has been absolutely wonderful to me. Di Green is also currently on my staff, and has been for 15 or 20 years. I have been blessed to have people who put up with me for a long period of time.

I acknowledge my local LNP people: Guy Burnett and Bill Hovard in particular—people who have been my campaign directors—and now Llew O'Brien, who has been endorsed as the party's candidate for this seat and will be an excellent member if the people of Wide Bay choose to elect him, and I will be recommending that course of action.

I actually met Lyn because she was secretary of the divisional council and I was the president, so ours is actually a relationship born of the party. She has been a wonderful support through all of that time, and I am very grateful for it.
I acknowledge also on the other side the shadow ministers I have worked with. I am particularly grateful to my departmental staff, especially Mike Mrdak and Mike Taylor, who have seemed to follow me from portfolio to portfolio. They are two outstanding public servants, but there are many others. The public of Australia is well served by the Commonwealth service here, who deal with governments of all political persuasions and do it with competence and a great deal of skill.

So, thank you very much to all of those people. Thank you to the staff who joined me in the gallery today. It is clearly the end of an era for me, but it is the beginning of an era for someone else who will take my place. Thank you all, to those who are in the chamber tonight, for your friendship and your courtesy. Thank you for the opportunities that have been given to me. Thank you to the people of Wide Bay, who faithfully returned me time and time again. I hope my representation of that area has delivered real benefits, even though I know there are still some tasks left for my successor to take up. Thank you.

Mr ROBB (Goldstein) (18:21): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker—and while I am on the topic of 'Mr Speaker', I will just acknowledge our very longstanding and strong friendship and also the pride I have had in the way in which you have conducted yourself as Speaker of this House. It has been, in my view, outstanding, and I cannot recall anyone who was better than you in that chair. So, congratulations, and well done.

I had the privilege on 11 February, when it was announced that I was not going to recontest the next election, of saying a few words in this House. I will probably cover some of the topics again, but not all of them. I consider that in future I will read at least, if no-one else will. I will read both in conjunction as my contribution to my valedictory speech. It is not often you get two bites of the cherry—certainly in this place.

I think it is true that every person's life is like a kaleidoscope: a rollercoaster of events, experiences, emotions and challenges. But I must say, after 12 years in this place I have discovered that the kaleidoscope is turbocharged. Juggling the electorate representation of 66,000 families, 6,000 to 7,000 businesses, 50 schools, 900 community groups, along with 20 weeks in parliament, endless media engagements, a ministry or extensive committee work, endless hours on a plane, as well as the needs of your family and friends, I have found it involves a combination of exhilaration, despair, guilt, exhaustion, robust debate, disappointment and enormous satisfaction, and all that can happen in one normal day. When you think about it, it is a huge commitment by everyone in this place. I am sure very few people really do understand it, but that is the nature of so many jobs in life. You just need to take pride and satisfaction in the opportunities that we have been given to be here.

The job does require a huge commitment of time, but not just from us politicians; it critically includes your professional staff, your family members, your party supporters and members of the party machine at both state and federal levels. It is very much a team game. Even around each individual, a lot of team effort needs to go into that person being as effective as they possibly can. I have been blessed with outstanding personal staff throughout my 12 years, and quite a number of them have done me the honour of being here tonight in the chamber. I thank them for that.

There are, perhaps, too many staff that I have been associated with to mention. I would hate to inadvertently overlook anyone. I just want all of them to know the enormous gratitude that I have for their efforts, their professionalism and the friendship that we have enjoyed; the
absence of office politics, which has been a real blessing for the me, in our office—it can make things so much more difficult if there are tensions running throughout the team; the loyalty that I have received; the intellect of those that I have worked with; the esprit de corps; and the sheer decency of those from both my parliamentary and my electorate offices. They have been a very, very big part of any of the achievements that I may have been able to make over the last 12 years.

I move to the bureaucracy. I think they get nearly as many brickbats as politicians. However, from my experience with various departments over my 12 years, I have got to say that the experience I have had has been most positive—some outstanding people, endless good intent, commitment and, in most cases, teamwork. But I found that if a minister does not provide leadership the department will take over the reins, and thank God they do at times. However, where leadership and clear direction is provided, I have found that the capacity of our federal departments and agencies to provide effective implementation of projects to be exceptional. For me, in all my experience, that is what they excel at: when given something with clear instructions, clear parameters and timelines, they carry it out in a way that I suspect no other group could do.

Our Public Service might be less well equipped, perhaps, in terms of coming up with new ideas. That is probably the biggest mistake that has been made with the placement of our capital in Canberra—so removed from so many other parts of our community, and we have now got third- and fourth-generation public servants from this city. They have got exceptional skills, excellent education, good values and all of the rest, but a lot of them have never sat on train with a person in a blue singlet. It is, in my view, something that we cannot change—the capital—but we ought to think about how we might change the experience of some of these exceptional public servants that I think do such a good job. I have found them less well equipped to come up with new ideas, but their ability to identify the weakness and risk of any new proposal that is flagged with them is very impressive indeed. That is important. People may say, 'They're just stoppers,' but, as someone such as myself who is forever on the lookout for problems to fix or new opportunities to progress and promote, I have always appreciated the capacity of the Public Service to critically assess the merit of suggested new initiatives. I think they often may have been somewhat frustrated by me having another idea. Their day was already full without me coming up with another idea for them to give me some feedback on, but they have saved me from myself on many occasions. They have also given me the confidence to drive on with some initiatives, if those initiatives survived their scrutiny. It is a good team effort. It is a good marriage of skills and strengths and it has been an important part of my experience with the Public Service. I thank the many public servants who have assisted me and the government so effectively. In this regard, I would like to make special reference to those at DFAT and Austrade. They are the department and agency that I have had the most time with over the last three years—the most time in any period during the 12 years.

Trade negotiations can be very gruelling and intellectually very challenging. The skills and persistence of those supporting me in negotiating the three free trade agreements and the Trans-Pacific Partnership has, I think, led to our trade team establishing an outstanding global reputation for excellence and achievement. I recall that the last of the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations—we had many, many sessions over the last two years lasting days on end—was excruciating. It went on for days. On some issues there was just us negotiating with
the US. The talent of our young lawyers was unbelievable. They armed me every day and every night. I think we had 10 negotiations in 2½ half days and seven hours of sleep. We came back again and again. They were lining up against some of the US's best people, people with 20 years more experience than our team had. And yet the quality of our people was such that they delivered. They delivered under the pressure and all the sense of authority coming from the other side of the table. It was a great thing for our country. That is the point. They did the job for us.

That showed that you can give a lot of responsibility to younger people. In so many cases, they will stand up to it. We need to keep our eyes open for that. That is another thing to watch for in the Public Service. I observe in so many different departments that so much is focused on seniority and not on potential. We have to back some young talent some of the time. If they do not live up to it, so be it. But many of them will, and we will be the better for it.

I must say in regard to those agreements that in the years to come I really am optimistic that these agreements will be viewed as a very positive legacy of this government in terms of making a very material contribution to our long-term prosperity. All of those who have been involved—and there have been literally hundreds—from my personal office through to the department should be very proud. A lot of the industry groups put in serious amounts of time. You hear all this business about negotiating in secrecy, but we had thousands of consultations. My office alone had hundreds. Then there were the officials we had who were experts in different areas across all portfolios talking to people. You cannot negotiate something of enormously complicated structure and content across dozens of different industry sectors, service operations and all the rest without having expertise, knowledge and experience from practitioners giving you advice and saying, 'That won't work. That will work.' It is a very iterative process. It is just those who really are opposed to trade who are picking up slogans and notions to try to do anything in their power to ensure that we do not seek to pursue more trade and investment opportunities.

As with DFAT, Austrade have truly excelled in their efforts to support me as the first ever federal minister with trade and investment responsibilities. That inclusion of investment in the portfolio I think has been an inspired initiative. They are two sides of the same coin. I found that the trade work was almost all government to government. If the trade work was all I did I would have been in a position where I would hardly have ever met any of the senior business people from other parts of the world. I would know those from Australia but not other parts of the world. The trade agreements and the investment role and the capacity of Austrade to ramp up with very senior people in that role has meant that I now have personal friends from most of the very big companies that are important to us from so many countries of the world. I met with them sometimes two, three or four times, if not more. The potential then to help other colleagues and other businesses in Australia and be a facilitator and also to do my job on trade was greatly expanded. All of that intelligence is extraordinarily important. I think that must become an ongoing feature.

Bear in mind that Austrade had never really done things on the scale we did them before. In China they met with 700 people in 2014. In India they met with 450 people in eight cities over a week in 2015. In Indonesia they met with 350 business people across five cities. In the US this year they met with 320 people across nine cities. Then the team led by Steven Ciobo met with 1,000 people in China across 12 cities. The response was unbelievable. The capacity
of Austrade to line up business people from the Chinese side with seniority and a level of enthusiasm to do business was just incredible. That is the consistent message I got back from so many of them. We had 350 investors from 20 countries at a major conference for northern Australia last year in Darwin, with over 100 investment-ready projects. I have had 80 investment roundtables in 28 countries. That was all structured and all those people identified by Austrade. They know their patch.

It is the only area of government that has a truly commercial interface. The rest of the Public Service have some other very important roles, but I think you have to protect Austrade at all costs and bolster it. At different times the Prime Minister, the finance minister, the Treasurer and many other ministers need that sort of advice. If we have a significant cell of investment expertise which is keeping us in touch with the world it can provide a great opportunity for us. For all of that, I am very grateful for their professionalism and the extent of the support I have been given.

I just want to reflect on the fact that there have been some agreements et cetera which we have been fortunate enough to conclude, but there is still so much more to do.

The opportunity in our region, you have heard me say it at other times and I will not go on about it, for the first time since European settlement we have got all the drivers—not all the drivers, but most of the drivers—of global growth in our region, in our backyard instead of 12,000 miles away. This is extraordinarily important, and it is going to be that way for the rest of this century, if not much longer. India and China are inexorably going back to where they were for 18 of the last 20 centuries: as part of the centre of economic and political gravity in the world. They are heading back in that direction; they will share it with the United States, in my view. It has all sorts of consequences. We have to keep an eye on all these things from a security point of view and other points, but it is full of opportunity—unbelievable opportunity. We are in the same time frame, we complement greatly what they want we need. We want to sell our services and our products—they are clean green healthy products. They all need to move to services based economies because that is where the jobs are. There are still hundreds of millions in so many of those countries around us who are coming into, and wanting to come into, the middle class. It is something that has to be sung from the rooftops.

It is one thing to have some architecture in place; it is another thing for that to be taken up. For a lot of that architecture we have concessions that no other country has. In time they will give these concessions to others. We have a first-mover advantage which we have to take advantage of. One of the reasons I am stepping down and going to the private sector is to try and do whatever I can to promote Australian companies going into the region, especially the services companies and to promote companies from the region to come into Australia with trade and investment. Otherwise these things can just drift and others can take up the opportunities and we will miss it. We could set ourselves up for a century of very significant contributions to our prosperity and a lot of opportunities for our young people.

I would also like to say that I have also been blessed with an extraordinarily supportive party membership. I have nearly 700 members in my electorate. From the time I arrived it was only nine weeks before the election in 2004 and there was not a lot of time but there was so much experience in my electorate in running campaigns. They just took over; I was a figurehead. Their machine just worked, and I did not have to spend a minute on a lot of the logistics or any of those things. It all just happened, and that has been the experience ever
since. They will do another great job this time around with Tim Wilson, my successor, who will be a very good member in this House. As always, you cannot take a seat for granted. We have to get on with the job and get him there, but he has the backing of so many. There are the chairs of my electorate council, those who have volunteered for the executive committee over the years, others who have been members of my campaign committee, the branch chairs, the hundreds of booth workers, Tim Wildash, Tammy van Weiss and other members of the Bayside Forum. They have all contributed enormously to my effectiveness by taking many, many loads off me. Having been federal Director and involved with that lot of marginal seats in particular, where there were not big party bases, I know the prospective candidate had so much to do in the mechanics—everything to do, to manage, to organise—and to get the horsepower out there. I have had none of that to do. It is unbelievably beneficial in freeing up your time to do all the other things I mentioned right at the outset in terms of our formal job as a representative for that seat. I thank all of those people again—too many to mention by name. I really value them; I value their friendship, I value their commitment to the Liberal Party and the sacrifices they make. So many of them just want to see a good country for their kids and their families and they are prepared to go that extra mile to do it. I really admire what they do.

I have greatly enjoyed the interaction with my constituents. I think I said last time, on 11 February, that you just do not know—if you have been in local government, you may have some idea—how you will get on with all this meet and greet and all the rest of it. I have thoroughly enjoyed it; it is almost relaxation from me from other things to go and have a beer down at the yacht club, as we do in the Bayside. You can all eat your hearts out, but it is a lovely part of the world. There are so many times that my wife Maureen and I have pinched ourselves at the good fortune of being part of that community. I want to put that on the record.

As I said earlier, I have had the opportunity on 11 February to make some remarks. In those comments by express sentiments my wife and family. I can't think of any better way of saying what I wanted to say than what came off the top of my head that afternoon. With your indulgence, could I just read that paragraph again, because I think it is worth my wife and family hearing it.

I thank in particular my wife of 42 years, Maureen. I can remember what my father said when I told my parents that, at the tender age of 23—she was actually 21, but I was 23—Maureen and I had got engaged. My father is not one to give a lot of advice or anything, but he said to me, 'Son, you've chosen a very accomplished partner. You're going somewhere—I don't know where it is—but you've got an accomplished partner who will be able to travel with you.' How very true that has been. She is a woman of great consequence, in my view and I think in the view of others—Some in this place know her very well—She is an elegant person who has been a great support. I have done well over 7,000 domestic flights in my career and now a few international flights have been added to that list. She is quite an independent person who, more than anything, brought up our kids and was a very good English teacher at the same time.

We are a very close family. We are very proud of our three kids. They have all made their own way, but they have been enormously supportive. In fact, we left them in Sydney when we went to Melbourne. They were all living with us when the opportunity came up. We had
three nights to make a decision. We had not been in Melbourne for 20 years. We had been in Canberra and then Sydney. They had never lived in Melbourne. They were all in their first jobs, more or less. We had three nights to decide, and they supported us. Actually, it is worth thinking about, for some of you, because it made them stand on their own two feet very quickly—and they were old enough to do it. But it cost me a fair bit in subsidies for rent for a couple of years! But we are very close and I am very proud of them, and they have been so supportive all the way through. Pip, my daughter, gets very defensive if there is any bad press around. That is a nice feature. I tell her it is just part of the job. Their three respective partners are very lovely people. In the last two years, they have produced four grandchildren, which is a new stage in our life which I am really enjoying.

I would also like to acknowledge my beloved parents, who at 92 and 87 are still going strong. In fact, the old man bought a new car at 90, after he had his knee done. And he picked the sports model, so he has a spoiler and mag wheels, which my sisters in particular are not too keen on.

I have had lots of opportunities in this place, on the backbench economics committee, initially, then as chair of the Howard government's Taskforce on Workplace Relations; parliamentary secretary for immigration, Minister for Vocational and Further Education; shadow minister for foreign affairs, for infrastructure and for climate change; chair of the Coalition Policy Development Committee, along with shadow minister for finance; and of course, for the last three years, Minister for Trade and Investment. It has been a roller-coaster for me, but it is the nature of my skill set in many ways, as a sort of generalist, to get across a lot of things. I have enjoyed it all immensely.

Being in opposition for those six years reminded me again—like my time as federal director, which was mainly when we were in opposition—what a soul-destroying experience that is and, when you do get into government, how much you need to really value it. By God, value it, because you have so many opportunities—and you have none on the other side of this chamber—to fulfil what you came here to do, and that is to make life better for our community. It is a great privilege. There is often anxiety and all the usual things associated with making progress and getting things done, but once you have done it, if it works out, it is enormously satisfying. It is like a Melbourne Cup: they can never take it off you. They cannot take it off you. You have it there and, when things get worse in life, as it does at times, you can draw strength from your achievements in this place. It is a real privilege for us all.

In the middle of all those different roles, I had that problem with mental health. I will not go over it to any extent again, because I did on 11 February. I want to acknowledge Malcolm, and Tony Abbott; they were both enormously supportive and understanding. They gave me the space to try and get on top of it, which I was determined to do, after finally confronting something I had had for 43 years. The six months of experimentation with different medication, the side-effects and all the rest, straddled the time between Malcolm's first leadership experience and Tony Abbott taking over, so they both had big input at different stages. I also want to acknowledge all my colleagues, including the other side of the chamber, for the sort of 'business as usual' approach that people took. It was very important to me. I was able to do what I had to do but I was also able to come back and be judged only for what I was doing, not for what had happened during that period. The support of my personal staff during that time and the unrelenting support of my wife were very important, of course.
I achieved what I wanted to achieve early on, and that was to beat this damn thing and be able to demonstrate that, if you cannot beat it, you can manage it. That is as good as beating it. In 85 per cent of cases, you can manage it so that you can lead a normal life. Younger people can actually beat it. If you get it early, and in most cases it starts in the teenage years or early adulthood—75 per cent of cases start then—it is a lot easier to resolve permanently. But, for older people and for some of those younger ones as well, in 85 per cent of cases you can manage it. If you think of the hundreds of thousands who are out there avoiding the issue, not admitting to it and not wanting to, afraid of the stigma, their lives would be materially different if they just picked up the phone and found a psychiatrist or psychologist, made an appointment and saw where they could go from there. I wanted to be able to demonstrate that you could do that.

After getting management of that problem, the trust placed in me after I came back from that and, again, the way in which everyone just got on with it enabled me to have other positions and perhaps to get to the job I have had for the last three years, which, when I look back, is probably the job that I have been training for for 30 years—the sweet spot for me, in some regards. As the Reverend Bill Crews said to me not so long ago, 'You once had a secret; now you've got a story.' It is a lovely line, because that story can help a lot of others.

In conclusion, colleagues, after 35 years in and around politics, 12 in this place, I do view this profession as a very noble profession. I just ignore all the commentary and the cheap shots and all the rest. This is a very noble profession. This is a place where you are doing significant things—both sides are. Being in opposition is a soul-destroying but very important part of this. We have been there; Labor is there at the moment. That is the way it goes. But I am enormously proud just to have been part of this institution, if you like, and this profession. Every day, our job is to reconcile hundreds of competing interests, and it is no easy task, as we all know, but it is so unbelievably satisfying when you get it right. And we are getting a lot right, and I hope we are going to see the rewards.

To the Prime Minister, to senior colleagues and to all of us: I hope that you all see the rewards for the work. I will just be a Joe Citizen at that stage. As I said before, I have such enthusiastic and significant belief in the quality of the team that we have—not just the team we have in the executive positions but the backbench is the most talented backbench I have seen in my 35 years. They will keep the pressure on the frontbench but will also move through the ranks in time. It could mean that, if we do the job properly on this side of politics, we can be a big part of the next 20 to 25 years of government in this country. So good luck with all of that. I will be cheering from the bleachers.

I not only thank my colleagues for the friendship and the support in so many ways, as I have referred to, but also acknowledge the intent and the efforts of those on the other side of the chamber. We all come here with an intent to do good—well, almost everybody. I think that is true of equal numbers on the other side. It is a very important part of the process, this Westminster system. It is a system which pits one against the other. So does our legal system and many parts of our systems. But it works, though sometimes it looks a bit messy.

I also acknowledge, as others have: the clerks, the attendants, the Comcar drivers, the dining room staff, the cleaners and Domenic and his team from Aussie's—all part of this institution and all make it so much easier for us to do our job. I very much admire the contribution they make and the pride they take in what they do around here. You can see it.
You can see how they feel. They know they are part of something significant here and it is reflected in the pride they take in their work and the pride they take in looking after us.

I said in my maiden speech:

From as early as I can remember, my mother and father instilled in me and my eight brothers and sisters that opportunity and freedom would come through education, personal responsibility and self-belief; that our destiny was largely in our own hands—how hard we studied and worked, the opportunities we took, how we dealt with people. I grew to believe that I was responsible for charting my own course—that I was free to follow my dreams, make my own mistakes, take the consequences of my decisions.

I feel satisfied that I leave this place having remained true to those sentiments and undertakings, but I also feel immense gratitude for the opportunities that have been provided to me over these 12 years. I will miss it, but I am also excited about the next chapter. I look forward to maintaining strong contact and very strong support from my colleagues. I wish you all the best, Prime Minister, for the upcoming election. You are putting an enormous amount into it. I thought yesterday's document was a cracker. It starts to show that we have a plan and we can deliver the stability and we can maintain the prosperity. Bear in mind that we are still the strongest growing developed country in the world. We often forget that, or many do. So, thank you. It has been a privilege and a great pleasure.

Mr BRUCE SCOTT (Maranoa—Deputy Speaker) (18:58): As this is my last speech in this place, I have to say that I rise with a sense of emotion, pride and humility. It is an absolute privilege to serve in the Parliament of Australia and, can I say, being only one of nine people since Federation to represent the seat of Maranoa, I find it hard to find the words to express the gratitude that I feel and the thanks that I owe to so many people for my time in this place.

I say 'emotion' because I thought long and hard about whether I would retire. Also, there are some people in those dreadful drought areas in the west of my electorate who are going into their fourth year of drought, where their properties are destocked and their communities are wondering whether it will ever rain again or whether they will ever recover. The last thing I wanted them to feel was that I was abandoning them. We have done a lot. We were able to achieve a lot. We were able to get some programs in place that will help those on the land and those in the towns who are feeling the continued effect of a long drought that shows no sign of breaking.

I grew up in western Queensland. I was born in Roma. Actually, some of you would know Roma for other reasons. It is the great rugby league town, with players such as Willy Carne, Darren Lockyer, Ray Higgs and, of course, Artie Beetson. I went to school with Artie in my very early days in Roma. In fact, I still recall taking a sandwich to school for Artie. We would sit down together under a tree and have lunch. Artie being of an Indigenous background experienced extreme disadvantage. As little kids it was good to be able to sit down together, as we did in those days. There was not the sort of discrimination then that some communities have today. I remember later in life telling my young sons, who were playing rugby league for the little under six-stone Greens or at a carnival down at the Redcliff Peninsula, how I knew Artie Beetson. They said, 'Oh, dad, you must be joking.' It was not until we were walking across an oval one day and Artie was walking towards me and he said 'G'day, Scotty. How are you?' that my little boys believed me. Dad does not tell stories like that; it was a true story.

Before I came into this place in 1990, I had had a background in running a property and growing up on the land. I had been to school in Roma. We went out onto land at Muckadilla.
There was the Muckadilla State School, which is one of those schools that has a composite class—seven grades in one classroom, with one teacher. There were four ponies in the school ground, one of them being mine. It was a typical scene in many country towns when I was growing up in western Queensland. I grew up on the land and so I know what it is like to have to send your children away to get an education beyond year 7 and the cost associated with that. I think the member for Wide Bay, the former Deputy Prime Minister, touched briefly on this. There is a lot more work to do in this space, as he outlined. I also know the wonderful joy you feel when you have a good season and also the heartbreak when the season turns against you or international commodity prices are corrupted and you are at the end of the line and feel the effect of that.

I have to say that when I entered this place there were floods right across western Queensland. Charleville was well and truly under water. I had been appointed to do something overseas at that time. I was visiting what was called in those days the USSR. I was behind the Iron Curtain. So I knew nothing of the fact that my electorate was under water. John Kerin, the agriculture minister at the time, had sent me to do a genetic comparison trial between Australian merinos and Russian merinos. The other thing that happened very quickly at that time was the collapse of the Reserve Price Scheme, which then saw the collapse of the wool industry. We, in opposition, and the government had to look at how we could deal with a scheme that had been reasonably successful for a long time but it had built up a stockpile of wool which was going to mean that prices may not return to levels to meet that Reserve Price Scheme for some time. The moment we started to talk about it was the moment that the buyers around the world ceased to buy wool. They knew the day that we in the opposition or the government lowered support for that scheme, which was operated by the Australian Wool Corporation, would be the day that someone else would get wool cheaper than them. So the discussion was: how do you deal with the four million bale stockpile? Do you take it down to the Pacific Ocean? Some said we should burn it. I said, 'You don't do that.' Others said: 'We've got 180 million sheep in Australia. That is twice as many as we really need. There is a lack of confidence. Maybe we should shoot 30 or 40 million sheep.' Maybe that was part of a solution. Being a woolgrower myself and knowing what the wool industry meant to so many of my western Queensland towns, it was something that I would never, ever support.

The western Queensland towns that were dependent on the wool industry—the many shearers, their teams, their families—have never recovered. We have lost the shearers. We have lost their families. Many of the communities out there are half the size they were 20 years ago. Whether we can recover them in the future is still open for discussion. Outback tourism is going to be part of the solution. People have adjusted into other enterprises in the pastoral zone, but that will not take up the slack in employment that the wool industry was able to provide and that underpinned the economies of so many western Queensland towns.

Further east, there was an opportunity to farm the land, to move into cereal production. Where there is irrigation potential, as the now Deputy Prime Minister would be aware, in the St George, Condamine and Balonne area and across the rich soils of the Darling Downs there are other opportunities. I had to bring my voice to Canberra. They were very, very tough times indeed, because I felt I had to be the voice of these people and bring their concerns to the parliament. I was only one amongst 150 voices. Many sought my counsel but found it difficult to understand how we might be able to find a new way forward.
I had the enormous privilege of being awarded a Nuffield scholarship whilst I was still on the land. That took me to the United Kingdom and Europe to study the common agricultural policy of Europe. The large bulk of our commodities, particularly raw wool product, was sold there. For me, it was a life-changing experience. I still very proudly wear the Nuffield tie, which I have on tonight. I say to anyone out there involved in agriculture or associated with agriculture: if you are given the opportunity and awarded a Nuffield scholarship, take it with both hands. I do encourage young farmers to take it up. Jim Gelch, the director of Nuffield Australia, now Nuffield International, has scholars on a global focus tour in the Americas. It really was one of the most life-changing experiences for me. It enabled me to look outside of my own community at the global opportunities that were presenting themselves and continue to present themselves and allowed me to think a little differently to the way I had been, perhaps—not being insular but looking at Australia's market potential only.

The electorate at Maranoa is the largest in Queensland and people often say to me, 'Well, how big is that?' I have very good colleagues and friends from Victoria who ask me. I say, 'Let me put it this way. When I'm in the largest town in my electorate—Warwick, on the New England Highway, in the east of the electorate—it's actually a shorter drive to Melbourne than it is to the west of my electorate.' It is three times the size of Victoria, and I have been privileged to have many of you visit my electorate. Prime Minister, it is further from Warwick to Birdsville than it is from Warwick to Melbourne. When the sun is rising Warwick, it will be 56 minutes before it rises in Birdsville, and yet it only takes 24 hours to go around the world. But stretched across that vast land are mineral wealth, agricultural wealth and enormous opportunity. As you said, Prime Minister, 'There has never been a more exciting time to be in government;' nor has there ever been a more exciting time for many parts of my electorate with the opportunities that are in front of us, and I am just as excited about them as well.

I want to talk a little about the great outback. I talk about the great, rich soils of the Darling Downs. My colleagues across the border, including the Deputy Prime Minister, would say, 'Your soils are not as good as ours,' but that is a debate we will have outside of this place. I know the member for Parkes would say that about his electorate, but I can assure you that the rich Darling Downs contain magnificent soils—and I have little story to tell about them.

But the great outback, where the inland rivers run into great Lake Eyre—the Diamantina, the Georgina, the Thomson and the Barcoo, all of those great rivers out there that empty sometimes, with a little bit this year going into Lake Eyre—form part of, I think, the character of us as Australians. In fact, that part of Australia inspired some of our great bush ballads to be written, and I refer particularly to Banjo Paterson. When he was at Dagworth Station in 1895, north-west of Winton in the electorate of Maranoa on the Diamantina, he sat down one night with Christina Macpherson, who played a Scottish tune, Craigielea, and he put words to that tune, the great tune that we call Waltzing Matilda. Prime Minister, I note also that, whilst it is our unofficial national anthem, it is so often used. Indeed, it was used on Anzac Day this year, when you were given the salute as you arrived at the parade ground for the Anzac Day service at the Australian War Memorial—a few bars of Waltzing Matilda were heard. I think it grabs all of us from time to time, because there is a story there to be told in that song.

But I raise it tonight for another purpose, because the custodian of that song is the Winton Shire Council. About 15 months ago, tragically, the centre that they had established in town to
collect the artefacts and the stories and tell the history, as part of a tourism venture for people
to visit and learn more about the story of *Waltzing Matilda*, was burnt down—but their spirit
has not burnt down with it. They are going to rebuild that centre. They do have insurance
money, and they have applied for some money under our Stronger Regions program. During
this campaign, I will be supporting their quest for some money to help that community re-
establish the heart of the Waltzing Matilda Centre again. I use this time, Prime Minister,
tonight to highlight that as an opportunity, but I say it could come from both sides of the
House. I think we all see *Waltzing Matilda* as our national song; $6 million would make all
the difference—they have $12 million of their own money. The other thing it would do, with
this dreadful drought that still prevails out there, is bring job opportunities in the construction
phase. Purchasing products locally is one of the things we are doing now, but rebuilding that
centre would support a community to re-establish the heart and soul of the story behind
*Waltzing Matilda*, which Banjo Paterson sat down in the electorate of Maranoa—which I am
so proud to represent for another day or so—in 1895 and wrote the words for. I will leave it
for others to see what they think of that.

Another story I wanted to touch on is the great story of Qantas. The first Qantas board
meeting was in Winton. Its heritage now rests in Longreach. They used to make their aircraft
at Longreach in the early days—they actually made them there, constructing them out of
timber and fabric. There is a story there. It was the inspiration of McGinness, Fysh and
McMaster, three veterans of the First World War who came back to Australia after Gallipoli.
They flew in a light aircraft in those very intrepid early days and thought, ’Maybe one day
we'll be able to fly around the world’—and so we do. I am so proud of Qantas, with its
birthright in the electorate of Maranoa. In four years time it will celebrate 100 years. It is the
oldest continuous airline in the world and I think we are all proud of the service it gives to us.
You step on board a flight when you are overseas, and it does feel like home when you get on,
and you know you will get home with the wonderful record that they have as an airline. I will
leave it, perhaps, for others to look at whether we can support that, but I would say there is an
opportunity there to look at how we can support Qantas. I have spoken to Alan Joyce about
this and I think the Qantas board must also step forward and help with the centre in
Longreach, where the wonderful story of Qantas, of the history and the heritage, is told.
Indeed, that story also forms part of our nation's heritage.

Prior to the last election, when Tony Abbott was our Leader of the Opposition, he will
recall that we committed $5 million to the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame and Outback
Heritage Centre to establish and build on the history of the stockmen and the heritage of our
outback, including some recent additions to the gallery—the story of the Aboriginal
stockmen. We have been able to capture their stories. The walkout at Wave Hill from the
Vestey's property has now been recorded. Maybe it was down here in some of the archives,
but it is now being told out where it should be told—out in the outback. There is a great story
there. We look at our national institutions here in Canberra and in our capital cities, which we
do support, and we should support rightly some of the institutions out there where
communities are doing a great deal, putting in a lot of their own money through councils and
other ways to preserve what is an essential and important part of our nation's heritage.

Prime Minister, Mr Speaker and my colleagues here, I had a long fight and a long battle,
you might say, to see that the outback of my electorate was connected to the main optic fibre
network. I have to say that the contracts were signed last week. It is a great example of three levels of government working together—Commonwealth government, state government and local government. Also, the contractors here are Telstra. I know when we lost government in 2007 we had plans to do it. We were going to use the Future Fund to do things like that into the future. We have had difficulties in convincing some people. For towns of only a couple of hundred people, maybe satellite can deal with that into the future. But satellite was not going to satisfy the councils in the Barcoo and Diamantina shires and it was not going to satisfy the member for Maranoa. On 1 July I think they kick off construction.

Let me give you an example of the sort of population that can swell into those communities. Early in July, Jimmy Barnes and Paul Kelly are going to be raising money for type 1 diabetes research. They are holding a big two-day concert on Big Red, the last big sand dune in the Simpson Desert. They have had to cut off the tickets they have sold to that at 5,500 people. They are coming from all over Australia. So it is not a community of 180 or 200. It will be a community of over 6,500 when you count the children as well. In 12 months time, people there will be able to enjoy better communications than are there now. I use that as an example of the fact that for many of the communities we look at we cannot look at the static population as the census figures; we have to look at the transient population that comes from time to time, particularly during our tourism season. So I am delighted that we have made a great deal of progress in that area.

I wanted to touch on the great soils of the inner part of the electorate—Darling Downs down through Stanthorpe, the wine and tourism area of the Granite Belt and Kingaroy, the South Burnett, which is also in the electorate of Maranoa and, of course, has the farm of the member for Wide Bay. I have been making sure that it is well cared for in his so-frequent absence, as the member for his family in that area.

I want to touch on the resource companies. We have had a lot of difficulty with those resource companies. In the early days with coal seam gas they believed that they had more rights to the land than the title deed holders. We took on a battle there where the coal mines wanted to mine coal at Warra and a place called Haystack. The member for Groom would know it well and would know many of the grain growers in that area. I will never forget we had to take them on because that was soil that was prime agricultural land. There are lands that we must reserve, put a circle around and say, 'We will not be mining those areas to extract coal.' There are other areas where we can, where there is lesser soil. There was a campaign which I supported which was run by that community. I think we mustered about 700 or 800 people in a meeting in Dalby one day to start the planning process. They said, 'You can't eat coal for breakfast.' But I know what you can eat for breakfast; it is the food that is produced from that soil. I have to say we won the debate. It is classified as prime agricultural land. And we must never lose that commitment to support prime agricultural land. Where the reason is good, prime agricultural land will prevail. I am sure you, Prime Minister, will know of some of the debates that have been in the Hunter Valley recently. I think we have to draw a line sometimes, and say, 'That's it; we'll go elsewhere,' until it is absolutely essential and technology will allow it, if we really do need what is under that prime agricultural soil to be mined.

I want to touch on my time as the Minister for Veterans' Affairs and the Minister for Defence Science and Personnel. It was a huge privilege to have been appointed a minister by
John Howard and Tim Fischer, as Deputy Prime Minister. I had more than 350,000 entitled veterans to look after. I never saw myself as the Minister for Veterans' Affairs but rather as the veterans' minister, because it was their voice that I needed to bring to cabinet to make sure that we were, as we often said, looking after the veterans. We had to deal in those early days with the issue of PTSD. It was not really recognised as a war related injury. I well remember going to America, looking at what the US was doing and talking about whether it could be acknowledged as a true causal effect of service in a war zone.

We had to deal with the privatisation of the veteran hospitals. Concord went to the state of New South Wales. Daw Park in South Australia went to the state government. But the one in Greenslopes in Hollywood in Western Australia was sold to the Ramsay Group. The veterans came with us. That is what was important. When we had completed that process, the department was actually the purchaser of health care for veterans not the provider of health care for veterans. We were spending something like $9 billion a year purchasing health care for veterans, under the entitlement and under Medicare item numbers, where we had agreements with doctors and providers of health care for veterans.

I was also struck by the wonderful people whom I had the responsibility for to be their voice here. We did a number of pilgrimages to Hellfire Pass, scene of the horror of Hellfire Pass in Thailand, where we established a commemorative pavilion. I remember taking a pilgrimage to Sandakan—to the death march—where 1,850 were interned at the prisoner of war camp that was under the control of the Japanese. But I will never forget, in my very first year as the minister, leading a pilgrimage to Vietnam to the battlefield of Long Tan on 18 August 1996—30 years on from that battle. We had people who were young children when they lost their father—they never knew their father; killed in Vietnam. You could probably tell that story throughout history, with many of the other wars and conflicts of which we have been involved in. But I will never forget standing at the Long Tan Cross for a very simple service on 18 August 1996 with veterans and a war widow. We had a very simple service. The war widow came over to me and put her arms around me. She said, 'Minister, thank you for bringing me here. This means so much to me.' It was on that day 30 years earlier that she lost her husband on that very battlefield. She felt a spiritual connection to him. It was very much a healing process for her. I learned a great deal from her at that time.

We talk of loss. I contrasted her loss with my life. That was the year that Joan and I were planning our wedding. We had had the joy of watching our own children come into the world, grow up and have a business. We had had a wonderful life together. She had had 30 years as a war widow, being cared for by the Department of Veterans' Affairs. So it bought into very sharp focus my responsibility to the veterans, the war widows and the children that were left behind. So when we talk of loss, it just reminded me every day, as I was the minister, of my real responsibility to ensure that we always erred on the side of generosity with the entitlements that we provided to our veterans and war widows.

I will never forget meeting with Vivian Bullwinkel, the sole survivor of a massacre on Bangka Island. She came to me with those beautiful blue eyes she had—I will never forget them—and she said, 'Minister, do you think we could have a memorial on Anzac Parade just for service nurses?' I said, 'Why not?' She said, 'Well, service chiefs don't it, chief ministers don't want it, the National Capital Authority don't want it.' I said, 'I'll see what I can do. It will cost money.' She said, 'We might be able to raise some.' Vivian was the sole survivor of the
massacre on Bangka Island. She was one of 23 nurses who had got ashore at Bangka Island from the *Vyner Brooke*—which is scuttled off Borneo. They were ordered into the ocean by a patrol of Japanese who picked them up, and they were machine gunned from behind. She miraculously survived. She was wounded but lay there in the water until dark, enabling the story to be told of the horror of that massacre.

I went up to the War Memorial one Sunday afternoon, as I was want to do some times, just to look around. I hoped that staff would not see me because I did not need staff to say, 'Minister, can we help you?' I went to the Tomb of the Unknown Australian Soldier and I looked down Anzac Parade over the tomb and along the national axis through to Parliament House. I looked up at one of the 15 great stain-glassed windows. The central figure there is a nurse with a white veil and a red cape. I thought to myself: she is standing there right on the central axis. They have always been there. The simple inscription underneath her said, 'Devotion'. From that point, I went forward and I said, 'We are going to have to give this money, Prime Minister.' And we did. It is their memorial on Anzac Parade. I am very proud to say that it is their memorial. It honours the service nurses. If we think about our history, many of them in the First World War paid their own way to go to Gallipoli, Egypt and the Western Front to serve and to look after the sick, the dying and the wounded. So I believed it was more than appropriate that they be recognised on Anzac Parade.

I just want to end on a couple of points. I think the future for agriculture is extremely bright, with our free trade agreements that we signed with China, Korea and Japan. Only today I tabled a report into the inquiry we conducted into trade and investment opportunities in the Middle East. It really is an exciting time ahead for agriculture and for many of our other resources that we have in Australia. So it is going to be wonderful for, I believe, any primary producers, but they need to know that, at the end of the day, we will have competition from other countries. So the reforms that we do in this country in taxation and regulation, and in ensuring that our country is protected from the possible incursion of exotic diseases, are going to be extremely important into the future. The world does want our food. It is clean, it is green and it is fresh, and it is going to come into increasing demand in the future.

On that note, I just wanted to say something about the decision by the Treasurer to not support the sale of Sidney Kidman's pastoral empire. I have to say that I agree with that decision. I had already been to see the Deputy Prime Minister in a bit of quiet diplomacy behind the scenes, saying, 'I think we have a problem here.' I am not anti-foreign investment. In fact, the oldest investment that has ever come into Australia was through the Australian Agricultural Company, which was given a grant in 1824. It is now a publicly listed company. You can buy shares in it on the Australian Stock Exchange. I supported the sale of Cubbie to foreign interests—a Chinese private company, with an Australian company, Lempriere Australia, taking a 20 per cent interest in it.

Lempriere have been here since 1858. They are a wool-buying and mixed enterprise in agriculture and processing here and in New Zealand. They are a business operating in Australia. One of the concerns I had, as I know it—I am not on the Foreign Investment Review Board, nor have I been privy to any of the information the Treasurer may have been—is that a large parcel of these properties are in my electorate. There is capacity of over 70,000 head of cattle on those properties. People said to me, 'What is the business case that they have for this enterprise?' At Cubbie they have continued to produce cotton on those
properties. They have purchased a cotton gin. They have expanded the operation. Lempriere Australia, with a business base in Australia, manages Cubbie with the private enterprise investment coming from China.

The Kidman purchase offer was from a Chinese government owned business enterprise with 20 per cent support from a rural property investment trust in Australia. It was not an operating business. The question I have been asked by constituents is: do they intend to continue the sort of operation they have or, as some have suggested, will they be taking most of the cattle live to China where, rather than here in Australia, they will add the real value in processing and feedlotting? I do not have these answers, but maybe we will find out whether there is any validity in them. There are suggestions that some of the business inputs—motor vehicles, steel and all the other inputs to a large cattle enterprise—might perhaps be imported directly out of China to these properties, so the stock and station agent in the towns would no longer be a provider of those and the motor machinery dealer would not be a provider of motor vehicles and repairs and tyres. These are questions I have been asked, Prime Minister, and I have said that I do not have the answer. I think that with any of these foreign investments we need to know the business case of what they are proposing behind it to ensure we do not see stranded assets as a result of an enterprise. I put that on the table tonight, not being opposed to foreign investment—in fact, I am a great supporter of it. As I said, I supported the sale of Cubbie almost to my political death, because I believed it was right and the business model was right.

I have to say some thankyou's. I, like Warren Truss, found in a bit of clean up recently my first receipt, for joining the Young Country Party. It was probably more of a social club in those days, but we had a lot of fun. I think that was where we started to cut our teeth in terms of an interest in conservative politics. I want to pay tribute to those people who were with me then, who signed my receipt for 10 and sixpence—Philippa Henzel. I applied and joined voluntarily. The one ticket I cannot find is from when I was on cattle camps. The union official arrived at Kynuna Station, and tickets had to be written out for all the workers. We had to join; we had no option. I am really still searching for that AWU ticket. I had no choice in that, but I did have a choice in joining the Young Country Party and have voluntarily been a member ever since.

I pay tribute to some of the early presidents and the people who kept the party together through very difficult times: Sir Robert Sparkes, Don McDonald, David Russell and Jenny Russell. They were there because they believed in the conservative cause. I had a term as president of the National Party when Warwick Parer was president of the Liberal Party. Having both been in parliament we understood the importance of working together rather than fighting each other on the same side, which had been almost a sport for many years and kept us out of government in Queensland.

I acknowledge the great support that I have had from people in my home town of Roma. People who supported me way, way back when I joined the Country Party are still there today. It is truly a humbling experience to have people who have been with you so long, who are so loyal, handing out how-to-vote cards and still believing in you. It is extremely humbling to have them still supporting you so long later.

Thank you to my staff. Shandra Baker joined me not long after I became the member. She has been my chief of staff for almost all these 26 years. It is an extraordinary commitment to
make to a member. One of the things I often say about staff is that they make you look good. It has been a full-time job for Shandra and other members of my staff to make me look good. I say thank you to all my ministerial staff and the department. They really are so good. Once again, they make you look good. They deal with the difficulties from time to time. They do not even bring it to you sometimes, but they are wonderful people and they have been so supportive over such a long time.

I want to touch on some other people: Allison Armstrong, the late Alf Golder and Lindsay Reardon, and Philippa House and Ann Gibbes from my home town. They have been underscoring my campaigns. It was nothing for them to do a thousand-kilometre round trip on a weekend to attend a divisional council meeting, using their own money and their own time. I thank them and recognise them.

We have a great candidate, David Littleproud, to run in the seat of Maranoa. I am looking forward to getting behind him and making sure that he does win. In my first term I went to second preferences to get elected. I said to him that he must not do that. He is working hard and he will be a great addition, and if he is elected he will be a great member for Maranoa.

Finally, when I think of achievements in Maranoa and achievements in life, I think my greatest achievement is that of my family, who join me tonight. My wife, Joan, my daughter and son-in-law, my son who has come from Hong Kong, and another son who is in New York. It is a little far to travel but I know he is over there listening to us tonight online. Without their support I could never have done this job. My wife, Joan, is successful in her own life. She has broken three glass ceilings. She is the very first woman ever elected to the local council in my area and rose to be the deputy chairman of the Bungil Shire Council. Those were the days. When she first became a member, the men did not quite know how they were going to deal with a women on council—and they did not for a while, either. They would go to lunch at the club, go to the bar and Joan would sit outside, until they thought that there must be a better way, and there was. She was the first women ever to be appointed to the Rural Lands Protection Board in Queensland, dealing with noxious weeds, and also the first woman elected to the royal national association at the Brisbane Ekka. I am very proud of her achievements, not in the name of women but because of the respect that people have had for her and for her opinions. She has always been prepared to ask the question that needs to be asked. She has never been afraid to ask that question. She has been a great strength of mine. She has been the supporter of our children when I have not been there. She has always been my supporter when I have come home and wondered how to deal with some of the emotional issues that would plague you as you went to bed at night. She was always there, supportive, with kind words that got you through to the next day.

In conclusion, I thank the staff here, including the Speaker's staff, the clerks and the COMCAR drivers. I want to put a special plug in for the library staff—it is a magnificent library we have here. We often use it and I acknowledge the work that they have done. They have done a great deal of work in relation to the Centenary of Anzac. It is worth looking at what they have done and the resource the library can be for you. Whether it is the cleaning staff, the catering staff or the staff in the departments, they are all here for us. I have said to a number of people that we really want for nothing and we are very privileged to be here as members of parliament.
As a young child, I was inflicted with polio. For the many, many years that I took to recover it was the love of my mother, father, two brothers and broader family that supported me through it. I was in my very youth and I wondered whether I would ever be like other kids and walk properly again. It took many years to recover, but I never forget my father quoting a proverb to me. He said: ‘There was a man who thought he was badly off because he had no shoes, till he met a man who had no feet.’ In many ways that was a great strength for me as a barometer and a beacon for a large part of my life. We should count our blessings every day, and in this place we should count our blessings every day. We are blessed to be here, and that carries responsibilities with it to make sure that we do not leave people behind. It is within our power to make sure that we look after people and that we do not leave people behind. We have that power and we have that responsibility.

Finally, Winston Churchill once said that you make a living by what you get, but you make a life by what you give. I hope one day that people may judge that what I have given as the member for Maranoa has been adequate. It has been an enormous privilege to serve as the member for Maranoa. It has been a time in my life, and that of my family, that I will never forget. I thank members in this chamber, and members before you, for the great support you have given to me. Prime Minister, I wish you and all your team great success in the forthcoming election. This is not goodbye; this is just changing tack—as Bronwyn Bishop, the former Speaker, said. She and I were a great team, actually. We were often referred to as the odd couple. We will start on a new path. I still have plenty to give. I want to make sure that you, Prime Minister, are supported, with your team, to be rightly returned to government, underpinned by the budget last night, which I have been out selling much of today. I thank the House.

Debate interrupted.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The SPEAKER (19:41): It being 7.42 pm, I propose the question:

That the House do now adjourn.

**Infrastructure**

Dr CHALMERS (Rankin) (19:42): What a class act the member for Maranoa is. From all of us on the Labor side, we wish him all the very best in his retirement, and we wish his family well too. The member for Maranoa is a terrific bloke, and we farewell him tonight.

Last night's budget was the third budget in a row where the Liberals have abandoned the people of Logan on the M1. In their three years in office, the LNP have completely failed to allocate a single cent to easing congestion on the M1. For years, the local Liberals have ranted and raved about that freeway. The member for Forde made it one of his key election issues in 2013 and the Prime Minister has heard from locals about the severe problems there. But last night, the Prime Minister, the Treasurer and the member for Forde confirmed for people in Logan what many of them already suspected: the LNP do not care about the needs of the people in Logan City.

They do not care about our infrastructure priorities, they do not care about the severe congestion that affects local families and businesses and they do not care that Infrastructure Australia has put fixing the congestion on the M1 on their national priority list. They have done nothing on the M1 in three years.
A government member interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The minister will not interject.

Dr CHALMERS: Labor cares deeply about the people of Logan and surrounds. We understand the way severe traffic build-up on the busiest road in Queensland prevents quality time being spent with family or developing local businesses. I understand this acutely. I have lived on or around this road for my entire life, at Rochedale South, Springwood and Daisy Hill. Unlike those opposite, I understand what is going on there. I have sat in the traffic queues, like a lot of my constituents, for hours, when the road is clogged up for kilometres during the peak hours of weekday afternoons and on weekends.

That is why I am so proud that Labor has announced that it will make such a significant investment in the M1, filling the void left by those opposite. I was pleased to join the Leader of the Opposition and the future member for Forde, Des Hardman, to announce Labor's $168 million investment in the road. We will upgrade the southbound Gateway-M1 merge by adding additional southbound lanes between Eight Mile Plains and Springwood, with construction to start next year. And unlike that ridiculous interjection, from a person who does not understand, the Queensland Labor government has agreed to kick in $42 million to make this upgrade possible. We are prioritising this project to tackle congestion on the busiest road in South-East Queensland, which carries an average of 145,000 vehicles a day. This builds on the more than $312 million worth of upgrades to the M1 in Logan that was paid for and delivered in the last Labor government.

It is worth noting that the member for Forde has been in office for six years and in government for almost three and has not got a single cent for this road upgrade in Logan. Des Hardman has been the candidate for six months and he has got $168 million for the M1 through Logan. Imagine what Des will accomplish when he takes his seat in this place after the next election. Labor's announcement says a lot about the advocacy of Des Hardman for his local community. He will be a terrific local member in Logan City and the northern Gold Coast.

But it also says a lot about the opposition leader's understanding of the people of Logan. I said at the town hall meeting in Beenleigh that I have not been aware of a political leader of either persuasion who has taken as much time as the Leader of the Opposition has to understand what is going on in Logan City—to understand our infrastructure needs. I thank him and I salute him for the commitment he made in Beenleigh just a few days ago.

The current Prime Minister, on the other hand, who was in Eagleby the day after our announcement and was asked whether he would match it, whether he would finally invest in the M1 southbound, where the Gateway joins the M1, could not commit a single cent—third time in a row, three budgets, and no money for my community to ease that congestion that does so much to damage family life and damage business in the local area. That is something that everybody else knows. The new mayor, Luke Smith, knows it. Everybody in our community knows it. It is only that side of the parliament that does not understand what is going on.

The M1 is a clear example of the difference between us and them when it comes to serving our community. The Liberals have used this budget to deliver tax cuts for big business and multinationals at the expense of local families: 82 per cent of people in Rankin do not get a
cent of a tax cut; a millionaire gets $17,000. A Labor government would put people first by investing in local schools and hospitals, supporting better paid and protected local jobs and investing in vital infrastructure, like the M1.

My message to local people as they go to the ballot boxes is clear: if you want a government that puts big business over battlers and high-income earners before families, if you want someone to dither and delay and deceive on the M1, vote for the Liberals; if you want something better, vote Labor. (Time expired)

Same, Mr Saul, AM

Mr DREYFUS (Isaacs—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (19:47): I stand today to speak of the recent passing of Saul Same AM. Saul Same was a tremendously talented businessman and a magnificent philanthropist. I am proud to have been one of his multitude of friends.

Saul, as is well documented, was once introduced by Prime Minister Bob Hawke to Queen Elizabeth as the 'most honourable man in Australia'. Born Avshalom Shmulewitz in British mandate Palestine in 1918, Saul came with his family to Australia in the early 1920s to a farm near Perth. He served our nation in the RAAF during World War II, and after the war he went to work in business. Commencing work in a small shirt factory, Saul rapidly transformed that business with his commercial savvy and his willingness to embrace new and innovative manufacturing techniques. He rose to become one of the kings of the Australian textile industry and made Gloweave a household name.

Yet despite his great commercial success Saul was a man of fundamental decency and integrity. As the Leader of the Opposition, Bill Shorten, said:

Saul dined with Governors-General, he advised Prime Ministers, he offered four generations of Labor leaders the wisdom of his counsel and through it all remained a humble, courteous, decent man. Former leader Simon Crean, speaking at Saul's funeral at Springvale on 17 April, declared him an 'exceptional man' with values of integrity, trust and loyalty, a man of 'passion and compassion'. Former Prime Minister Julia Gillard called him a 'man of pure heart'. He was a Labor man through and through, who cared deeply about social justice and for the less fortunate in our community. And he was a man who matched his passion with action, donating large amounts of his wealth to philanthropic causes.

The events Saul held at his home in Armadale in support of Labor before every federal election were Labor legend. He held an event for every Labor leader from Evatt to Beazley. His love of the Labor Party was unwavering and his advice for Labor members, new and longstanding alike, was always considered and always valued. When he could no longer hold those events himself, Saul was an honoured guest at Labor events. The Premier of Victoria, Daniel Andrews, recalled speaking to Saul at such an event at Raheen just before the November 2014 election, when Saul put an arm on Dan's shoulder and whispered to him, 'We must win; so many people are counting on us.' Reflecting on that statement by Saul, Daniel now says, 'I can't tell how many times I call upon that moment when things are looking tough.' I also think there is a beautiful wisdom in Saul's simple statement, expressing as it does a compassionate call to arms. To me that statement evokes a call to the foundational Labor values of justice and equity; values that all of us on the progressive side of politics fight
for. It is a statement that reflects Saul's lifelong commitment to nurture and strengthen those values in our nation.

Many people and institutions owe a great deal to Saul Same. Saul was a giant of many communities: of the Labor community, of the Australian Jewish community, of the world Jewish community and of the Melbourne business community. He leaves behind thousands of friends and admirers.

While success in itself is not an uncommon experience for those who are lucky enough to live in Australia, success is rarely achieved with such grace and is rarely shared with such generosity as it was by Saul Same. I consider myself extremely lucky to have known Saul for the years that I did. He always gave me good counsel, and he did so with a disarming warmth and wit. I learned a great deal from Saul, and I will miss him greatly.

I offer my heartfelt condolences to Saul's family and to his many friends. Saul, on behalf of the Labor Party, thank you. You will be missed.

Retiring Politicians

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah) (19:52): This evening I rise briefly to pay tribute to former frontbenchers in the Abbott government who have retired or are retiring. Obviously, we heard today valedictory speeches from the members for Wide Bay and Goldstein. As I have previously said a few words about them in this place, I hope they will forgive me if I focus on others. Starting with former Senator Michael Ronaldson. The Centenary of Anzac celebrations last year were a flawless tribute to the original Anzacs and also a great tribute to his skill as an administrator and as a minister. The Sir John Monash Centre at Villers-Bretonneux, which we expect to open on Anzac Day in 2018, will be an enduring legacy from his time as a minister.

The member from Groom, Ian McFarlane, was the resources minister who scrapped the mining tax. This was the job-destroying, investment-killing tax which did not raise any revenue. It was a magnificent achievement by the member for Groom in his time as minister reborn, as it were. I hope this sector will acknowledge and demonstrate their gratitude to him in his years of retirement from this place.

The member for Dunkley, Mr Bruce Billson, was not just the Minister for Small Business; he was the evangelist for small business. After last year's budget, I think he was the messiah for small business. He authored the small business tax cut and the small business $20,000 instant asset write-off which were at the heart of last year's budget, and, expanded, were at the heart of this year's budget too.

Then, of course, there is the member for Paterson, Bob Baldwin. He was one of our parliament's greatest advocates for tourism, a fierce partisan for the Hunter region and, as parliamentary secretary, a deft judge of the right balance between our economy and our environment. I want to particularly thank him as the member for Warringah for his excellent work with the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust and for the deft way in which he handled a difficult decision about a nursing home on trust land. He dealt with that very well in his valedictory earlier today.

I cannot finish these remarks without honouring my friend Senator Bill Heffernan. Bill Heffernan has been almost unique in this parliament: someone who was never ambitious for himself. He is the only member of this parliament I have ever met who never sought
promotion. That has made him, over a very long period of time, the one person you could always trust on everything. I recall quite some years ago, as a relatively new member of parliament, that a well-known millionaire invited me for a pre-Christmas drink. As I was leaving he gave me an envelope and said, 'That's your Christmas present.' When I opened it up it contained $5,000 in cash. I can tell you, the Abbott family in those days could have used that money, but it did not feel right. I rang Bill Heffernan for his advice and he said: 'Once bought, always bought. Give it back and say to that person, "Please write out a cheque for the campaign."'

I have not always agreed with Bill Heffernan, but I have always admired him as the most honest and selfless member of parliament that I have ever met. He certainly deserves a long, happy and honoured retirement from this place, as indeed do all of the members who have served this parliament so well for so long and are now leaving us.

**Defence Procurement**

Mr DANBY (Melbourne Ports) (19:56): Labor, of course, has announced through our shadow defence spokesman, Stephen Conroy, that we have no particular preference as to which company or country should be selected for the submarine contract. Of course, the process of building submarines in Australia is something that Labor has always supported, particularly in Adelaide. I note that Senator Conroy said that the DCNS company, which has been in good contact with the opposition, has made the point publicly that their preference is to build the first submarine in France. That submarine preference has a number of strategic implications. I do want to share my concern—and Senator Conroy expressed in a couple of media programs the concerns of the opposition—as to the treatment of Japan in the fiasco of the way the process of this has developed over the last two years. It was best put by Professor Paul Dibb. But I want to focus first on the something that happened in the last couple of days.

The French Prime Minister, Manuel Valls, was here—a most welcome guest to Australia. Unfortunately, he was here for only three hours. The previous Prime Minister, the member for Warringah, who just spoke, was getting a little ahead of his own party and the people of Australia on acquiring the submarine originally in Japan. It would be good practice for not just the French ambassador, the very capable Christophe Lecourtier, whom I know well, but also his equally capable predecessor Stephane Romatet, Mr Vall's adviser, to take the advice of the Friends of France and make sure that the opposition has a proper briefing from the French Prime Minister's office before the election takes place. After all, there may be a change of government. We are well briefed by DCNS.

Senator Conroy has indicated our support, but we do have concerns about how this issue has developed. As Professor Dibb, the very learned strategist here in Canberra, put it: in 2014 former Prime Minister Abbott had advised President Abe to build eight submarines in Japan and sail them ready-built to Australia; by 2015, Japan was faced with what we now know as 'a competitive evaluation process'; and then, on 4 August 2015, the previous foreign minister did a volte-face and announced an $89 billion local naval shipbuilding program and finally accepted Labor's views that the submarines should be built in Australia. Until that time, the member for Warringah and his ministers had proclaimed there was no strategic priority for local naval shipbuilding. Of course, Labor continues to support the defence white paper. As Professor Dibb said:
… wherever practicable and reasonably cost-effective, we should use—

(Time expired)

House adjourned at 20:00

NOTICES

The following notices were given:

Ms Ley: To present a Bill for an Act to establish and provide for a cancer screening register, and for related purposes. (National Cancer Screening Register Bill 2016)

Ms Ley: To present a Bill for an Act to deal with consequential and transitional matters arising from the enactment of the National Cancer Screening Register Act 2016, and for related purposes. (National Cancer Screening Register (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2016)

Ms Ley: To present a Bill for an Act to amend the Dental Benefits Act 2008, and for other purposes. (Dental Benefits Amendment Bill 2016)

Dr Hendy: To move—That, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1969, it is expedient to carry out the following proposed work which was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works and on which the committee has duly reported to Parliament:

- AIR 5428 Phase 1—Pilot Training System Facilities Project.
- Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation waste management facilities' extension and upgrade.
- Fit-out of new leased premises for the Australian Taxation Office located in Gosford, New South Wales.
- Fit-out of new leased premises for the Australian Federal Police at 45 Commercial Road, Newstead, Queensland.
- Puckapunyal military area high voltage power supply upgrade, Puckapunyal, Victoria.
- C-17 Maintenance Facility, Aircraft Apron and Associated Infrastructure Project, Royal Australian Air Force Base Amberley, Queensland.
CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS
Serana (WA) Pty Ltd

Ms MacTIERNAN (Perth) (09:30): More than 18 months ago I raised the case of the innovative biotech company, Serana Pty Ltd, which was being hounded out of business by the highly dubious actions of the federal department of agriculture, causing the loss of 20 existing jobs and a great many more jobs in the planned expansion of this company. This so-called investigation for competition breaches was instigated by a competitor company and has now been running for over 2½ years with no end in sight. The alleged case was sent to the Commonwealth DPP over a year ago, and the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources is claiming that they have received no response from the Commonwealth DPP in over a year. Then, in a bizarre twist last month, the company, Serana, having re-established itself in Germany, ordered supplies from a Melbourne company, GBP Australia, which all of a sudden found itself the subject of a raid from the department, looking for, again, the potential breaches by this company more than two years ago.

We have to remember the context of this. All of the samples that were taken from Serana have been proved beyond doubt to be legitimate, legal product. The complaint was instigated by a multinational competitor, PAA, as part of the GE group, after they were unable to come to a commercial arrangement about Serana supplying them with product.

I am deeply disturbed that in this country we can see such behaviour tolerated. The minister responsible, the Deputy Prime Minister, made his career rampaging around this country telling us about the deadly hand of bureaucracy, telling us that bureaucracy has gone mad. We all know that there is a very real case that the Deputy Prime Minister himself may have gone mad but that does not absolve his responsibility for taking this investigation in hand. Over $1 million of taxpayers' money has been spent. This company has been shut down. This madness must end.

Budget

Mrs MARKUS (Macquarie) (09:33): Today I rise to speak about the 2016 budget delivered last night, which depicted the Turnbull government's economic plan to ensure Australia continues to successfully transition from the mining investment boom to a stronger, more diversified new economy. It is a budget for Australians, securing our future responsibility whilst ensuring there is a safety net for our most vulnerable into the future.

In short, the components of our plan are: an innovation and science program for start-up businesses, a defence plan for local high-tech manufacturing and technology, export trade deals to generate new business and opportunities, tax cuts and incentives for small business and hardworking families, a sustainable budget with crackdowns on tax avoidance and loopholes, and guaranteed funding for health, education and roads.

For our vulnerable, this government will invest over $5.1 million over four years into early intervention and prevention trials to reach the vulnerable and improve their future economic
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and social outcomes. We are backing our youth. As a mother, as someone who has represented young people for decades, this is so important to me and to this government. We will invest $840 million in an innovative youth employment package to ensure up to 120,000 young people secure jobs over the next four years. In Macquarie, according to ABS statistics, in 2013 there were 19,016 young people between the ages of 15 and 24 years; these people are our future. We are creating new Youth Jobs PaTH (Prepare-Trial-Hire) program. This three stage program allows job seekers to step into a pathway towards work. They are real jobs for our young people.

In the electorate of Macquarie, tourism is a major contributor to the local economy. In Australia, tourism is our largest export. In this budget our plan is to deliver jobs for the 21st century. With this budget the Turnbull government will deliver record funding of $629 million over four years for Tourism Australia, the government agency marketing Australia to the world. This is a major boost for the people of Macquarie and the small businesses, and those that they employ, in this industry. This funding, along with the Western Sydney airport, will create 39,000 jobs by 2035 and 60,000 jobs in the years that follow. This will have a significant impact for our young people across greater Western Sydney, their families and those young people that I serve and represent in the seat of Macquarie.

The safety and security of the Australian people, the defence of our territory and its interest is the Australian government's first and abiding priority. Over the next two decades we face greater security uncertainty and complexity globally, but we will back our Defence Force and our border protection agencies.

Fowler Electorate: Vietnamese Community

Mr HAYES (Fowler—Chief Opposition Whip) (09:36): Last Saturday, 30 April, I, together with many hundreds of Australian Vietnamese people, attended the Australian War Memorial to commemorate the 41st anniversary of the fall of Saigon. Of the people that attended, many had lost homes, family and friends. But, most of all, they came together to remember that they had lost their freedom and their country.

It was also an opportune time to pay our respects to the many Australian and Vietnamese soldiers that fought in that conflict. They fought side by side defending South Vietnam. They fought side by side defending freedom. With much sadness, we remember the many thousands of South Vietnamese soldiers who died in that conflict and the 521 Australian soldiers who paid the ultimate sacrifice fighting for freedom and the right of South Vietnamese people to live with dignity. Their courage and their commitment is certainly very humbling and deeply inspiring. It is because of their sacrifice that Vietnamese Australians and many Vietnamese people around the world will never give up on their quest for freedom and democracy in Vietnam.

That day was also an opportunity to remember the thousands of people who died at sea and during treks through the jungles trying to escape the tyranny of the communist regime. Our prayers remain with them.

It also gave me an opportunity to reflect on the contributions that Australian Vietnamese people have made to this country since arriving here no earlier than 1975. Their hard work and industrious nature, their compassion for Australians in need, their care for community and their unshakeable belief in freedom and democracy makes them very much model citizens of
this country. It is with great pride that we can reflect on their contribution and everything they have been able to achieve since settling in this country.

Australian Vietnamese people have never forgotten their culture, traditions or their history. Importantly, they have never forgotten the quest for freedom in their home country. They never forget the people living under a repressive regime—people whose human rights are being violated and whose dignity is being ignored. They still dream of freedom.

It was a day for us to honour the Australian Vietnamese soldiers, pay our respects to those lost in the seas and jungles escaping the regime. But, most of all, it was an opportunity to pledge ourselves to and to stand by the people of Vietnam as they strive for freedom, democracy and respect for human rights.

Banks Electorate

Mr COLEMAN (Banks) (09:39): I was shocked and saddened to hear about the fire that broke out in the Macedonian Orthodox Church of the Resurrection in Rockdale earlier this week. The fire occurred at Orthodox Easter, which is a time when families come together to celebrate the church. Thankfully, there were no casualties during the fire.

The Macedonian community is a very important part of my electorate of Banks with almost 4,000 people of Macedonian background living there. It is a very strong and proud local community and I am sure that it will come together to overcome this terrible occurrence. The immediate priority for the community is to find a temporary location in which to hold its church services. I would encourage owners of suitable sites to work with the Macedonian community in order to find a location at which church services could be held.

I would like to express my most sincere sympathy to the Macedonian community, and I am ready to assist in any way that I sensibly can.

In Hurstville in my electorate we have one of the busiest shopping hubs anywhere in Sydney. Hurstville, of course, is a large employer with many small businesses and is one of the most densely populated regions in suburban Sydney.

One of the issues in Hurstville that needs to be further addressed is crime. Unfortunately, in recent years there has been a significant amount of largely petty crime in the Hurstville CBD area in particular such as things like the break and enter of cars and so on. It is important that everything that can sensibly be done to reduce this crime is, in fact, done. That is why I am strongly supporting Hurstville council's application for CCTV cameras under the federal government's Safer Streets Program. CCTV cameras will assist in ensuring the safety of both residents and the many small business operators who are based in Hurstville. CCTV cameras assist in deterring crime and in identifying criminal activity, and it is very important that these further cameras are installed.

We have had CCTV cameras installed in my electorate already in Penshurst, Narwee, Mortdale and Riverwood, and they have been called upon on numerous occasions by local police. I am sure that CCTV cameras in Hurstville will be similarly useful.

Bedford, Mr Jack, OAM

Mr CLARE (Blaxland) (09:42): A couple of years ago on my wedding anniversary the phone rang, and I gave the phone to my wife, Louise, to answer. On the other end of the line was my mate, Jack. When she answered the phone he started singing the song, Louise, the
1929 classic by Maurice Chevalier. My wife loved it. It was all Jack's idea. He had been planning it for months. Every time I would see him he would say, 'Remember the phone call. I have planned the song out. We're ready to go.' That is my mate, Jack Bedford, 95 years young and one of the world's great romantics.

Seventy-five years ago he was not singing love songs. He was in a place called Tobruk and was one of the great Rats of Tobruk that withstood the siege by Rommel's army in 1941. On 14 April that year a German dive bomber flew overhead where Jack was working with his mate, Eddie Herne. As the bomber started firing, they both dived into a little dirt hole, one on top of the other. After the plane had passed, Jack pushed Eddie off him. Eddie had been hit; he was riddled with bullets from the plane's machine gun. As he lay there dying, he asked Jack a favour. He said, 'Try to see my mum when you get home.'

When Jack got home he married Beryl, the love of his life. They had three wonderful children, Julie, John and Darren. Over the years they had stacks of grandkids and great grandkids. Jack worked as a bread carter and he joined the local RSL at Bankstown, and that is where I met him. For the last 14 years he has been the president of the Bankstown RSL.

Jack never forgot his mate, Eddie, and he never stopped trying to find Eddie's mum. A couple of years ago he found Eddie's family. His mum had long since passed away but his three sisters were still alive. He finally made good on his promise. Eddie's sisters told Jack that it was like he had brought their brother back to life after all these years, and Jack started crying.

Last Monday was Jack's last Anzac Day. He was not at his beloved Bankstown RSL leading the service and having bacon and eggs with me; he was in Waratah Private Hospital. He passed away on Sunday morning with his daughter, Julie, by his side.

Jack Bedford OAM was a great man. More importantly, he was good man. He was a good husband, a good dad, a good friend and I am going to miss my old romantic mate very much. I am sure he is up there now, back with his beloved Beryl serenading her, and he is also up there with his mate, Eddie, the mate that he never forgot. I will not forget you, old friend, lest we ever forget men like you.

Automotive Industry

Mr GOODENOUGH (Moore) (09:45): The Motor Trade Association of Western Australia through its Chief Executive Officer, Mr Stephen Moir, has made representations on behalf of automotive dealerships, particularly local businesses in my electorate of Moore, concerning the government's proposal to permit the personal importation of new vehicles from 2018. Whilst this deregulatory measure may appear to be consistent with free market principles by introducing greater choice and competition into the marketplace, there are some significant considerations which should be taken into account such as motor vehicle standards, specifications and operating environments which vary considerably between countries.

Australian car dealerships make substantial capital investments to operate their businesses through the acquisition of premises, trading stock and maintenance equipment, and provide high standards of safety and serviceability to consumers whilst employing tens of thousands of Australians including apprentice mechanics. These local jobs could be placed at risk by
allowing personal importers to undercut existing licensed dealerships which are compliant with consumer protection legislation and applicable Australian vehicle standards.

Manufacturers have already made it clear that consumers who choose to import their own new vehicles will not be covered by new car warranties in Australia. With over 67 manufacturers offering over 400 different model variants, currently, Australia is one of the most competitive car markets in the world. Compare this with Japan where there are fewer than 40 manufacturers in the marketplace. The Australian marketplace is not suffering from a lack of competition and therefore it stands to reason that there is no market failure impacting on consumers. It is important that the highest standards of professionalism, vehicle reliability and safety are maintained. For the benefit of consumers, local dealerships invest in employee training, quality assurance and provide excellent customer service.

On behalf of the automotive dealerships in my electorate, I make representation in this parliament that the government should exercise due caution before introducing legislation which has the potential to impact on local business operators. The considerations of consumer protection and vehicle safety must be taken into account in addition to the financial aspects of the transaction.

Mr WATTS (Gellibrand) (09:48): In footballing terms, if the 2014 federal budget was the Freemantle budget, a case of the minor premiers crash landing in spectacular fashion in the year after, last night was the Richmond of budgets. It was a budget of high expectations met with mediocrity and disappointment. Malcolm Turnbull, the Prime Minister, had a choice in last night's budget. He could have chosen to invest in our schools, in our hospitals and in our communities. Instead, he chose tax cuts for the highest 25 per cent of Australian income earners. Individuals who earn the most will get a double tax cut. Someone earning $1 million a year will get a $16,715 tax cut, while three-quarters of Australian taxpayers receive absolutely nothing. Indeed, many will go backwards. A couple with a single income of $65,000 with three primary school kids are $3,034 worse off a year and will receive no tax cuts. A single mother on an income of $87,000 a year with two high schoolers is $4,463 worse off per year.

The Prime Minister also chose tax cuts for multinational corporations. He says it is a plan for, 'Jobs and growth'. That is the new slogan from the Prime Minister, who promised no slogans. How can you have a plan for jobs and growth that does not invest in our schools, that abandons the Gonski plan for school education funding, that cuts $2 billion in funding from our universities, that cuts $1 billion in funding for infrastructure investment accelerating the already dangerous 20 per cent decline in public sector infrastructure investment that has occurred under this government? This budget is not about jobs and growth; it is about ideology and vested interests. It is a budget that clearly frames the question facing the voters at the coming election: do you trust Malcolm Turnbull to govern in your interests?

On Thursday night Bill Shorten, the Leader of the Opposition, will outline Labor's positive alternative. We will provide the economic leadership that was lacking last night. It will be a Western Bulldogs budget reply—a plan that invests in young people to build a prosperous future, and a plan that lets everyone contribute and reach their full potential, not just a few high-earning stars. It will be a plan that provides for better paid and protected jobs; for better schools and better teachers; for a healthier Australia investing in Medicare instead of cutting
it; and for a 50 per cent renewable energy target, including driving more solar energy investment. It will be a plan that puts people first. You can trust a Labor government, led by Bill Shorten, to govern in your interests. Whose interests will Malcolm Turnbull govern in?

**Budget**

**Mr ALEXANDER** (Bennelong) (09:51): It gives me great pleasure to stand up in this parliament the morning after our nation's Treasurer delivered a deeply considerate, responsible and fair budget. The Treasurer deserves great praise not just for crafting an appropriations document but for delivering an economic plan for Australia towards a strong, new economy with more jobs and growth. The budget will drive economic growth and national prosperity to ensure our nation successfully transitions from the mining investment boom to a stronger, more diversified economy. This includes tax cuts and incentives for local small businesses and relief for hardworking families that will encourage workforce participation and business investment to improve growth and create the jobs of the future.

This economic plan backs hardworking Australians and will drive jobs and growth across the country, with real benefits for individuals and businesses in my electorate of Bennelong. Part of this economic plan includes personal income tax relief, as middle-income Australians are bearing a growing tax burden. We will prevent average full-time wage earners from moving into a higher tax bracket, so that when they earn more they will not be taxed more. This means 3,400 average wage earners in Bennelong will be prevented from facing the 37 per cent marginal tax rate this coming financial year. We will introduce a low-income superannuation tax offset from one July 2017. This will ensure that low-income earners are not paying more tax on their superannuation than they are on their take-home pay. This means that 18,570 individuals in Bennelong earning $37,000 per year or less will effectively pay no tax on the money they contribute to superannuation. This is worth repeating: this means that 18,570 individuals in Bennelong earning $37,000 or less will effectively pay no tax on the money they contribute to superannuation.

We will lower the tax burden on small businesses from July 1 this year. Small and medium businesses with annual turnover less than $10 million will have their company tax rate cut to 27.5 per cent. This will reduce the tax rate for around 7,412 companies in Bennelong. The government will also increase access to a range of small business tax concessions to 17,617 businesses in Bennelong. Small businesses are the engine room of the local economy in Bennelong and the backbone of our local community. This deeply considerate, responsible and fair budget will provide significant benefits to them. It will drive jobs and growth in our local community and give tax relief to residents across Bennelong. I congratulate the Treasurer, the Prime Minister and my coalition colleagues for delivering a budget for the future of our nation in the very best interests of my electorate of Bennelong.

**Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation**

**Mr DREYFUS** (Isaacs—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (09:54): The CSIRO is one of Australia's most respected institutions. Since its establishment 100 years ago in 1916, the CSIRO has been responsible for countless discoveries that have benefited our great country. But, while CSIRO's research may lead to commercial applications of great value to our nation, it is an organisation that exists to serve the national interest in ways that are far broader than the generation of profit from commercial products. The CSIRO Marine and Atmospheric Research centre, a major part of which is located in Aspendale in my electorate.
of Isaacs, is one of the world's greatest contributors to international climate research, yet the Abbott-Turnbull government's cuts to climate research will have a devastating impact on the Aspendale centre. Many scientists who have spent their professional lives working for the public good through their groundbreaking climate research are about to lose their jobs.

Like many Australians, I had hoped that Mr Turnbull would walk his talk and be smarter than his predecessor, but, with the devastation of CSIRO's climate research capacity on Mr Turnbull's watch, we see that he has capitulated to the right-wing, antiscience, anti-climate-change agenda of the party that he now leads. A Prime Minister must be judged by his actions, and Mr Turnbull's actions in the face of what he knows is the compelling need for action on climate change say a great deal about the type of man that he has become. There is very little that I agree with the member for Warringah on, but his claim this last month that the Turnbull government is a continuation of his own with only cosmetic differences in policy and approach seems lamentably correct.

Twice in three weeks The New York Times featured criticisms of the Prime Minister's cuts to the CSIRO, labelling them as 'deplorable' and 'making no sense'. A letter signed by nearly 3,000 scientists from across the world called on Mr Turnbull to halt his plan to cut from the CSIRO's climate research capacity. The Prime Minister's only response to these compelling denunciations of his policy has been a pathetic silence. Science cuts are stupid cuts. The sacking of some of our leading climate scientists which will very soon commence at CSIRO's Aspendale centre reflects the twisted priorities and the duplicity of a Prime Minister who loves smooth talk about jobs and innovation but whose actions show that he cannot be trusted to deliver. You cannot have an innovation plan or talk about an educated nation if you are proceeding with cuts to the CSIRO, cuts to higher education and cuts to schools, all of which we see in this budget delivered last night.

**Flynn Electorate: Carbon Pricing**

**Mr O'DOWD** (Flynn) (09:57): I rise to speak about some of the measures we need in order to keep our economy strong. Jobs are incredibly important throughout the country, and nowhere more so than in my electorate of Flynn. The Flynn economy has been driven by unprecedented growth courtesy of the mining construction boom. It has provided the region with incredible infrastructure and thousands and thousands of jobs. For example, the three gas plants on Curtis Island used $70 billion worth of capital and employed 14,000 jobs on Curtis Island at any one time. Overall the project employed 28,000, a big boost to the region. Sadly, this has come to an end and, combined with low commodity prices, this has led to job-shedding in the region.

The economy is fragile, but still a very productive area. Industries of Flynn and around Australia cannot handle the increase in power prices. This is the main topic I want to speak about today. They cannot handle the dangerous policies of Labor under their proposal for an ETS system and a Renewable Energy Target of 45 per cent by 2030. When the Gillard government introduced the carbon tax, it nearly crippled industry across Flynn. The aluminium industry, in particular, was hit very hard. It cost Boyne Smelters $25 million. I have to thank our own party and Gary Gray and Chris Bowen for giving Boyne Smelters exemptions of 100 per cent, because without that exemption I do not think Boyne Smelters would be here with us today, and that would be a great loss to Boyne Island and surrounds and to the Australian economy. For instance, as to the electricity price in Bundaberg, where
there is a lot of cane grown: last year they had the crop, they had a reasonable price and they had the water, but they could not afford to pump the water onto the crops, so their crops actually died—it was a dry season. It also affected all the aluminium refineries. We have three in Gladstone, including the Boyne Island smelter. It also affected the cement factories. There is only one in Queensland now, which supplies some of New South Wales and Victoria. There is an oil re-refinery. They all employ people and they all need electricity.

We then have the federal arm of the ALP who wish to tie a noose around the necks of industry once again under a new carbon tax. I cannot urge the opposition—(Time expired)

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Conroy):** Order! If no member present objects, three minute constituency statements shall continue for a total of 90 minutes.

**WestConnex Project**

**Mr ALBANESE** (Grayndler) (10:00): Last Saturday, I attended a public meeting in Rozelle, following an invitation by a member of the Annandale WestConnex Action Group who came to one of the street meetings that I regularly hold on Saturday mornings. It was an expression of concern by the community about the lack of proper planning for the WestConnex Project and particularly the impact it will have in Rozelle. At the moment, it is unclear how many, if any, houses will be resumed, as has occurred in Haberfield. It is unclear where the route will go. It is unclear where any exhaust stacks will be placed. And that uncertainty is creating enormous concern in my local community.

This is an example of planning gone wrong. The WestConnex Project has been funded before the planning or the business case have been conducted. We established Infrastructure Australia to get the process right—do the planning, do the business case, then receive the funding—to make sure projects actually achieve outcomes. And yet in last night's budget it was confirmed that Infrastructure Australia's budget will be cut by 25 per cent—precisely the wrong direction. Infrastructure New South Wales identified freight to Port Botany as the priority for roads and rail in terms of Sydney's urban congestion challenges. The WestConnex Project solves neither.

The WestConnex Project of course goes to St Peters. I wrote to the WestConnex Delivery Authority chairman, Tony Shepherd, saying this: 'From what has been published, the proposal to widen the M5 and dump traffic at St Peters interchange is absurd. The notion that delivering additional traffic to King Street, Newtown, and parallel congested back-routes represents proper planning is beyond belief.' I wrote that on 9 November 2014.

It appears that the same mistakes are being made with the rest of this project. That is why I have requested an audit of the entire WestConnex Project, as well as of the government's infrastructure plans, because it is clear that—with regard to the East West Link fiasco, the collapse of Perth Freight Link in the courts and the blow-out on WestConnex from $10 billion to $16.6 billion—this is a failure of government planning, which is why the national Auditor-General should conduct an audit into the government's infrastructure programs.

**Wilson, Mr Barry**

**Mr ENTSCH** (Leichhardt) (10:03): I rise today to congratulate Barry Wilson of Cairns Glass & Glazing, who has become the first glazier in Australia to receive a master glazier certification. This is a major step for the glazing industry and a true recognition of Barry's skills and commitment to his customers.
Australia has approximately 11,000 glaziers across the industry and it contributes about $4.5 billion to our national economy. The Australian Glass and Glazing Association is the industry's peak association, and their stand-alone Continuing Professional Development Program is available to all qualified or in-training glaziers, irrespective of whether they are employed by a member company. The program provides a defined career path that starts as an apprentice becoming a qualified glazier and then moving to become a certified glazier with an aim and an option to eventually become a master glazier.

For Barry to achieve the master glazier qualification, he had to fulfil a range of criteria including holding a Certificate III in Glass and Glazing, demonstrating relevant skills for at least 10 years post apprenticeship, providing two industry references, completing a work portfolio, demonstrating two areas of specialisation and attending an interview with the state association panel. For Barry, who began glazing as a 16-year-old in his uncle's business in the Whitsunday Islands, it was humbling to receive this honour. I think it is a fantastic achievement and, yet again, shows the depth of expertise and talent that we have here in Far North Queensland and in northern Australia more broadly.

We talk about businesses being adaptable and innovative and the potential under policies such as the northern Australia white paper to export this expertise to other tropical zones around the world. This is a fabulous example of a business that has learnt how to overcome the challenges of operating in a regional area with a very testing and varying climate. It is this kind of knowledge that will put them head and shoulders above the competition.

I would also like to commend the Australian Glass and Glazing Association for being so proactive in identifying gaps in their industry and seeking to address them. The CPD program was established to combat issues such as the lack of market knowledge and awareness, injuries and fatalities, limited career development opportunities, a perception of glazing being a lesser trade and the lack of suitable qualifications among many glaziers. The CPD program brings the glass and glazing industry into line with other professional trades providing a benchmark for quality and offering a clear pathway from apprentice to certified glazier and master glazier.

Congratulations again to Barry Wilson. I certainly look forward to catching up with him when I am next in Cairns.

**Shortland Electorate: Stronger Communities Program**

Ms HALL (Shortland—Opposition Whip) (10:06): The second round of the Stronger Community Program grants has closed. In Shortland electorate, we have some fantastic applications that have been put in for grants between $5,000 and $20,000, and I would like to put on record in the parliament my thanks to the committee members for their time and commitment to the process. My thanks go to Allan Bargwanna, former president of Valentine Bowling Club and formal regional manager of the federal Department of Employment in the Hunter; Sheena Harvey, manager of Belmont Neighbourhood Centre; Geoff Robinson, principal of Belmont High School; Bill Symington, former business owner and former Wyong Shire councillor; and Lisa McDermott from my office who has coordinated the projects on the committee.

This has been an outstanding committee and it has some good projects to look at. Already we have had projects that involve men's sheds, surf-lifesaving, school P&Cs, sporting groups,
environment groups, Rotary clubs, scout groups and a number of other support groups. All the applications were lodged on time, and I am pleased to report that nine of the round 1 projects have been approved and a further five of the round's projects are still waiting for the decision. Unfortunately, it has been a bit slow.

Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie received $15,000 in order to get a new 6,000-litre fuel tank on site to help train in skills for water rescues. That will be of enormous benefit to Lake Macquarie as a whole. Redhead Surf Lifesaving Club got some new equipment for their function room. Girrinbai Community Preschool have a wheelchair-friendly sensory playground for children with special needs. The Belmont Neighbourhood Centre community garden has a fit-out for a new building with walls, floor, kitchenette et cetera. These are great projects. Belmont Men's Shed has a new storage shed for donated timber, and 1st Belmont Scouts group has an internal hall refurbishment. Charlestown Public School P&C has a new playground. The Belmont community centre have put in an application for funds, and Dudley Public School P&C has an application for play equipment. Summerland Point progress association is still waiting for the outcome of its application. The YMCA at Lake Haven, Charlestown Rotary, NOVA women's refuge and Charmhaven tennis club are still waiting to hear whether their projects have been approved.

Round 2 projects are excellent, just like round 1, and I congratulate all those community organisations for the work that they have done in submitting their applications.

Bradfield Electorate: The Novus Foundation

Mr FLETCHER (Bradfield—Minister for Major Projects, Territories and Local Government) (10:09): I am very pleased to rise to speak about The Novus Foundation, which this weekend is hosting the Novus gala dinner to support many worthwhile causes in the electorate of Bradfield and causes supported by institutions based in the electorate of Bradfield. The Novus Foundation was formed in 2006. It is a collaboration between the Rotary Club of Wahroonga, the McCarroll's automotive group and the San Foundation.

Wahroonga Rotary has over 60 members and meets every Wednesday morning at 7.15 am for breakfast at the Warrawee Bowling Club. They support many worthwhile local organisations, with a particular focus on projects that serve young people such as KYDS, which is the Ku-Ring-Gai Youth Development Service, StreetWork, the Police Citizens Youth Club at Hornsby and several youth leadership training events. McCarroll's automotive is a well-known and longstanding dealer group with a number of dealerships and outlets throughout the electorate of Bradfield. It is well known on Sydney's North Shore and particularly well known for its longstanding support of many worthwhile local charities and causes. The San Foundation is a foundation of the Sydney Adventist Hospital at Wahroonga, proudly known as the San, a much-loved institution in the electorate of Bradfield and throughout northern suburbs of Sydney. It is an extremely large and successful hospital run by the Adventist church. It is a hospital which has an emergency room. It is a teaching hospital of the University of Sydney and has advanced capabilities in many fields of medicine.

The Novus Foundation came together with the intent of developing and supporting projects that are directed particularly at the welfare of young people in the district of Hornsby and Ku-Ring-Gai. Since it was established, the Novus Foundation has raised over $1.25 million for a variety of different organisations that are investing in and supporting young people. Their major event each year is the Novus dinner, and that will occur this Saturday, 7 May, with
more than 500 locals expected to attend this very important charity event. This year, the funds raised at the Novus dinner will go to help the Sydney Adventist Hospital's Open Heart International volunteer cardiac surgery team and two local youth services: KYDS and StreetWork.

I am very proud to support the Novus gala dinner. I am looking forward to a good night with many other members of our community. I congratulate all involved in this project, which is doing so much to support people in Bradfield and more broadly.

**Holt Electorate: Budget**

Mr BYRNE (Holt) (10:12): We are coming to the end of the 44th Parliament, and we have just had budget night and listened very closely to what the Treasurer had to say. But there was one thing that the Treasurer did not talk about, and which this government is keen not to talk about, which alarmed me a great deal. I will touch on that in a second, in terms of what was not said and what should be said by this government.

In the short period of time that I have, I want to talk briefly about my great electorate and why what the government did not say affects those people so profoundly. At the 2011 census, 15 per cent of all women in the workforce in my area were employed in retail. This is instructive, and it would have changed, clearly, given the massive growth in my electorate. Twelve per cent of employed women were employed in manufacturing. Twenty-five per cent of men in the workforce in my electorate were employed in manufacturing. I think that is the highest rate of employment in manufacturing in the country. In Holt, 15 per cent of men in the workforce are employed in construction. In my electorate of Holt, nine per cent of men are employed in retail. Based on the 2011 census, 52.5 per cent of people also have a mortgage. It is about 27,000 or 28,000 homes. It is the third highest rate in the country. I think Lalor is up there as well in terms of numbers of people. The electorate is also 11th highest in terms of the number of people with dependent children.

We have an area where people have come to make a life. We have many households with more than two, three or four cars. But there is not a lot of extra money in people's pockets. They come out here to build a life. Cranbourne East is in my electorate and it is the fastest growing area in the country. They need every extra penny that they have. They are working mums who take their kids to school and working men who are in various workplaces such as retail, construction and trade. To ensure that they can fund their lifestyle they need to have a secure income and they need to know that, if they work on weekends, they will actually be appropriately compensated.

What was not mentioned last night was that the government said, 'We won't strike you out on penalty rates or overtime. We're not going to remove that.' We know that is the government's intention. I would like, with all the words and all of the reception that the budget has received, for the government to say clearly to the people in my constituency, 'We're not going to take your overtime away. We're not going to interfere with your penalty rates. We're actually going to give you the protections that you deserve and the protections that you need. We're not going to rip money away from you if we get re-elected.'

**Solomon Electorate**

Mrs GRIGGS (Solomon) (10:16): I rise reflecting on my favourite paper, the *Northern Territory News* and their fair go campaign where they made a very strong case for a fair go by
government for regional Australia. They looked at many aspects of life in the Territory from education to aged care, from roads to hospitals, from life expectancy to cost of living. They highlighted the challenges of living in regional and remote Australia when stacked against the major southern cities, especially Melbourne and Sydney.

I grew up in Alice Springs and attended university in Darwin where I raised a family and worked in the private and public sector, so I think I am pretty well qualified to discuss life in the regions. While acknowledging the political, economic and social priorities associated with funding for major cities, I believe governments, over many years, have held back national economic growth through their abject failure to properly fund infrastructure and services in remote parts of the country.

The Territory is experiencing a period of negative net interstate migration. While a number of factors are at play, how much is it to do with a lack of specialist medical services or the disparity of educational outcomes or the higher cost of living that comes with living in the north? Our beef industry is a case in point. The road cattle producers need to travel before they reach the major highway to deliver the livestock. In some cases, those roads are no better than dirt roads. This stifles productivity growth and holds back further gains in one of the Territory's most productive industries. It makes a great deal of sense to develop the infrastructure, say, for example, better beef roads to facilitate growth in the industry around the investment rather than waiting for the industry to grow and then following up with the investment. Let's not forget that Victoria and New South Wales benefited from gold discoveries that helped them establish their economies 170 years ago.

I am proud to be a member of a government that has an eye on regional growth through the $5 billion North Australia Infrastructure Facility. Billions of dollars have been committed under the defence white paper and the north Australian development paper. There has never been a better time to be a Territorian.

I would like to just finish by saying congratulations to Matt Williams, who is the new Northern Territory News editor. I am sure he is going to do a great job. I would also like to congratulate Rachel Hancock on the extraordinary job that she has done as our first ever female editor. I wish her all the very best in her new role in Brisbane.

**Budget**

Ms RYAN (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (10:18): I rise today to make some comments about last night's incredibly disappointing budget. The core of this budget will have an enormous impact on the electorate of Lalor. People are waking up this morning to pick up their newspapers and find that this government is going to give a tax cut worth thousands to millionaires, while people earning under $80,000 a year will get absolutely zero in relief from this government. On top of that it has backed in the 2014 cuts to the family tax benefit which will leave some families in my electorate $4,500 a year worse off. Waking this morning to this budget is bad news for many in my community. In fact, the median income in the suburb of Werribee is $52,000, so there will be very few people in that area who will be getting any tax relief from this budget.

More importantly and most disturbingly was about infrastructure in the budget papers last night which confirms that this Prime Minister and this Treasurer do not know that Victoria exists, that they do not go south very often and that they need to start to pay attention. Again,
we have Victoria short changed. Estimates say that 9.7 per cent is the share Victoria will have from the infrastructure budget compared to 31 per cent for New South Wales and 28 per cent for Queensland. I know that locals in the electorate of Lalor, particularly the Werribee South growers, will be waking this morning and, like me, pouring through the documents to see if our state government's work with the Commonwealth had bought any relief, any funding, to assist in the modernisation of the Werribee and Bacchus Marsh irrigation districts. They will be bitterly disappointed. There is no money for the modernisation of the irrigation system for our growers.

Of course, there is one thing in the infrastructure space that this government is very keen for and that is a gift for the member for Higgins, which is a new station. The Victorian state government estimates it will cost $1 billion and this federal government would like to say, 'Well, we want to give you $857 million,' but the state government has already said that they want to go it alone. The Assistant Treasurer thinks there should be a new station in her seat where a station already exists, yet this government does not want to fully fund infrastructure anywhere in Victoria.

There are a lot of things in this budget that are on the never-never—child care and higher education—and we are going to an election without policies in either space for the public to judge this government. It is a very disappointing morning in Canberra.

**Budget**

**Mr McCormack** (Riverina—Assistant Minister for Defence) (10:21): It is a great morning in Canberra and it is certainly a great morning in the Riverina following last night's federal budget. The Riverina's key role in the plan for inland rail and Roads to Recovery funding has featured highly, prominently, in last night's federal budget. The budget is a plan to back hardworking people and small businesses right throughout the Riverina and the Central West regions of New South Wales wanting to make most of Australia's natural advantages in the future. The Riverina and Central West's rich agricultural industries are set to benefit enormously from the government's recently negotiated trade agreements with China, Japan and South Korea. Part of delivering the jobs and growth of these new markets and opportunities is ensuring that we can get that product to market as quickly and as efficiently as possible. The Australian Rail Track Corporation plan for a Brisbane to Melbourne freight route has the Riverina and Central West as its most critical artery in New South Wales. Last night's budget delivers on the key role our region will play in getting high-quality, local produce to market by investing an additional $593.7 million to acquire land and for preconstruction activities. Now, that commits the government and that commits the nation to this vital rail corridor, to this vital transport link.

Whilst the plan for inland rail delivers a wholesale freight route along the eastern seaboard, last night's budget also helps deliver the critical final mile, which is very vital, within regional communities with timely boosts to the nation's road budget. I know how happy local governments were when we increased the Roads to Recovery funding. Those black spot areas are fixed up under the coalition government's commitment to roads funding, commitment to that last vital mile. We have invested an additional $400 million nationwide, and the Riverina and Central West will benefit from that, in the successful Roads to Recovery program to ensure that trucks and other industry can load, cart and freight locally. Roads to Recovery empowers local councils to make decisions on behalf of local people where they know,
because they are best placed to do it, where these roads are required and where these upgrades are needed.

Many Riverina people own or work in a small and medium business and they will see the benefits of a 2.5 per cent tax cut delivering yet another injection into the engine room of regional communities. I am so pleased, as the Assistant Minister for Defence, that the $960 million—that is right, nearly $1 billion—to help RAAF Wagga Wagga and Kapooka Army base is going forward. It is going to create jobs, it is going to create enterprise and it is going to put more uniformed personnel in my city of Wagga Wagga.

It is a great budget.

Blair Electorate: Ipswich Motorway

Mr NEUMANN (Blair) (10:24): The Ipswich Motorway linking Ipswich to Brisbane is a vital piece of infrastructure in South East Queensland. When last in government, the Labor government invested $2.8 billion to upgrade from Dinmore to Darra, creating and sustaining 10,000 jobs. The Ipswich Motorway in this section was designed, built and completed under the last federal Labor government. In our last budget in May 2013, we put money aside to kick-start stage 1 construction of the Darra to Rocklea section of the Ipswich Motorway. For three federal elections in a row, Liberal candidates running against me have opposed the upgrade of the Ipswich Motorway. Indeed, in October 2009 the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Warren Truss, the member for Wide Bay, actually said in parliament that they would stop construction on the Ipswich Motorway. Before the last election, the coalition had a Damascus road conversion experience and said that if elected they would upgrade the Ipswich Motorway from Darra to Rocklea, and they said they would fast-track construction.

In the last week the Leader of the Opposition, Bill Shorten, attended the Oxley roundabout in the Darra to Rocklea section of the Ipswich Motorway with the member for Moreton, Graham Perrett. Milton Dick, the Labor candidate for Oxley, announced that a Shorten Labor government would match the Queensland government’s $200 million commitment to stage 1 of the Darra to Rocklea section of the Ipswich Motorway from the Oxley roundabout to Suscatand Street—a fifty-fifty split. Why is this so important? It is because 85,000 motorists and 12,000 trucks use this section of the Ipswich Motorway each day. Infrastructure Australia has this as its highest priority. The cost to the Queensland economy in 2011 was $40.1 million, and it is fast rising.

After 1,000 days of inactivity, inertia and idleness by the coalition, for a second time, as The Queensland Times newspaper has reported in South East Queensland, the coalition has said that they will match Labor’s commitment of $200 million for the Ipswich Motorway Darra to Rocklea section. The people of the western corridor have a right to be sceptical of the coalition on the Ipswich Motorway. Only the Labor Party has the unequivocal record, credibility and consistency to deliver this vital piece of infrastructure upgrade in South East Queensland. Only the election of a Shorten Labor government will do this job, and I urge the people of the western corridor to vote for the candidates in Moreton, Oxley and Blair with Labor Party tickets in their pockets and Labor values in their hearts—only that way will the Ipswich Motorway be upgraded.
Budget

Mr HOWARTH (Petrie) (10:27): I rise to talk about a few quick points in relation to last night's budget. The federal budget is a plan for jobs and growth. It is part of our new strong economy for more jobs and growth, and as Australia transitions from the mining investment boom to a stronger, more diversified economy it is vital that our tax system drives economic growth and national prosperity.

Regarding personal income tax relief, middle income Australians are bearing a growing tax burden. To prevent average full-time wage earners from moving into a higher tax bracket, we will increase the middle tax bracket threshold from $80,000 to $87,000 from 1 July this year. At the moment, if someone who is on about $80,000 a year gets bonuses, commissions or overtime, all of that is taxed at 37 per cent rather than 32.5 per cent. The 32.5 per cent rate will now move from $80,000 up to $87,000. A moment ago, the member for Lalor incorrectly stated that high-income individuals would get thousands of dollars in tax relief. Either she has not looked it up, she is lazy or she is not telling the truth, because the fact is it is a $315 tax cut for those people and people on $50,000, $60,000 or $70,000 can get higher wages over time and will not move into the 37 per cent tax rate.

In relation to superannuation, we have also introduced the Low Income Superannuation Tax Offset.

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr HOWARTH: Do not worry; I am sure the member for Bendigo will get up and carp as well, like you always do. The fact is, this is a good budget for low-income earners. If you really want to talk about low-income earners, look at what you guys are doing to those people like nurses and so forth who want to negatively gear their properties, you are hitting them as well. In relation to the Low Income Superannuation Tax Offset, from 1 July 2017, it means that those people will get $500 back into their account. That is a good thing and I am glad we have bipartisan agreement on that. It is a good thing and we need to be encouraging more people to put money into super. It is very important.

Small businesses are the engine room of our economy. Right now businesses that have a turnover of up to $2 million can take advantage of the instant asset tax write-off. With any product up to $20,000 they can get it instantly written-off rather than depreciating it over several years. This will kick in for businesses starting next year with up to $10 million in turnover which will also help supercharge sales in that year as they are able to purchase products for that amount.

Building and Construction Industry

Ms CHESTERS (Bendigo) (10:30): A few weeks ago there was a big protest in Melbourne followed by a protest in Bendigo. It was in relation to the Lend Lease building of the new Bendigo hospital, which is a $630 million infrastructure project in my part of the world. It is a project that we are all excited by.

When the state government first announced that they would be building the hospital in Bendigo there was a lot of hope for local tradies, there was a lot of hope for our local construction industry. A few were disappointed when the first contracts, subcontracted by Lend Lease, went to a Melbourne based firm. Plasterers and carpenters in Bendigo missed out on work because of that decision by Lend Lease. What we have since learnt is that that
particular subcontractor of Lend Lease has gone into receivership owing hundreds of thousands of dollars to their workers—workers who are unpaid.

We have known for a while that these workers were being bused up or driven up from Melbourne. They live in their suburbs and they are predominantly Chinese migrant workers working in Bendigo. That did create friction in our town because there were lots of local trades that missed out on that work. What we have since learnt is that those migrant workers had been ripped off. They had not been paid by their company before it went into receivership. That is why there was a protest out the front of Lend Lease a few weeks ago demanding that Lend Lease step in and clean up this mess and make sure that these workers got paid. We also know that some workers completely disappeared from the site—people here on temporary work visas—and nobody knows what has happened to those workers or whether they got paid.

The good news is that, after the public pressure, after the campaign, after the protests, Lend Lease did the right thing and paid those workers, but it should not come to this. Australian workers should not have to protest to get paid. Companies like Lend Lease should do the right thing and in the first place contract to subcontractors who will pay them properly, contract to people who have a standard and who have a relationship with their workers that they pay properly. Australian workers should not have to take to the streets to be paid for doing work.

Small businesses in my part of the world, who are also caught up in the fiasco, should not have to speak to the local media about getting their contracts paid. The good news is that, with some of those small businesses in my part of the world, Lend Lease has done the right thing and paid the invoices, so they will not miss out on money that is owed to them.

It should not come to this. Lend Lease and this government need to ensure that when people work they get paid. They need to do everything they can. People should not have to take to the streets to simply get their pay cheque.

Dobell Electorate: Central Coast Country Music Association

Mrs McNAMARA (Dobell) (10:34): I often share with the House many outstanding organisations and associations on the Central Coast of New South Wales. It is a pleasure to highlight another, which is a bit of a hidden treasure on the Central Coast, and it is known as the Central Coast Country Music Association. The CCCMA has proved its worth throughout the years and recently celebrated its 40th anniversary. The association was formed in 1976 when 17 country music enthusiasts met at Long Jetty with the intention to form a country music club on the Central Coast. Over the past 40 years the association has promoted country music and fostered new talent, all the while raising funds for numerous charities such as Riding for the Disabled, CareFlight, and spina bifida and cancer counsellors, as well as many community groups and individuals requiring help.

The association hosted their 40th anniversary celebration on 5 March at the Central Coast Leagues Club. The event featured past and present top-line artists and current members, along with some very special guests that have supported country music on the Central Coast over the years. As part of the celebrations, the association is releasing a compilation country music album consisting of past and present country music members. Over the years, the association has provided the Central Coast community with access to top-quality country music in the form of festivals, first at The Entrance Memorial Park and then later at Warnervale.
The association established the Warnervale Country Music Park, which was set on 11 acres of bushland with a natural amphitheatre. The park's creation was the result of the hard work of volunteers, consisting of the CCCMA members and their children, who cleared the virgin bushland to create a wonderful country music park facility which at the time was known and appreciated nationwide. The Warnervale Country Music Park, since renamed Federation Park by Wyong Shire Council, boasted many features, including a concrete stage, outdoor kitchen and children's play area. Sadly, the park is no longer in use by the association. In its day, the park hosted major shows with around 5,000 people in attendance and drew visitors from throughout New South Wales and interstate.

The success of the association in promoting country music has much to do with the dedication and commitment of its members—in particular, of three who remained active throughout their lives. The dedication, passion and commitment of Vera, Vince and Lyn McKenzie will never be forgotten. I also acknowledge the commitment and dedication to the association of six life members who served 15 consecutive years as active club members. Thank you to Clive McKenzie, Jim Waters, Kay Matthews, Ted J Kale and Helen and Ray Potter.

Over the past 40 years, the association has been a springboard for many successful acts. Music is such an important part of our lives and we are fortunate in Dobell to have a group dedicated to the promotion and creation of country music.

**Greenway Electorate: Defibrillators at Sporting Venues**

Ms ROWLAND (Greenway) (10:37): I am delighted to report to the House on another successful partnership that I have been able to deliver in conjunction with Blacktown City Council and one that has attracted widespread support around the community for the benefits it will bring, and that is that Blacktown City Council has become the first council in New South Wales that will be placing a defibrillator in every sporting venue across the council's area.

This is an enormous achievement. Blacktown City Council is the largest local government area in New South Wales. In my time as a councillor and deputy mayor on the council, we really promoted the area as being a sporting city. If you go around on any weekend, especially in Blacktown, you can see that all of the sporting grounds are full and they are very widely utilised, which is why this plan is so important. One hundred and one defibrillators will be rolled out across the council's area, and every sporting venue will have the same brand and type of unit. This is a $225,000 project which is underwritten by Blacktown City Council. I was pleased to be able to sponsor a $20,000 contribution through the Stronger Communities Program. I want to acknowledge that the partnership extended beyond the council and me to a number of other institutions, including the Blacktown district soccer football club, Rugby League Penrith, Rugby League Parramatta, AFL and Cricket NSW.

This will certainly be an initiative that will have very significant benefits for our local community. We are going to have club officials trained to properly use the defibrillators. The huge benefit of this will be that at any sporting fixture there will be a large group of people who will be able to grab a defibrillator off the wall and use it with confidence.

The Heart Foundation of New South Wales has heartily welcomed this as well, saying that it congratulates Blacktown Council in its comprehensive approach to providing every sports
facility in its local area with automated external defibrillators. It said that time is crucial in sudden cardiac arrest situations—every minute that passes reduces the rate of survival by 10 per cent.

This will be of enormous benefit to some 30,000 athletes who use our sporting grounds, especially elite young athletes. Many people may not realise that it is elite young athletes who are most vulnerable to cardiac arrests.

I was very pleased on Friday to be able to meet with members of a number of the sporting groups who will benefit from this, including Blacktown City & District Cricket Association President Stuart McKinder, who said, ‘We have had two people—older blokes—die on the fields within Blacktown over the past 20 years that I know of, and who knows? It might have turned out differently if there was a defibrillator. If it saves one life, then it pays for itself.’ So I am very pleased to have been able to sponsor this. As I said, these council-owned fields accommodate 120 sporting clubs across 20 sports codes. This will have a very real benefit for the people of Greenway.

Valedictory

Mr HUTCHINSON (Lyons) (10:40): It gives me great pleasure to rise. It may be the last time I get an opportunity in this parliament—who knows? Ultimately, that is a decision for the Prime Minister. I just wanted to say that for the last three years it has been an honour and a privilege to be the member for one of the most diverse and amazing electorates in Australia, in my belief.

I have an enormous respect for the electors in my electorate. They are reasonable and they are fair-minded. We have more work to do, and I do hope that they will give me the opportunity to continue the work we have started. Tasmania has been a better place in the last three years. When we inherited government unemployment was over eight per cent, and today it is in the mid-sixes. We have invested in infrastructure and we have supported the engine room of my state, which ultimately is small business.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank my staff. I have extraordinary people who support me every day. I thank Caroline Donaghy, Cassie Tickner-Smith, Sharna Lee, Charles Headlam, Lorraine Anderson, Jane Donaghy, Kirstie Hill and all of the other people and volunteers who support me in the work that I do. I thank them all very much. They make me look good most of the time.

Most of all, can I thank my family—my beautiful wife, Amanda, and my two boys, David and John—for the time that I do not spend with them, for the times I miss important events in my boys’ lives—I miss that—and for the time that I do not spend with my wife that I should spend with my wife. That is the choice I made. As has been said, they are the conscripts and I am the elected member.

I want to focus on the future as well. Last night was an important milestone for our country. Scott Morrison, the Treasurer, delivered a plan for our nation's future. It is a plan to deliver jobs in growth and to create a stronger, more diverse economy, whether it be through the National Innovation and Science Agenda; the procurement of defence spending capacity; the ability for small and medium businesses all around Australia to take advantage of those initiatives and for Australians to have the passion and the capacity to be able to develop start-
ups; or the tax cuts that are now extended for businesses with a $10 million turnover—small and medium businesses—and hardworking Australian families that will benefit from not going into higher tax brackets—this is all about you. We are cracking down on tax avoidance and multinationals. It is right and proper that they pay their fair share of tax. That burden then does not fall on families and small business, which we know is the engine room. We have, with secure and proper planning, been able to guarantee proper and reliable funding for health and education. This is about the trust we put in Australians. We will deliver on that promise.

Budget

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (10:43): Last night the Treasurer delivered the Turnbull budget, which purported to be a plan for jobs and growth but is really a plan for cuts and unfairness. It delivers tax cuts for the banks and multinationals at the expense of Australian families, particularly those in Moreton. It is a Liberal budget to its core. There are cuts to schools, cuts to Medicare, cuts to families that will increase their cost of living, cuts to higher education, cuts to veterans' hospitals, a GP tax by stealth and tax breaks for banks and multinationals.

For families in Moreton this will mean that a couple on a single income of $87,000 and with two children in primary school will be nearly $2,500 worse off. A sole parent with an income of $65,000 and two children in high school will be nearly $5,000 worse off. A couple with an income of $50,000 each and two children in high school will be over $2,500 worse off each year. A couple with an income of $90,000 and three children in primary school will be nearly $3,000 worse off each year—all this while millionaires will receive two tax cuts and be $16,715 better off each year.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms O'Neil): Order, please, members!

Mr PERRETT: The top 10 per cent of income earners are getting the vast majority of the Turnbull government's tax cuts. In fact, politicians will get a tax cut, while 75 per cent of Australians will get none at all—surely a sign that the Treasurer has got it horribly wrong. Pensioners in Moreton will be hundreds of dollars worse off each year due to Mr Turnbull's budget. Single pensioners will be $366 a year worse off and couples $550 a year worse off. And the government has done that despite the tripling of the budget, as announced by Treasurer Morrison.

This budget is looking after the big end of town, while cutting payments to families, pensioners, schools and hospitals. So desperate is Mr Turnbull to give a tax cut to the top end of town, he has even changed the definition of a small business. This budget puts big business and high-income earners before families. It is an un-Australian budget. This budget does nothing to set up Australia for the future. In fact, this budget will undermine our egalitarian future at a time when wages growth is the lowest it has been since they have been recording wages increases, and also when we are becoming a more unequal society. The president of the AMA—not exactly a friend of the Labor Party—Professor Brian Owler said about this budget: 'The poorest, the sickest and the most vulnerable will be the hardest hit.' Now more than ever, the difference between the Labor Party and the Liberal Party could not be any starker.
The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Excuse me, members. The member has a right to be heard. Please allow him to be so.

Mr PERRETT: Mr Turnbull and the Liberals will only look after the high-income earners and multinationals, while the Labor Party—

Honourable members interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, please, members!

Mr PERRETT: will do what we have always done. Labor will put the people first.

Budget

Mrs WICKS (Robertson) (10:46): I strongly welcome the 2016 budget delivered last night, because it is more than just a budget. It is an economic plan for Australia, for a strong new economy with more jobs and growth, which is fantastic news for local families and local businesses in my electorate of Robertson on the New South Wales Central Coast.

I am thrilled to see how the focus of this tax plan backs hardworking families and businesses. This is a budget that will drive jobs and growth across the country, with real benefits for thousands of people and businesses. Already, I am hearing positive stories on street corners and train stations on the Central Coast, from people like Darren and Bec, who told me: 'This budget is just what we needed. It puts us in a better position today than we were in yesterday.' There are many other examples of comments like this, because this is a budget that delivers tax cuts and incentives for local small businesses and relief for hardworking families. For example, the budget will introduce a low-income superannuation tax offset from 1 July next year. This will ensure that low-income earners are not paying more tax on their superannuation than they are on their take-home pay. This means that more than 21,000 people in my electorate of Robertson earning $37,000 per year or less will effectively pay no tax on the money they contribute to superannuation.

We also know that it is business, not government, that creates jobs. Sometimes, of course, government can play a direct role, such as our major commitment to deliver 600 new federal jobs in Gosford. But it is the coffee-shop economics—the flow-on effects and the hard work of our small business owners and employees, who are those we need to back so we can build a strong economy. As we transition from the mining investment boom, these businesses deserve every opportunity to invest, grow and employ more people, so they can thrive, prosper and succeed locally on the Central Coast. From 1 July this year, small and medium businesses with an annual turnover of less than $10 million will have their company tax rate cut to 27.5 per cent. This will reduce the tax rate for more than 5,200 companies in Robertson. Crucially, the Turnbull government will also increase access to a range of small business tax concessions to more Australian businesses with turnover of less than $10 million. This is great news for more than 15,000 businesses in my electorate, who will be able to access these concessions.

Every day, people raise with me the need for jobs for our young people. Last night's release of a new PaTH to youth employment will help young people through Australia's economic transition. The government will invest over $840 million over four years in a youth employment package that will assist up to 120,000 vulnerable young people. These measures will further boost young people's job prospects by helping them to be better prepared for the workforce.
The budget also has great news, with guaranteed funding, for health, education and roads, and I know that there will be much more to say about the need for better infrastructure in our region.

**Education Funding**

Mr HUSIC (Chifley) (10:49): We have had a lot of talk in this country about an ideas boom, but how do you have an ideas boom if you are a dud on school funding? In last night's federal budget, Malcolm Turnbull committed to Tony Abbott's school cuts.

If the federal government, through Malcolm Turnbull, cuts school funding, what happens in Mike Baird's patch? Well, this is the impact. The New South Wales education department has released documents that show the full extent of how schools in New South Wales are crumbling because of a massive $732 million maintenance backlog. That is 2,000 maintenance jobs in government schools as at 30 June last year—it does not even take into account this year's backlog. According to the New South Wales Auditor-General, between 2013-14 and 2014-15 that maintenance backlog jumped nearly 40 per cent—nearly $200 million in just one year. It is growing faster than the maintenance spend across the state, meaning broken and faulty facilities across many schools will frankly never be up to scratch. Across 400 schools, the types of repairs that are waiting include worn carpets that are becoming a safety hazard; overflowing sewerage in schools, which is disgraceful; and playgrounds that are failing to meet safety standards. This is what will keep happening if we do not clear the maintenance bill, and it is unlikely that the New South Wales government will catch up with fixing these schools.

In the electorate I represent, there are schools in Mount Druitt that are waiting for these types of repairs. For example, there are two Chifley College campuses that are waiting on more than $1 million in works. Bidwill Campus is listed at $1.2 million, and at the Dunheved Campus, which a lot of students from the Chifley electorate attend, over $1 million in repairs are waiting to be done. At Rooty Hill High School, a massive school in my area, nearly $800,000 worth of repairs are required; at Tregear Public School, it is nearly $700,000.

These are absolutely alarming figures and they come on top of recent reports highlighting the Baird government's failure to cope with building new and upgraded schools to meet Sydney's growing population. The Baird Liberal government needs to urgently inject funds into this project, but they are placed even further behind when the Turnbull government cuts their funding even further. This is what happens—the snowball effect. If the federal government cuts funds, the state government looks to save money by holding back on maintenance, and that is causing safety hazards in New South Wales schools.

Our locals should not bear the brunt of Tony Abbott's and then Malcolm Turnbull's cuts. Certainly overcrowded schools and buildings in disrepair are simply not good enough. If we want quality education, it should happen in a quality education environment.

**Budget**

Mr IRONS (Swan) (10:52): Last night, we saw the Treasurer deliver the 2016 budget for more jobs and growth. The 2016 budget is an economic plan for Australia, for a strong new transitioning economy, again with more jobs and growth.
As part of the budget, there are several changes to superannuation and some dividends from Operation Sovereign Borders. Obviously, in a three-minute time period I cannot go through the whole budget, so I will just talk on those two particular issues.

The government will enshrine in law that the objective for superannuation is to provide income in retirement to substitute for or supplement the age pension. There will be a retargeting of tax concessions towards those who need incentives to save for their retirement, including: introducing a $1.6 million balance cap on the total amount of superannuation that can be transferred into a tax-free retirement phase; extending the 30 per cent tax on concessional contributions to those earning over $250,000, including concessional contributions; reducing the annual cap on concessional contributions to $25,000; and introducing a lifetime cap of $500,000 on non-concessional contributions. All of that is based around bringing equality back into the superannuation scheme where the high-end-super people can now have some of their funds turned back to the superannuation schemes of those on lower incomes.

The government will also introduce a low-income superannuation tax offset from 1 July 2017. This will ensure that low-income earners are not paying more tax on their superannuation than they are on their take-home pay. This means that 19,534 individuals in Swan earning $37,000 per year or less will effectively pay no tax on the money they contribute to superannuation.

There was also another announcement in the budget about the dividends of the success of Operation Sovereign Borders in stopping the boats. Our border protection measures have enabled the government to close four additional detention facilities, achieving savings of $39.1 million over four years. One of the facilities to be closed is Perth Immigration Residential Housing, some of which is based in my electorate. Perth IRH was opened in April 2007 and is located in the suburb of Redcliffe. It will be closed by the end of 2016. This will take to 17 the total number of detention facility closures by the government. When Labor was in government they opened 17 facilities—a result of their failure to secure Australia's borders, which allowed people smugglers to send more than 50,000 illegal arrivals into our country. The closure of these 17 facilities has saved Australian taxpayers more than $500 million. This will take to 17 the total number of detention facility closures by this government.

Rolfe, Brigadier Bill, AO

Mr GRIFFIN (Bruce) (10:55): I rise today to mourn the passing of a very great Australian, Bill Rolfe. Bill Rolfe was an Army officer who stepped on a mine in Vietnam and lost both his legs. When he returned to Australia he triumphed over his injuries by studying to become a lawyer. He then spent many years in the military and had a very successful career. He later maintained his interest in the military and the veterans' community and became head of the Veterans' Review Board and then a Repatriation Commissioner. I had the great privilege of working with him when I was the Minister for Veterans' Affairs. After his working career—it never really ended—he was the President of Legacy Canberra, among a number of things.

I do not know how you sum up a man like Bill in three minutes. He was both a battler and a gentleman. This is a tremendous loss for his wife Joan, or Toots, and his children Bradley, Kathleen and Erin. Our hearts go out to them. But our hearts also go out to so many more because there were literally hundreds and hundreds of people at Bill's funeral.
I want to tell a quick couple of stories about Bill. Hopefully, there will be time for me to do that. Firstly, here is an extract from Bradley Rolfe's excellent eulogy given at the funeral:

Sometime in the 1980s, Bill decided that what the army really needed was a parachute trained legal officer with no legs. He may have applied for the army parachute course but was turned down, or advised, with all due respect I'm sure, not to apply. Undeterred, Dad sought out a former army mate of his who now ran a civilian jump school at Goulburn. After a stringent medical, which involved jumping off a chair to prove he could bend his knees on landing, he was declared fit. All went well until his 2nd or 3rd jump, when the strap broke on one of his legs and it plummeted some 10,000ft to the ground, much to the consternation of the ground crew, who had not been informed of Dad's condition. My sister and I remember vividly Dad getting delivered home that night, grinning from ear to ear, very drunk, a black eye from the awkward landing and a shattered leg under one arm. I don't recall Mum being as impressed as we were.

The story is now part of the mythology of our family, and in many ways sums up my father. It captures his larrikin streak, his physical courage, his humour, and his casual disregard for the label of 'disabled'. For many people, a disability such as the one Dad suffered might serve to define their life. That's not how it was for Dad. His injuries simply seemed to highlight attributes that were already there. I am used to reading books littered with words like virtue, duty, honour, loyalty and friendship. But they are all just words, and the more I read then, the less convinced I become that the authors know what they mean. Dad didn't speak about these things, he just lived them. It was as if these words were integrated in the very fibre of his being. Only three or four weeks before he died, my mother and sisters finally managed to convince Dad to resign his post as the president of Canberra Legacy much to his chagrin. Likewise, one of his greatest regrets in life, again, in his own words, was not that he was wounded in Vietnam and faced the rest of his life without his legs, but that he was forced to leave behind his platoon to continue the fight without him. In both occasions he had to remain satisfied that very good men had stepped in to fill the breach. But that attitude is more than words. That 'is' courage, that 'is' duty and that 'is' friendship.

Bill was a great Australian. I remember him telling me what it was like after he had stepped on the mine and was in the hospital waiting to be cared for. He said to me, 'Mate, I just thought to myself, "Toots is going to kill me when I get home"'—and that very much summed up their relationship. He was a great Australian. He was a man I am very proud to have known. This is a great loss for all of us.

Budget

Ms HENDERSON (Corangamite) (10:59): It is my great pleasure to rise to speak about our budget, which delivers our national economic plan for jobs and growth. There is some great news in the budget this year for Corangamite residents. I am very pleased that we announced last night, as part of the budget, another $25 million for the Great Ocean Road, building on the $25 million that we have already delivered—so important for jobs, for road safety and for our tourism economy; as well as $300,000 for feasibility planning for the duplication of the Midland Highway between Geelong and Bannockburn; $300,000 for planning to upgrade Grubb Road in Ocean Grove, which is under increasing pressure because of the growth in Ocean Grove; and $5 million to upgrade and plan the Forrest-Apollo Bay Road, with particular focus on passing lanes, or slow vehicle pullouts, which is a very big issue in that region. I am very proud to have delivered $30.6 million for Corangamite roads. That is part of our $1.5 billion Victorian infrastructure package, announced last month by the Prime Minister, which also includes $220 million for the Murray Basin freight rail project, a very important project for Victorian farmers and for Geelong Port.
I am also very proud to have had announced in the budget last night $1.5 million for Foundation 61, a wonderful organisation providing long-term rehabilitation beds in the Mount Duneed area. This $1.5 million is for capital works for a new women's rehabilitation facility—the first one for the region. It is a very important part of our local plan to combat ice addiction in our community, which is such a big issue. I am very proud, and I want to acknowledge and thank Senator Nash for all of her support in relation to that commitment.

Our national economic plan is so important for small business, cutting the small business tax rate to 27.5 per cent. It also increases the unincorporated tax discount from five to eight per cent, and increases the threshold for small businesses to $10 million. We know how important small business is as an engine room of our economy; as an engine room of job creation. It is incredibly important. We are also cracking down on tax avoidance with a new Diverted Profits Tax, and the Tax Avoidance Taskforce will raise some $3.7 billion—funding that can be spent on hospitals, schools and roads. We are also backing young Australians with $840 million for a youth employment package. It is so important to get young people into jobs, and we know that is important in Corangamite.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms O'Neil): In accordance with standing order 193, the time for members' constituency statements has expired.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr IRONS (Swan) (11:02): I move:

That the Federation Chamber do now adjourn.

Question agreed to.

Federation Chamber adjourned at 11:03