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**SITTING DAYS—2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>8, 9, 10, 21, 22, 23, 24, 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 21, 22, 23, 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>10, 11, 12, 23, 24, 25, 26, 30, 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>1, 2, 14, 15, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>4, 5, 6, 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>16, 17, 18, 22, 23, 24, 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>12, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>11, 12, 13, 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 21, 22, 23, 24,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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FORTY-THIRD PARLIAMENT  
FIRST SESSION—FOURTH PERIOD

Governor-General  
Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce, Companion of the Order of Australia

House of Representatives Office holders  
Speaker—Mr Harry Alfred Jenkins MP  
Deputy Speaker—Hon. Peter Neil Slipper MP  
Second Deputy Speaker—Hon. Bruce Craig Scott MP  

Members of the Speaker’s Panel—Ms Anna Elizabeth Burke MP, Hon. Dick Godfrey Harry Adams MP, Ms Sharon Leah Bird MP, Mrs Yvette Maree D’Ath MP, Mr Steven Georganas MP, Ms Kirsten Fiona Livermore MP, Mr John Paul Murphy MP, Mr Peter Sid Sidebottom MP, Mr Kelvin John Thomson MP, Ms Maria Vamvakinou MP

Leader of the House—Hon. Anthony Norman Albanese MP  
Deputy Leader of the House—Hon. Stephen Francis Smith MP  
Manager of Opposition Business—Hon. Christopher Maurice Pyne MP  
Deputy Manager of Opposition Business—Mr Luke Hartsuyker MP

Party Leaders and Whips

Australian Labor Party  
Leader—Hon. Julia Eileen Gillard MP  
Deputy Leader—Hon. Wayne Maxwell Swan MP  
Chief Government Whip—Hon. Joel Andrew Fitzgibbon MP  
Government Whips—Ms Jill Griffiths Hall MP and Mr Ed Husic MP

Liberal Party of Australia  
Leader—Hon. Anthony John Abbott MP  
Deputy Leader—Hon. Julie Isabel Bishop MP  
Chief Opposition Whip—Hon. Warren George Entsch MP  
Opposition Whips—Mr Patrick Damien Secker MP and Ms Nola Bethwyn Marino MP

The Nationals  
Leader—Hon. Warren Errol Truss MP  
Chief Whip—Mr Mark Maclean Coulton MP  
Whip—Mr Paul Christopher Neville MP

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Members of the House of Representatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abbott, Hon. Anthony John</td>
<td>Warringah, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adams, Hon. Dick Godfrey Harry</td>
<td>Lyons, TAS</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Albanese, Hon. Anthony Norman</td>
<td>Grayndler, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Alexander, John Gilbert</td>
<td>Bennelong, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Andrews, Hon. Kevin James</td>
<td>Menzies, VIC</td>
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<td>Andrews, Karen Lesley</td>
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<td>Paterson, NSW</td>
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<td>Bandt, Adam Paul</td>
<td>Melbourne, VIC</td>
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<td>Billson, Hon. Bruce Fredrick</td>
<td>Dunkley, VIC</td>
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<td>Bird, Sharon Leah</td>
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<td>McMahon, NSW</td>
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<td>Lindsay, NSW</td>
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<td>Briggs, Jamie Edward</td>
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<td>McMillan, VIC</td>
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<td>Brodtkmann, Gai Marie</td>
<td>Canberra, ACT</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Gippsland, VIC</td>
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<td>Christensen, George Robert</td>
<td>Dawson, QLD</td>
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<td>Moncrieff, QLD</td>
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<td>Clare, Hon. Jason Dean</td>
<td>Blaxland, NSW</td>
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<td>Collins, Hon. Julie Maree</td>
<td>Franklin, TAS</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Combet, Hon. Greg Ivan, AM</td>
<td>Charlton, NSW</td>
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<td>Hotham, VIC</td>
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<td>O’Connor, WA</td>
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<td>Isaacs, VIC</td>
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<td>Dutton, Hon. Peter Craig</td>
<td>Dickson, QLD</td>
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<td>Elliot, Hon. Maria Justine</td>
<td>Richmond, NSW</td>
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<td>Ellis, Hon. Katherine Margaret</td>
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<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Rankin, QLD</td>
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<td>Leichhardt, QLD</td>
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<td>Ferguson, Hon. Laurie Donald Thomas</td>
<td>Werriwa, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Batman, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Kooyong, VIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>Division</td>
<td>Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-------------------------------</td>
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<td>Gambaro, Hon. Teresa</td>
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<td>Garrett, Hon. Peter Robert, AM</td>
<td>Kingsford Smith, NSW</td>
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<td>Gash, Joanna</td>
<td>Gilmore, NSW</td>
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<td>Georganas, Steve</td>
<td>Hindmarsh, SA</td>
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<td>Bendigo, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Gillard, Hon. Julia Eileen</td>
<td>Lalor, VIC</td>
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<td>Gray, Hon. Gary, AO</td>
<td>Brand, WA</td>
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<td>Grierson, Sharon Joy</td>
<td>Newcastle, NSW</td>
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<td>Bruce, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Griggs, Natasha Louise</td>
<td>Solomon, NT</td>
<td>CLP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haase, Barry Wayne</td>
<td>Durack, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall, Jill</td>
<td>Shortland, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hartsuyker, Luke</td>
<td>Cowper, NSW</td>
<td>Nats</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hawke, Alexander George</td>
<td>Mitchell, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hayes, Christopher Patrick</td>
<td>Fowler, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hockey, Hon. Joseph Benedict</td>
<td>North Sydney, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunt, Hon. Gregory Andrew</td>
<td>Flinders, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husic, Edham Nurredin</td>
<td>Chifley, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irons, Stephen James</td>
<td>Swan, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Jenkins, Harry Alfred</td>
<td>Scullin, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Tangney, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jones, Stephen Patrick</td>
<td>Throsby, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jones, Ewen Thomas</td>
<td>Herbert, QLD</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Katter, Hon. Robert Carl</td>
<td>Kennedy, QLD</td>
<td>Ind</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keenan, Michael Fayat</td>
<td>Stirling, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Kelly, Hon. Michael Joseph, AM</td>
<td>Eden-Monaro, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kelly, Craig</td>
<td>Hughes, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>King, Hon. Catherine Fiona</td>
<td>Ballarat, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laming, Andrew Charles</td>
<td>Bowman, QLD</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Leigh, Andrew Keith</td>
<td>Fraser, ACT</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Ley, Hon. Sussan Penelope</td>
<td>Farrer, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Livermore, Kirsten Fiona</td>
<td>Capricornia, QLD</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Lyons, Geoffrey Raymond</td>
<td>Bass, TAS</td>
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<td>Barton, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Groom, QLD</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Jagajaga, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marino, Nola Bethwyn</td>
<td>Forrest, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markus, Louise Elizabeth</td>
<td>Macquarie, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Marles, Hon. Richard Donald</td>
<td>Corio, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
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<td>Macarthur, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Nats</td>
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<td>Banks, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Indi, VIC</td>
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<td>McEwen, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morrison, Scott John</td>
<td>Cook, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Pearce, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Reid, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neumann, Shayne Kenneth</td>
<td>Blair, QLD</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Members of the House of Representatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neville, Paul Christopher</td>
<td>Hinkler, QLD</td>
<td>Nats</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oakeshott, Robert James Murray</td>
<td>Lyne, NSW</td>
<td>Ind</td>
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<td>O’Connor, Hon. Brendan Patrick</td>
<td>Gorton, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Flynn, QLD</td>
<td>Nats</td>
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<td>Higgins, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Robertson, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Owens, Julie Ann</td>
<td>Parramatta, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Parke, Melissa</td>
<td>Fremantle, WA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Moreton, QLD</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plibersek, Hon. Tanya Joan</td>
<td>Sydney, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prentice, Jane</td>
<td>Ryan, QLD</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyne, Hon. Christopher Maurice</td>
<td>Sturt, SA</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramsey, Rowan Eric</td>
<td>Grey, SA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Randall, Don James</td>
<td>Canning, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Goldstein, VIC</td>
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<td>Robert, Stuart Rowland</td>
<td>Fadden, QLD</td>
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<td>Greenway, NSW</td>
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<td>Gellibrand, VIC</td>
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<td>Longman, QLD</td>
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<td>Griffith, QLD</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Berowra, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Hume, NSW</td>
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<td>Fairfax, QLD</td>
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<td>Boothby, SA</td>
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<td>ALP</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Members of the House of Representatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Party</th>
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<td>Vasta, Ross Xavier</td>
<td>Bonner, QLD</td>
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<td>Washer, Malcom James</td>
<td>Moore, WA</td>
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<td>Wilkie, Andrew Damien</td>
<td>Denison, TAS</td>
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<td>Windsor, Anthony Harold Curties</td>
<td>New England, NSW</td>
<td>Ind</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wyatt, Kenneth George</td>
<td>Hasluck, WA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zappia, Tony</td>
<td>Makin, SA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

ALP—Australian Labor Party; LP—Liberal Party of Australia; LNP—Liberal National Party; CLP—Country Liberal Party; Nats—The Nationals; NWA—The Nationals WA; Ind—Independent; AG—Australian Greens

### Heads of Parliamentary Departments

- Clerk of the Senate—R Laing
- Clerk of the House of Representatives—B Wright
- Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—A Thompson
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Minister and Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prime Minister</td>
<td>Hon. Julia Gillard MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy Prime Minister, Treasurer</td>
<td>Hon. Wayne Swan MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government</td>
<td>Hon. Simon Crean MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Jobs and Workplace Relations and Leader of the Government in the Senate</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Chris Evans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth</td>
<td>Hon. Peter Garrett AM, MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy and Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Stephen Conroy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>Hon. Kevin Rudd MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Trade</td>
<td>Hon. Dr Craig Emerson MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence and Deputy Leader of the House</td>
<td>Hon. Stephen Smith MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Immigration and Citizenship</td>
<td>Hon. Chris Bowen MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Infrastructure and Transport and Leader of the House</td>
<td>Hon. Anthony Albanese MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Health and Ageing</td>
<td>Hon. Nicola Roxon MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs</td>
<td>Hon. Jenny Macklin MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities</td>
<td>Hon. Tony Burke MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Finance and Deregulation</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Penny Wong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Kim Carr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attorney-General and Vice President of the Executive Council</td>
<td>Hon. Robert McClelland MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Manager of Government Business in the Senate</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Joe Ludwig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Resources and Energy and Minister for Tourism</td>
<td>Hon. Martin Ferguson AM, MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency</td>
<td>Hon. Greg Combet AM, MP</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

[The above ministers constitute the cabinet]
GILLARD MINISTRY—continued

Minister for the Arts                                  Hon. Simon Crean MP
Minister for Social Inclusion                        Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP
Minister for Privacy and Freedom of Information      Hon. Brendan O’Connor MP
Minister for Sport                                   Senator Hon. Mark Arbib
Special Minister of State for the Public Service and Integrity Hon. Gary Gray AO, MP
Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Financial Services and Superannuation Hon. Bill Shorten MP
Minister for Employment Participation and Childcare   Hon. Kate Ellis MP
Minister for Indigenous Employment and Economic Development Senator Hon. Mark Arbib
Minister for Veterans’ Affairs and Minister for Defence Science and Personnel Hon. Warren Snowdon MP
Minister for Defence Materiel                        Hon. Jason Clare MP
Minister for Indigenous Health                       Hon. Warren Snowdon MP
Minister for Mental Health and Ageing and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Mental Health Reform Hon. Mark Butler MP
Minister for the Status of Women                      Senator Hon. Mark Arbib
Minister for Social Housing and Homelessness         Hon. Gary Gray AO, MP
Special Minister of State                            Senator Hon. Nick Sherry
Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Justice    Hon. Brendan O’Connor MP
Minister for Human Services                           Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP
Cabinet Secretary                                    Hon. Mark Dreyfus QC, MP
Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister         Senator Hon. Kate Lundy
Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer              Hon. David Bradbury MP
Parliamentary Secretary for School Education and Workplace Relations Senator Hon. Jacinta Collins
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Digital Productivity Senator Hon. Stephen Conroy
Parliamentary Secretary for Trade                     Hon. Justine Elliot MP
Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs    Hon. Richard Marles MP
Parliamentary Secretary for Defence                   Senator Hon. David Feeney
Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs Senator Hon. Kate Lundy
Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure and Transport and Parliamentary Secretary for Health and Ageing Hon. Catherine King MP
Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Carers    Senator Hon. Jan McLucas
Parliamentary Secretary for Community Services        Hon. Julie Collins MP
Parliamentary Secretary for Sustainability and Urban Water Senator Hon. Don Farrell
Minister Assisting on Deregulation and Public Sector Superannuation Senator Hon. Nick Sherry
Minister Assisting the Attorney-General on Queensland Floods Recovery Senator Hon. Joe Ludwig
Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Hon. Dr Mike Kelly AM, MP
Minister Assisting the Minister for Tourism            Senator Hon. Nick Sherry
Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency Hon. Mark Dreyfus QC, MP
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leader of the Opposition</td>
<td>Hon. Tony Abbott MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Minister for Foreign</td>
<td>Hon. Julie Bishop MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affairs and Shadow Minister for Trade</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leader of the Nationals and Shadow Minister for Infrastructure and</td>
<td>Hon. Warren Truss MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader of the Opposition in the Senate and Shadow Minister for</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Eric Abetz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment and Workplace Relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate and Shadow Attorney-</td>
<td>Senator Hon. George Brandis SC</td>
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<tr>
<td>General and Shadow Minister for the Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Treasurer</td>
<td>Hon. Joe Hockey MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Education, Apprenticeships and Training and</td>
<td>Hon. Christopher Pyne MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manager of Opposition Business in the House</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Indigenous Affairs and Deputy Leader of the</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Nigel Scullion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nationals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and</td>
<td>Senator Barnaby Joyce</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water and Leader of the Nationals in the Senate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Finance, Deregulation and Debt Reduction and</td>
<td>Hon. Andrew Robb AO, MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chairman, Coalition Policy Development Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Energy and Resources</td>
<td>Hon. Ian Macfarlane MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Defence</td>
<td>Senator Hon. David Johnston</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Communications and Broadband</td>
<td>Hon. Malcolm Turnbull MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Health and Ageing</td>
<td>Hon. Peter Dutton MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Families, Housing and Human Services</td>
<td>Hon. Kevin Andrews MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Climate Action, Environment and Heritage</td>
<td>Hon. Greg Hunt MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Productivity and Population and Shadow Minister</td>
<td>Mr Scott Morrison MP</td>
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<td>for Immigration and Citizenship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Innovation, Industry and Science</td>
<td>Mrs Sophie Mirabella MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Food Security</td>
<td>Hon. John Cobb MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Small Business, Competition Policy and Consumer</td>
<td>Hon. Bruce Billson MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affairs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[The above constitute the shadow cabinet]
SHADOW MINISTRY—continued

Shadow Minister for Employment Participation
Hon. Sussan Ley MP

Shadow Minister for Justice, Customs and Border Protection
Mr Michael Keenan MP

Shadow Assistant Treasurer and Shadow Minister for Financial Services and Superannuation
Senator Mathias Cormann

Shadow Minister for Childcare and Early Childhood Learning
Hon. Sussan Ley MP

Shadow Minister for Universities and Research
Senator Hon. Brett Mason

Shadow Minister for Youth and Sport and Deputy Manager of Opposition Business in the House
Mr Luke Hartsuyker MP

Shadow Minister for Indigenous Development and Employment
Senator Marise Payne

Shadow Minister for Regional Development
Hon. Bob Baldwin MP

Shadow Special Minister of State
Hon. Bronwyn Bishop MP

Shadow Minister for COAG
Senator Marise Payne

Shadow Minister for Tourism
Hon. Bob Baldwin MP

Shadow Minister for Defence Science, Technology and Personnel
Mr Stuart Robert MP

Shadow Minister for Veterans’ Affairs and Shadow Minister Assisting the Leader of the Opposition on the Centenary of ANZAC
Senator Hon. Michael Ronaldson

Shadow Minister for Regional Communications
Mr Luke Hartsuyker MP

Shadow Minister for Ageing and Shadow Minister for Mental Health
Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells

Shadow Minister for Seniors
Hon. Bronwyn Bishop MP

Shadow Minister for Disabilities, Carers and the Voluntary Sector and Manager of Opposition Business in the Senate
Senator Mitch Fifield

Shadow Minister for Housing
Senator Marise Payne

Chairman, Scrutiny of Government Waste Committee
Mr Jamie Briggs MP

Shadow Cabinet Secretary
Hon. Philip Ruddock MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Leader of the Opposition
Senator Cory Bernardi

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance
Hon. Teresa Gambaro MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Roads and Regional Transport
Mr Darren Chester MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary to the Shadow Attorney-General
Senator Gary Humphries

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Tax Reform and Deputy Chairman, Coalition Policy Development Committee
Hon. Tony Smith MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Education
Senator Fiona Nash

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Northern and Remote Australia
Senator Hon. Ian Macdonald

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Local Government
Mr Don Randall MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for the Murray-Darling Basin
Senator Simon Birmingham

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Materiel
Senator Gary Humphries

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for the Defence Force and Defence Support
Senator Hon. Ian Macdonald
### SHADOW MINISTRY—continued

| Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Primary Healthcare | Dr Andrew Southcott MP |
| Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Health Services and Indigenous Health | Mr Andrew Laming MP |
| Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Supporting Families | Senator Cory Bernardi |
| Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for the Status of Women | Senator Michaelia Cash |
| Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Environment | Senator Simon Birmingham |
| Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Citizenship and Settlement | Hon. Teresa Gambaro MP |
| Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration | Senator Michaelia Cash |
| Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Innovation, Industry, and Science | Senator Hon. Richard Colbeck |
| Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Forestry | Senator Hon. Richard Colbeck |
| Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business and Fair Competition | Senator Scott Ryan |
CONTENTS

WEDNESDAY, 21 SEPTEMBER 2011

Chamber
COMMITTEES—
Public Works Committee—
   Membership........................................................................................................ 10941
BILLS—
Social Security Amendment (Student Income Support Reforms) Bill 2011—
   First Reading....................................................................................................... 10941
   Second Reading.................................................................................................. 10941
Higher Education Support Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2011—
   First Reading....................................................................................................... 10944
   Second Reading.................................................................................................. 10944
Migration Legislation Amendment (Offshore Processing and Other Measures) Bill 2011—
   First Reading....................................................................................................... 10945
   Second Reading.................................................................................................. 10945
Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Amendment (Significant Incident Directions) Bill 2011—
   First Reading....................................................................................................... 10949
   Second Reading.................................................................................................. 10949
Consumer Credit and Corporations Legislation Amendment (Enhancements) Bill 2011—
   First Reading....................................................................................................... 10950
   Second Reading.................................................................................................. 10950
Tax Laws Amendment (2011 Measures No. 7) Bill 2011—
   First Reading....................................................................................................... 10955
   Second Reading.................................................................................................. 10955
MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS—
   Antidumping Reforms.......................................................................................... 10957
BILLS—
Clean Energy Bill 2011—
Clean Energy (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2011—
Clean Energy (Income Tax Rates Amendments) Bill 2011—
Clean Energy (Household Assistance Amendments) Bill 2011—
Clean Energy (Tax Laws Amendments) Bill 2011—
Clean Energy (Fuel Tax Legislation Amendment) Bill 2011—
Clean Energy (Customs Tariff Amendment) Bill 2011—
Clean Energy (Excise Tariff Legislation Amendment) Bill 2011—
Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas (Import Levy) Amendment Bill 2011—
Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas (Manufacture Levy) Amendment Bill 2011—
Clean Energy (Unit Shortfall Charge—General) Bill 2011—
Clean Energy (Unit Issue Charge—Auctions) Bill 2011—
Clean Energy (Unit Issue Charge—Fixed Charge) Bill 2011—
Clean Energy (International Unit Surrender Charge) Bill 2011—
Clean Energy (Charges—Customs) Bill 2011—
CONTENTS—continued

Clean Energy (Charges—Excise) Bill 2011— .......................................................... 10963
Clean Energy Regulator Bill 2011— ................................................................. 10912
Climate Change Authority Bill 2011— ............................................................. 10913
Steel Transformation Plan Bill 2011— ............................................................. 10914

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS— ................................................................. 11012
  Queensland Natural Disasters ........................................................................ 11013
  Finance Minister of the Year Award ............................................................. 11013
  Beaudesert Show Society ............................................................................. 11013
  Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria ............................... 11014
  National Rural Health Alliance .................................................................. 11014
  Queensland Natural Disasters ...................................................................... 11014
  Disability ........................................................................................................ 11015
  Small Businesses .......................................................................................... 11015
  South Adelaide Football Club ....................................................................... 11015
  Carbon Pricing .............................................................................................. 11016
  F1 in Schools Program .................................................................................. 11016

CONDOLENCES— .......................................................................................... 11017
  Report from Main Committee ........................................................................ 11017

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE— .............................................................. 11018
  Asylum Seekers............................................................................................ 11018

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS— ................................................................. 11019

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE— .............................................................. 11019
  Global Economy .......................................................................................... 11020
  Asylum Seekers ............................................................................................ 11021
  Economy ......................................................................................................... 11022
  Asylum Seekers ............................................................................................ 11023
  Carbon Pricing .............................................................................................. 11024
  Asylum Seekers ............................................................................................ 11025
  Mount Isa: Social Problems ......................................................................... 11026
  National Security .......................................................................................... 11026
  Asylum Seekers ............................................................................................ 11028
  Defence .......................................................................................................... 11028

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS— ................................................................. 11029

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE— .............................................................. 11029
  Australian Labor Party .................................................................................. 11030
  Australian Public Service ............................................................................ 11030
  Budget ........................................................................................................... 11031
  Economy ......................................................................................................... 11032

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS— ................................................................. 11034

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE— .............................................................. 11034
  Carbon Pricing .............................................................................................. 11035
  Fair Work Australia ...................................................................................... 11035

STATEMENTS ON INDULGENCE— ............................................................. 11036
  Rudd, Hon. Kevin ......................................................................................... 11036

11038

11040
CONTENTS—continued

DOCUMENTS—
  Presentation ........................................................................................................ 11040
MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE ................................................................. 11040
MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS—
  Tax Reform and our Patchwork Economy ..................................................... 11058
PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS............................................................................. 11066
BUSINESS—
  Rearrangement .................................................................................................. 11067
  Rearrangement .................................................................................................. 11067
ADJOURNMENT—
  Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Campaign ........................................... 11086
  Defence Procurement ....................................................................................... 11087
  Unemployment .................................................................................................. 11089
  Dementia Awareness Week ................................................................................ 11090
  Wright Electorate: Young Liberal-National Party ........................................ 11092
  Chifley Electorate: Pricing Discrimination ..................................................... 11093
  Housing Affordability ....................................................................................... 11094
  Sapper Jacob Moerland Memorial Skate Park ............................................. 11095
  Grey Electorate: Mouse Plague ........................................................................ 11097
  National Dementia Awareness Week ............................................................ 11098
  Asylum Seekers ................................................................................................. 11099
  Youth Allowance ............................................................................................... 11101
NOTICES............................................................................................................... 11102
Main Committee
CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS—
  Papua New Guinea: HIV-AIDS ................................................................. 11103
  Page Electorate: Awards .................................................................................. 11103
  Hasluck Electorate: Luke Adams Foundation .............................................. 11104
  Australian Public Service .............................................................................. 11105
  Regional Development Australia ................................................................. 11106
  Gippsland Electorate: Gippsland Lakes and Catchments ................................ 11106
  Agriculture ........................................................................................................ 11107
  Scoresby Football and Social Club .............................................................. 11108
  Corio Electorate: Northern Futures .............................................................. 11109
  Melbourne Ports Electorate: Caulfield Village ........................................... 11110
CONDOLENCES—
  Jull, Hon. David Francis ................................................................................ 11110
STATEMENTS ON INDULGENCE—
  Evans, Mr Cadel ............................................................................................... 11138
  Stosur, Ms Samantha ...................................................................................... 11145
Questions In Writing
  Broadband—(Question No. 389) ................................................................... 11150
  Emergency Services and Alerts Systems—(Question No. 445) .................. 11150
  Dawson Electorate: Alligator Creek Phone Coverage—(Question No. 448)  11151
  Broadband—(Question No. 451) ................................................................... 11152
  Tourism Australia: Board of Directors—(Question No. 476) ...................... 11153
CONTENTS—continued

Tourism Australia: Membership—(Question No. 479) ................................................................. 11154
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy: Senior Executive Service—(Question No. 561) ........................................................................................................ 11155
The SPEAKER (Mr Harry Jenkins) took the chair at 09:00, made an acknowledgement of country and read prayers.

COMMITTEES
Public Works Committee
Membership
The SPEAKER: I have received a message from the Senate informing the House that in accordance with the Public Works Committee Act 1969 Senator Boyce has been appointed a member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works.

BILLS
Social Security Amendment (Student Income Support Reforms) Bill 2011
First Reading
Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Garrett.
Bill read a first time.
Second Reading
Mr GARRETT (Kingsford Smith—Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth) (09:02): I move:
That this bill be now read a second time.
The Social Security Amendment (Student Income Support Reforms) Bill 2011 will provide additional assistance for young people from regional Australia who need to leave home to study after secondary school.
The Australian government is committed to reforming higher education and, in particular, increasing students’ access to university.
Higher education is central to achieving the government’s vision of a stronger, fairer and more productive nation.

Following last year’s reforms to student income support, many more young people, particularly those from families with low income, are accessing youth allowance while they study at university.
The amendments included in this bill follow consideration of the recommendations of the independent Review of Student Income Support Reforms conducted by Professor Kwong Lee Dow AM.
Professor Lee Dow brought to the review his considerable experience in higher education, his expertise in regional education issues and sensitivity to the challenges faced by regional students and their families in accessing further study.
On behalf of the government I would like to thank Professor Lee Dow for his report, which presents a balanced consideration of the needs of young people from low socioeconomic families and those whose distance from major cities limits their range of opportunities for a university education.
The report of the Review of Student Income Support Reforms recognises that the policy settings put in place by this government in 2010 following the Bradley review into Australian higher education have been working.
The impact of the reforms has been measurable with more students qualifying for assistance, especially young people from low- to middle-income families.
The reforms have also had a positive impact on families from regional and remote areas of Australia with more young people who need to live away from home being able to access student income support.
Mr McCormack: So why did you change the rules in the first place?
The SPEAKER: I would suggest to the member for Riverina that he keeps his powder dry for later in this debate. I really
think that it is just a waste of time to interject on the minister's second reading speech. The minister has the call.

Mr GARRETT: As I was saying before I was rudely interrupted, in fact, figures recently released by the government show that since March 2010 the number of students from low- and middle-income backgrounds has increased by some 21,000.

Also, since March 2010, the number of independent youth allowance recipients has increased by 29,000 due to the lowering of the age of independence from 25 to 23.

Overall, under the government’s reforms, 160,000 students are accessing youth allowance—up from 135,000—representing an 18 per cent increase in just over a year.

The report also notes that regional participation rates still lag behind those of metropolitan higher education students.

The strongest theme in submissions and consultations during the review was the additional cost incurred by students in relocating for study.

With course availability at local institutions often limited or lack of readily accessible institutions, many rural and regional students need to move away from home to study their chosen course and, therefore, require extra assistance, often beyond the first year.

While the government has made—and continues to make—significant investment to develop regional universities and broaden the educational options of regional students, more could be done to help young people from regional and remote Australia to take up the same options for university study as students from the major cities.

However, any assistance for regional students must also retain a focus on the needs of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

Following consideration of the report of the Review of Student Income Support Reforms, the government announced a package of additional measures which will increase access to, and better target, income support for students who need it most, through a fairer and more equitable allocation of resources. This package constitutes the government’s response to the review.

The government has chosen not to adopt all of the recommendations from the report. The proposed self-supporting criterion for independence for young people could be viewed as narrowing workforce independence rules for students and further delaying their entry to tertiary education.

Instead, the government will provide improved access to higher education for regional students through changes to the independence criteria for young people from inner regional Australia seeking access to youth allowance, while continuing to provide support for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. From 1 January 2012, students from inner regional areas will have access to the more generous part-time and earnings workforce participation for independent youth allowance, currently available to outer regional, remote and very remote students who need to live away from home to study after completing secondary school, and whose parents earn less than $150,000 per annum.

With this amendment, approximately 5,500 additional young people will be able to access independent rates of youth allowance payments.

This delivers on the government’s commitment to remove distinctions between students from inner regional and outer regional areas, and recognises the additional barriers and costs faced by young people
from all areas of regional Australia in accessing education.

The government’s 2010 reforms acknowledged and sought to address the financial hardships faced by students required to move away from home to study at university with the provision of relocation scholarships for eligible dependent students and small numbers of independent students disadvantaged by their personal circumstances.

The government is resetting the value of relocation scholarships to provide extra support for eligible students from regional areas. In any year, there will be around 15,000 students who are benefitting from this change over the period of their degree.

The bill amends relocation scholarships in 2012 for eligible regional students who are required to live away from home to study to $4,000 in the first year, $2,000 in each of the second and third years and $1,000 in subsequent years of study.

For eligible students from major cities, the 2012 values will be $4,000 in the first year they are required to live away from home to study and $1,000 in subsequent years of study.

These amounts will be indexed from 2013 and there are no changes to eligibility criteria.

The government’s response to the Lee Dow review also includes several measures which do not require legislation.

There will be a feasibility and merit study of an income-contingent loan scheme to assist students required to live away from home to undertake formal clinical placements, or other formal practicum periods as part of their course; triennial reviews of student income support to assess the overall effectiveness of the schemes in reducing financial barriers to participation of students in need; and an ongoing education strategy to ensure young people and their families are aware of their options for financial assistance as they prepare to enter tertiary education.

This is a fiscally responsible package. The cost of these measures will be met within existing funds, and represent no additional cost to the Australian government and taxpayers.

As well as resetting the value of relocation scholarships, there is a small reduction in the value of student start-up scholarships from 1 January 2012.

The value of the start-up scholarship from 1 January 2012 will be $2,050 for all eligible students, and this amount will continue to be indexed annually thereafter.

As recommended by the review, the bill also provides for the cessation of the Rural Tertiary Hardship Fund given the additional financial support being in the package for rural and regional students.

The government is also deferring to 1 January 2014 the extension of income support to cover all master's by coursework degrees.

Existing arrangements for approval for student income support of individual master's by coursework degrees which are professionally oriented will continue.

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations has already invited universities to submit additional courses for approval for 2012.

The bill amends the social security law to facilitate these measures and make several technical amendments.

These measures are part of the government’s commitment to open doors to higher education for young Australians, drawing on the Bradley and Lee Dow reviews.
The government is maintaining its emphasis on support for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds while also seeking to provide greater assistance to young people from regional areas where participation rates—though improved—remain significantly below metropolitan areas.

This package also meets the government’s commitment to remove regional eligibility distinctions for youth allowance from 2012.

The government’s changes to student income support will ensure that assistance continues to be directed at the students who need it most.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Higher Education Support Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2011

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Garrett.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr GARRETT (Kingsford Smith—Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth) (09:12): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Higher Education Support Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2011 amends the Higher Education Support Act 2003 to implement 2011-12 budget measures and update maximum payment amounts to provide for indexation and other variations.

The bill also clarifies the government’s policy in relation to Australian citizens studying at an overseas campus of an Australian provider and their eligibility for Commonwealth support and income contingent loans.

The 2011-12 budget included:

- additional funding of $1.2 billion over four years to fund growth in university enrolments;
- an extra $550 million for improved indexation for universities, to put them on a more sustainable funding base;
- $500 million for the regional priorities round of the Education Investment Fund; and
- additional funding of $109.9 million over four years for regional loading to help overcome the higher costs of regional campuses.

The budget also included a reduction in HECS-HELP upfront discounts, providing savings of $479 million to assist in paying for the government’s increased investment in higher education.

From 1 January 2012, the government will lower the HECS-HELP discount for upfront student contribution payments of $500 or more from 20 per cent to 10 per cent. Currently students can make a full upfront payment of their student contribution amount by paying 80 per cent of this amount for all of their units in a course of study with the same census date. The Commonwealth pays the remaining 20 per cent of the student contribution amount.

Students can also pay part of their student contribution upfront and receive a 20 per cent discount for any payments totalling $500 or more for units in a course of study with the same census date.

The reduction in the upfront discount will affect students who can afford to pay upfront and choose to do so. It will not affect students who fund all of their university studies through HECS-HELP deferred loans and it will not affect university revenues.

The HELP voluntary repayment bonus, applied to payments of $500 or more, will
also be reduced from 10 per cent to five per cent.

Students can make a voluntary repayment towards their HELP debt to the tax office at any time. Voluntary repayments of $500 or more currently attract a 10 per cent bonus on the payment amount. Effectively the government pays this 10 per cent by removing it from the student’s debt.

The decreased bonus for voluntary repayments will apply to all HELP debts.

This savings measure will help the government to maintain its commitment to fund a demand driven supply of undergraduate places and to ensure low-income people get the opportunity for higher education.

The act will be amended to provide for an increase in funding for overenrolment of Commonwealth supported places that has occurred in 2011.

Funding for overenrolment of Commonwealth supported places was raised from five to 10 per cent above funding for allocated places for 2010 and 2011 as a transitional measure prior to the introduction of the demand driven funding system for higher education funding from 2012.

From 2012, the government will fund all undergraduate Commonwealth supported places provided by public universities.

The bill increases the maximum amounts for other grants under section 41.45, and Commonwealth scholarships under section 46.40 of the act to provide for indexation and other variations affecting the 2012-14 years, and to include the 2015 funding year.

There is currently ambiguity in the act about its application to Australian citizens studying at the overseas campuses of Australian universities.

This has resulted in a small number of Commonwealth supported places being offered by Australian universities to Australian citizens studying at overseas campuses. These students have also been able to access the HECS-HELP scheme.

As students are only required to pay back their HECS-HELP debt if they file an Australian tax return, there is a higher risk that HECS-HELP debts incurred offshore will not be repaid, or not repaid for a longer period of time.

The bill amends the act to clarify that Australian citizens are not entitled to Commonwealth support or access to an income contingent loan when they are undertaking their course of study primarily overseas.

Current students will not be affected. Universities that currently have students in Commonwealth supported places at overseas campuses will be able to maintain the status of these students for the duration of their current courses.

The bill reflects the government’s continued commitment to growing Australia’s higher education sector and to expanding opportunities for Australians to obtain a high-quality higher education.

I commend the bill to the House. 

Debate adjourned.

Migration Legislation Amendment (Offshore Processing and Other Measures) Bill 2011

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Bowen.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr BOWEN (McMahon—Minister for Immigration and Citizenship) (09:19): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.
This bill amends the Migration Act 1958 and the Immigration (Guardianship of Children) Act 1946 to clarify the framework for taking irregular maritime arrivals, who arrive in Australia at an excised offshore place, to another country for assessment of their protection claims.

The purpose of this bill is clear: to restore to the executive the power to set Australia's border protection policies, specifically the power to transfer asylum seekers arriving at excised offshore places to a range of designated third countries within the region, while ensuring protection from refoulement, for the processing of their claims.

This is a power that was thought to exist until 31 August this year, when the majority of the High Court decided that transfers under section 198A of the Migration Act could only take place to countries legally bound to provide protections equivalent to those offered by Australia.

Subsequent legal advice has made it clear that the High Court's decision has thrown into significant doubt the ability of governments—present or future—to effect transfers to a range of countries in our region who are prepared to offer protection from refoulement, and will allow processing of refugee claims to be made, including Papua New Guinea and Nauru.

So today the government is introducing amendments to the Migration Act to make parliament's intention absolutely clear. This intention—the rationale for these amendments—is set out in the new section 198AA.

Section 198AA makes clear that these amendments are designed to tackle people smuggling, the distressing consequences of which we saw last December, when dozens of lives were lost in surging waters off Christmas Island.

This was simply the latest in what is a long line of tragedies. In 2001, 353 men, women and children died on the SIEV X. Several elderly asylum seekers drowned near Ashmore Reef in 2001, and 12 Sri Lankans died in 2009 in the Indian Ocean when their boat sank before a commercial tanker could rescue it.

There are, unfortunately, other examples I could cite. And it is inevitable that other boats have been lost that we simply do not know about.

The government believes offshore processing, when part of a proper regional framework, is appropriate—because, when properly designed, it can provide an effective deterrent to these dangerous boat journeys.

There are sound policy and humanitarian reasons for supporting the processing of people seeking asylum in Australia in another country when it is part of a properly thought-through regional framework. As the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees said in a landmark policy paper in November last year:

... under certain circumstances, the processing of international protection claims outside the intercepting State could be an alternative to standard 'in-country' procedures. Notably, this could be the case when extraterritorial processing is used as part of a burden-sharing arrangement to more fairly distribute responsibilities and enhance available protection space.

A truly regional approach involves Australia playing more of a role in resettling refugees and helping countries in the region move towards consistent standards and treatments.

In order to combat people smuggling—and in order to remove the lure of probable settlement in Australia, the product that people smugglers are able to sell—the amendments contained in this bill are explicitly intended to allow for the transfer
of offshore entry persons to a country designated by the minister.

The only condition for the designation of a country is that the minister thinks that it is in the national interest to make the designation. In forming this view, the minister must have regard to whether or not the country has provided assurances to the effect that it will not refoule those transferred and will make—or permit to be made—an assessment of a transferee's claims to be a refugee.

This bill allows for transfers to designated third countries, whether or not those countries are legally bound to provide the sorts of protections set out in subsection (3) of section 198AB. This intention is spelt out in paragraph (d) of section 198AA.

In restoring to the executive the power to manage one of a government's core functions—control of a nation's borders—these amendments are designed to provide the government of the day with the ability to implement its policies.

In order to strengthen political accountability, the new section 198AC requires the minister to lay before parliament several documents for the purpose of informing the parliamentary—and public—debate on the designation of a country as an 'offshore processing country'.

These documents include:

- a statement of the minister's reasons for considering the designation to be in the national interest;
- a copy of any written agreement—whether binding or not—with the designated country relating to the transfer of persons;
- a statement about consultations with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;
- a summary of any advice received from UNHCR about the designation; and
- a statement about any arrangements that are in place, or will be put in place, for the treatment of transferees.

These are criteria that do not go to the validity of the designation. They go to political accountability.

In enacting these amendments, this government is plainly intending to re-enliven the arrangement entered into with the government of Malaysia.

It is also intending to allow the coalition, opposite, to re-enliven its proposal to transfer boat arrivals to Nauru, should it one day carry the responsibilities of government.

The government believes the Malaysia arrangement is far the superior, removing, as it does, the essential product people smugglers are able to sell their vulnerable customers: the prospect of likely resettlement in Australia.

The arrangement with Malaysia means that, while resettling more people—giving more people the chance to a new life in Australia—we are also removing the attraction of engaging a people smuggler and taking a dangerous boat journey, because people transferred under this arrangement will get no preferential treatment when it comes to resettlement options.

This is an arrangement entered into under the auspices of the Regional Co-operation Framework, agreed at the Bali Process Ministerial Conference earlier this year.

It is an arrangement that contains commitments by the government of Malaysia to:

- respect the principle of non-refoulement;
- permit transferees' protection claims to be considered by UNHCR;
- facilitate their lawful stay in Malaysia while awaiting an outcome;
allow for self-reliance through employment; and
• treat transferees with dignity and respect.

The arrangement also provides for appropriate health care and education safety nets.

UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration have agreed to play ongoing roles in the implementation of the arrangement, and on-the-ground planning in Malaysia was well advanced when the High Court decision was made a few weeks ago.

The arrangement with Malaysia is the first of its kind in the region and represents a broadening of protection outcomes and a new level of international co-operation to tackle an international problem.

It would be a travesty to lose this moment, this time of significant progress with a crucial willing partner such as Malaysia.

These amendments are designed to provide the government of the day with the flexibility to find practical solutions with regional partners to reduce the risk of the loss of life at sea, to combat people smuggling and to determine the border protection policy it determines to be in the national interest.

The bill also makes related amendments to the Immigration (Guardianship of Children) Act 1946 to effectively return the law to the position that was understood to exist prior to the High Court decision. That is, to assert the primacy of the Migration Act over the Immigration (Guardianship of Children) Act.

This is designed to remedy the current, patently unworkable, situation precluding the involuntary transfer of unaccompanied minors to other countries, whether taken to a designated country under the provisions of this bill, removed as failed asylum seekers or transferred under other provisions.

Under the interpretation of the law set out by the High Court last month, the removal from Australia of an unaccompanied minor is practically extremely difficult, if not impossible. It would be thus in relation to Malaysia and it would be thus in relation to Nauru.

Of course, the minister will retain the ability to personally intervene to determine that a minor—or any other person who is considered vulnerable—should not be taken to a third country under the new subdivision. This power is an important safety valve to be used in individual cases, as and where appropriate.

However, a blanket inability of the government of the day to transfer unaccompanied minors to a designated country provides an invitation to people smugglers to send boatloads of children to Australia. No government can stand for the gaming of the system and risking of children's lives in this way.

That is why these amendments to the Immigration (Guardianship of Children) Act are necessary.

I urge everyone in this place to recognise the national importance that attaches to the passage of this bill.

There are times when we, as a parliament, must collectively do our job. In a parliament such as this one, responsibility for legislative outcomes resides with the whole parliament.

With power to pass or block legislation of national significance comes responsibility of equivalent gravity: a responsibility to act in the national interest.

I commend this bill to the House and I urge all members to support it.

The SPEAKER: The debate must now be adjourned.

Mr MORRISON (Cook) (09:30): The government has made no request of the
opposition to debate and consider this matter immediately. While we would be pleased to accommodate such a request, we will accommodate the government’s preferred timetable for dealing with this bill, so I move:

That the debate be adjourned.

Question agreed to.

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the House and Minister for Infrastructure and Transport) (09:30): On indulgence, I note the offer of the opposition to debate this bill according to our timetable. I would be pleased to have discussions with the shadow minister about that.

Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Amendment (Significant Incident Directions) Bill 2011

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Crean.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr CREAN (Hotham—Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government and Minister for the Arts) (09:31): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill is one of a number of amendments being introduced to improve the regulation of the offshore petroleum industry following the Montara incident. These include legislation to establish a national regulator for the offshore petroleum industry and additional work currently being undertaken to implement the Australian government’s response to the report of the Montara Commission of Inquiry.

This bill amends the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006, the OPGGGS Act, to specifically enable the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority, NOPSEMA, to issue a direction to a petroleum titleholder in the event of a significant offshore petroleum incident occurring within the title area that has caused or might cause an escape of petroleum. A direction would require the titleholder to take action either within or outside the title area in relation to the escape or possible escape of petroleum and its effects. The matters covered by a direction could include action to prevent or eliminate the escape of petroleum and/or to mitigate, manage or remEDIATE the effects of an escape of petroleum. This would include, for example, clean-up of petroleum that has escaped as a result of an incident and has extended beyond the boundaries of the title area.

This bill helps to ensure that the regulator has the full ability to provide for remediation of the effects of an escape of petroleum in the event of an offshore uncontrolled release of hydrocarbons. Currently, under the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act, there are powers, including the authority in part 6.4 of that act, which allow the regulator to give remedial directions to titleholders in relation to the restoration of the environment. These powers in the bill enable the regulator to give remedial directions to petroleum titleholders about the removal of property, the plugging or closing of wells, the conservation and protection of natural resources or the making good of damage to the seabed or subsoil. However, these provisions are primarily for the purposes of decommissioning and, as such, this direction-giving power is limited to requiring action to be taken within the titleholder’s area.

In addition, the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority will have a general power to give directions to petroleum titleholders under the Offshore Petroleum...
and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act in relation to a number of matters. However, it is
desirable that NOPSEMA have a specific
power to issue directions in the event of a
significant offshore petroleum incident, to
provide a clear legal basis on which to issue
directions that extend to requiring action
outside the title area.

The report of the Montara Commission of
Inquiry found that the regulatory framework
should provide powers to regulators to
enable directions to a petroleum titleholder
requiring remediation of environmental
damage both within and outside the title
area. In the unlikely event of a future
significant petroleum incident, such as the
uncontrolled release of hydrocarbons into the
marine environment, remedial action would
be required to be taken as quickly as
practicable. These amendments will ensure
that regulators have a clear and unambiguous
power to direct petroleum titleholders to take
remedial action as quickly as practicable to
mitigate and manage the impacts from an
escape of petroleum. Failure of the
petroleum titleholder to comply with the
direction will be an offence of strict liability
under the OPGGS Act, to enable effective
enforcement of the offshore petroleum
legislation, particularly given the remote and
complex nature of offshore operations.

The protection and management of the
marine environment is critical to the
Australian community's confidence in the
ability of the offshore petroleum industry to
undertake operations in a safe and
environmentally sound manner. The
Australian government is committed to
providing a world's best practice regulatory
framework for the offshore petroleum
industry that will encourage investment in
exploration and development of Australia's
offshore oil and gas resources whilst also
providing safeguards for human health and
safety and the marine environment.

I commend the bill to the House.
Debate adjourned.

Consumer Credit and Corporations
Legislation Amendment
(Enhancements) Bill 2011
First Reading

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

Second Reading

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Assistant
Treasurer and Minister for Financial Services
and Superannuation) (09:38): I move:
That this bill be now read a second time.

Today I introduce the Consumer Credit and
Corporations Legislation Amendment
(Enhancements) Bill 2011. This bill
continues the government’s commitment to
ensuring that all Australians get a fair deal
when they use credit. It also underlines how
this Gillard Labor government is
unquestionably both pro-business and a
consumer champion.

This government has already introduced
the most important national reforms in the
history of Australian credit regulation. We
have introduced a national licensing scheme
for lenders and brokers, responsible lending
obligations that seek to prevent consumers
entering into contracts where they cannot
afford the repayments, and, earlier this year,
new requirements in relation to the two most
popular forms of credit, home loans and
credit cards.

This bill maintains our commitment to
ensuring that the balance of fairness is not
lost, particularly for the most vulnerable of
consumers.

The package of reforms introduced in this
bill address four main topics, relating to
short-term lending, reverse mortgages,
enhancements to the national credit
legislation and closing the current regulatory gap in respect of consumer leases.

I will address each of these in turn.

Payday lending

With the first—short-term lending, also known as payday lending—it is estimated that at least $500 million is lent annually in short-term, small amount loans. At one end it can include small loans in which a person borrows $300 which must be repaid plus interest a week or two later, on the borrower’s next payday. It also covers larger loans up to $2,000.

The vast majority of these loans are sought by low-paid workers or people on Centrelink benefits. It is estimated that nearly half of payday borrowers have incomes of less than $24,000 a year, and up to two-thirds earn less than $36,000. We do not believe it is acceptable that these consumers are left to pay exorbitant rates of interest because they have a very urgent need for a small amount of money.

Australians who use payday loans are usually unable to access other cheaper forms of credit. As a result they face two risks.

The first is the risk of excessively high costs, as consumers who cannot shop around can end up paying whatever the lender decides to charge. For example, there have been documented cases of lenders charging $1,477 in interest and fees on a loan of $1,000 for 26 weeks, or $2,074 on a loan of $1,000 for 52 weeks.

The second risk that consumers face is the risk of a debt spiral, where an existing loan is extended or rolled over into a new loan. The consumer is then faced with using even more of their scarce income to meet repayments, reducing their ability to meet other expenses from their own income.

Borrowing for these basics might seem like it helps in the short term, but for many people it simply makes things worse.

Borrowing money at very high interest leaves the underlying financial difficulties unresolved. When the direct debit payment comes out automatically at the next payday, it can leave the borrower with no cash for the next week’s basics, so they have to go and get another loan, trapping them again in a cycle of debt.

A significant number of borrowers take out multiple loans and there is evidence that some lenders’ existing business models actually rely on this occurring. They need people to keep coming back again and again, borrowing more and more, and paying larger and larger fees.

Take the example of a person on a fortnightly Centrelink benefit. They are caught short one week—they have to replace the tyres on their car or fix up the engine—and they take out a loan of $300, filling in a direct-debit form with the paperwork for the day their next payment will hit their account. Typical fees—not exaggerated fees—on that loan will be around $105 (35 per cent as a fee). So, if you borrow $300, you have to pay interest of $105 to establish the loan. So on their next payday $405 comes out of their account, leaving them short for that week as well. So this time they take out another loan—$350, and a higher rate again—and so the spiral of debt commences.

We believe the responsible role of government is, on one hand, to facilitate a competitive market for microloans but, on the other hand, to intervene when the market fails. There is a case to argue that in payday lending there is a significant example of market failure: the price of borrowing money is simply too high. Borrowers who are desperate for cash will pay whatever it costs
to get them their loan quickly, whatever the consequences might be the next week.

What is more, Australian payday lenders’ fees have grown substantially in the last decade and are now among some of the highest in the world.

In America, some states have adopted caps of between 16 per cent and 35 per cent. In Canada, rates are capped as low as 17 per cent in some provinces. Interest rate caps apply in 14 European Union nations: France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Slovenia, Greece, Ireland, Malta, Belgium and Estonia.

So what we are now doing is the following. We are implementing Australia’s first national cap on costs for ‘small amount’ contracts—that is, contracts for $2,000 or less that run for less than two years. Lenders will be limited to charging an upfront fee—a percentage in the case of this bill—of 10 per cent of the amount of credit the borrower receives, and then two per cent each month for the life of the loan.

This cap delivers real outcomes for consumers. It ensures that borrowers who are in need of a small amount loan will not face relatively high costs, and will reduce the risk of an ongoing cycle of dependency through the continued use of this form of credit.

But providing for a cap on costs is only part of the protections under this package. The bill addresses the risk of a debt spiral by introducing prohibitions on refinancing small amount contracts, and on lenders and brokers providing or arranging multiple loans. It may be convenient or simple for a consumer to take out one loan to meet the repayments under a second loan. However, in the long term they are only going backwards financially until they reach a point where they can no longer repay their debts and seek help.

Also, we think more could be done to encourage consumers to utilise other cheaper options. There are currently cheaper alternatives to small-amount loans, such as Centrelink advances, utility hardship programs from the large utility companies, and no-interest and low-interest microfinance schemes. Under these reforms small-amount lenders will be required to disclose the availability of these options to their customers.

And lenders who generate their businesses from websites will be required to provide a link to the ASIC website at moneysmart.gov.au.

These measures will tackle the problem of long-term debt dependence, and ensure that borrowers are aware of alternatives that may better meet their needs.

There is no doubt that over the course of the government’s consultations regarding the reforms which have got to this point, strong views have been expressed by both sides, from lenders and consumer groups. The effects of payday lending on the welfare of Australian households have been strongly debated. Let me be clear, the Gillard government strongly believes that short-term loans do have a role in the Australian economy and should be a part of everyday life, but we are also focussed on protecting vulnerable consumers, not terminating the payday lending industry. We do believe it is time that the interests of consumers are improved.

Whilst early negotiations with payday lenders perhaps have not seen much movement from payday lenders, I do remain optimistic that, in the process of consultation and negotiation of this bill, sensible heads and pragmatic business operators amongst the payday lenders will recognise that change is inevitable and the status quo can
no longer remain. I look forward to that process.

**Reverse mortgages**

The bill also introduces new protections for seniors seeking to take out a reverse mortgage.

Many senior Australians have worked hard to own their home before their retirement. If they now need to access the equity in their home through a reverse mortgage then they deserve to be adequately protected.

This class of borrowers can be particularly vulnerable for a number of reasons. Firstly, a senior Australian may be unlikely to recover financially if they enter into the wrong loan and exhaust their equity. Secondly, reverse mortgages are very different from other credit products and most borrowers will not be familiar with how they work.

The most significant risk to our senior Australians is that they could end up with a debt greater than the value of their home, known as negative equity. That is why the government is implementing Australia's first statutory protection against negative equity. This will ensure that older Australians are not caught short at a time in their life when financial stability is so important as their capacity to earn may be less than it once was.

The other major risk is that consumers will make poor choices because they are unaware of, do not appreciate or have not been advised about all the consequences of entering into a reverse mortgage. For example, they may borrow too much while still relatively young and unknowingly restrict their future choices if they later need to move into aged-care accommodation or have greater health bills.

Reverse mortgage lenders and brokers will therefore be required to meet specific disclosure requirements. They will need to sit down with consumers before they take out a reverse mortgage and walk them through the different scenarios. These scenarios will show them how the equity in the home will reduce according to how much they borrow, and different movements in house prices.

I am pleased to say this approach is supported by industry and will result in consumers making more informed and empowered choices in balancing their current and future needs.

**Enhancements to the national credit regime**

This bill also introduces several important enhancements to the national consumer credit law.

Firstly, there are changes to reduce the risk that borrowers in genuine hardship will face enforcement action by lenders, including losing their homes. The government considers it important that borrowers should have the best possible chance to come to an arrangement with the lender that avoids court action.

The procedures in relation to hardship variations will therefore be more flexible. And the restriction that means borrowers cannot apply for a variation because they borrowed more than $500,000 will be removed.

Secondly, providers of credit services such as brokers will be made more accountable by introducing a remedy for conduct that is unfair or dishonest. Unfortunately there will always be a minority of brokers who exploit the consumer's trust in them for their own benefit—this remedy will require them to adopt high levels of conduct, consistent with the standard of fairness, or face action by consumers.
Thirdly, this bill will restrict the use of the following words or phrases: 'independent', 'financial counsellor' and 'reverse mortgage'. These types of terms have an emotional or high-impact resonance and have been used in ways which mislead or manipulate consumers on occasion. We want these words and phrases to be used only where they strictly describe or relate to particular types of conduct or arrangements.

**Consumer leases**

This bill also provides for regulatory balance between credit contracts and consumer leases. Currently, the National Credit Code imposes significantly different obligations according to whether or not the consumer has a right or obligation to purchase the hired goods at the end of a consumer lease.

The experience of over a decade with the old state and territory Uniform Consumer Credit Code was that the technical nature of this distinction has resulted in regulatory arbitrage or people cherry-picking what suits the lender not the borrower. Some providers elected to offer consumer leases because of the lower regulatory requirements, and not necessarily because the consumer does not want to own the goods at the end of the contract. This particularly affects low-income consumers who may not have other finance options—in other words, they can end up paying for the use of goods such as refrigerators or computers without ever being able to own them.

Under this bill, consumer leases will be largely regulated consistently with credit contracts, to reduce the incentives for some providers to use leases in a way that can disadvantage consumers.

**Executive remuneration: clarification of role of chair**

Finally, the bill contains a measure to clarify a requirement in the Corporations Act 2001 relating to executive remuneration.

The government recently enacted reforms to strengthen Australia’s remuneration framework. As part of these reforms, key management personnel and their closely related parties were prohibited from participating in the non-binding shareholder vote on remuneration.

However, an exception was provided to allow the chair of an annual general meeting to vote undirected proxies in remuneration related resolutions where the shareholder provides informed consent for the chair to exercise the proxy. Some confusion has arisen about whether this exception applies to the non-binding vote on remuneration. The bill clarifies that this exception applies to the non-binding vote required under section 250R.

**Conclusion**

The Gillard government is ensuring that fairness remains a feature of Australia’s credit markets. In particular, we are ensuring that the regulation of credit does not happen in a way that ignores the vulnerable—such as some seniors or those on low incomes or people who find themselves in financial hardship.

The bill I am introducing today demonstrates our commitment to stand alongside consumers, but it also puts the importance of the access to credit and the growth and long-term sustainability of financial services businesses at the heart of our vision for the future. I encourage all members of this House to support its passage.

Debate adjourned.
Tax Laws Amendment (2011 Measures No. 7) Bill 2011

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Shorten.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Financial Services and Superannuation) (09:53): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill amends various tax laws to implement a range of improvements to our tax laws.

Schedule 1 removes income tax barriers that impede families from making financial contributions to a special disability trust. These changes include extending the capital gains tax main residence exemption to special disability trusts. By removing these barriers, special disability trusts will become more attractive for families looking to provide for the long-term care of a family member with severe disability.

Schedule 2 reduces the lowest marginal tax rate that applies to non-resident workers employed under the government’s Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme from 29 per cent to 15 per cent. The change will apply for the 2011-12 year of income and was announced in the 2011-12 budget.

The Pacific Seasonal Worker Scheme is an important element of the government’s Pacific engagement strategy, a whole-of-government strategy designed to advance our engagement in the Pacific. This measure will help support the government’s strategy by improving remittance outcomes for workers and by addressing equity concerns raised by the relatively high effective tax rates currently applying to workers in the scheme.

The changes introduced in this bill will not impact Australian workers or non-residents who are not Pacific seasonal workers.

Schedule 3 amends the pay-as-you-go instalments provisions to ensure that the concept of ‘instalment income’ interacts appropriately with the concepts of ‘gain’ and ‘loss’ in the taxation of financial arrangements, or TOFA, stages 3 and 4 provisions.

The amendments ensure that the interaction does not impose significant administrative or compliance costs while achieving the objectives of the pay-as-you-go instalments provisions.

Schedule 4 gives the Commissioner of Taxation a limited discretion to extend the time for a taxpayer to notify the commissioner of making the transitional election to apply TOFA stages 3 and 4 provisions to its existing financial arrangements.

The TOFA transitional election gives taxpayers the choice of not having to comply with two sets of income tax rules for financial arrangements.

The proposed discretion would provide some administrative flexibility so that taxpayers who did not notify the commissioner of a transitional election on time may be able to obtain the compliance benefits of the transitional election under certain circumstances.

Schedule 5 amends the tax law and the Banking Act 1959 to make four changes to the farm management deposits, or FMDs, scheme.

First, the changes allow an FMD owner affected by an applicable natural disaster to access their farm management deposits within 12 months of making a deposit while retaining concessional tax treatment.
This schedule also allows FMD owners to hold FMDs simultaneously with more than one FMD provider.

In addition, FMD providers will be required to report certain information about FMDs to the Agriculture secretary more frequently.

The amendments will afford the owner of an FMD additional protection under the unclaimed moneys provision, which is not available to ordinary depositors.

These amendments allow FMD owners to access their own funds without foregoing concessional tax treatment, enabling them to recover and rebuild their primary production businesses more quickly or providing an income in times of severe hardship. The minor administrative amendments are intended to benefit FMD owners and allow a better understanding of the effectiveness of the scheme.

Schedule 6 extends the end date of the temporary loss relief for merging superannuation funds by three months, that is, from 30 June 2011 until 30 September 2011. This will provide additional time for mergers to take place before the loss relief expires. The requirement that affected mergers are completed in a single income year is relaxed to permit funds to benefit from the extension.

Schedule 7 preserves the integrity of the taxation laws compliance framework by ensuring that certain director penalty notices remain valid. Director penalty notices are issued by the Commissioner of Taxation to the directors of companies which have failed to remit pay-as-you-go withholding amounts to the commissioner. These notices advise directors that if they do not cause their company to take certain actions with respect to the debt, they will become personally liable for the debt.

Between December 2007 and June 2010 the commissioner issued around 17,000 director penalty notices in reliance on a precedential 2007 New South Wales Court of Appeal decision. This decision was overturned by a later decision of the same court in 2011, which in turn raised doubts about the continuing validity of the director penalty notices issued during that period.

These amendments will simply restore the precedential understanding of the law at the time these notices were issued, yet they will not impact the individual director in the latter Court of Appeal decision. These amendments are retrospective in nature; however, this is essential for ensuring these notices remain valid, and the penalties attaching to these notices remain recoverable.

Schedule 8 fulfils the government’s 2010 budget commitment to provide a regulatory framework to improve the integrity of public ancillary funds, similar to that which has applied to private ancillary funds since 1 October 2009. This framework will provide the trustees of such funds with greater certainty as to their philanthropic obligations.

Following consultation, the commencement date for the measure was deferred from 1 July 2011 to 1 January 2012, which makes it vital that this bill receive royal assent by 31 December 2011.

Schedule 9 amends the tax law to make several changes to the film tax offsets. The changes specifically affect the producer offset and the location and post, digital and visual effects offsets.

These changes, which will apply from 1 July 2011, are estimated to increase expenditure on the film tax offsets by $8 million over the forward estimates period. These amendments to the film tax offsets are aimed at reforming and strengthening the
Australian screen production industry at a time when it is striving to meet the challenges of a changing global environment. The amendments to the producer offset will refine delivery of government support to screen producers, reduce the financial and administrative burden on applicants, and improve operational efficiency. The amendments to the location and post, digital and visual effects offsets are aimed at enhancing those offsets to attract offshore productions to Australia.

Full details of the measures in this bill are contained in the explanatory memorandum.

Debate adjourned.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Antidumping Reforms

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR (Gorton—Minister for Privacy and Freedom of Information, Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Justice) (10:00): by leave—The government believes that our nation's best days are ahead and is working to keep the Australian economy strong.

While the fundamentals of our economy remain strong, some sectors of our economy are under pressure.

There are additional challenges for Australian industry because of the rise in value of the Australian dollar and uncertainty in the global economy.

There are global forces impacting upon the Australian economy, which is in transition. Our terms of trade, climate change, the advent of new technology, and the drive for knowledge and innovation all represent profound challenges in the context of the global economic landscape.

That is why the government is supporting Australian industries to innovate, transform and meet the challenges in a range of ways.

We are acting to lift productivity, investing in innovation and skills, reforming the tax system to encourage investment and improve participation, and assisting businesses to access opportunities in Australia and overseas.

And our reform agenda is helping businesses to move to a modern, high-skill, high-tech, clean energy economy which will create Australian jobs into the future. As part of the reform agenda, the government is also supporting Australian business to remedy the harmful effects of unfair trading practices like dumping and the subsidisation of goods by other countries. We are doing so through the most significant improvements to the antidumping and countervailing system in a decade, which I will outline to the House.

When we came into government, we inherited an antidumping and countervailing system that needed reform. The antidumping system under the Howard government became overly complex, time consuming and difficult to access. Antidumping investigations were at historically low levels.

The government asked the Productivity Commission to review the operation of the antidumping system, and in June of this year the Minister for Trade and I announced the government’s response to that review. In developing a package of improvements we listened to manufacturers and their workers, to producers and importers, to members of parliament, and to industry associations and to trade unions.

We will continue to work with all parties involved in the antidumping system on the implementation of the government’s reforms through the new International Trade Remedies Forum. The forum will help ensure that the antidumping system continues to reflect industry experience and the international trading environment.
The first meeting of the forum occurred last month and I thank all those who attended and contributed.

**Faster resolution of dumping complaints**

The government’s improvements to the antidumping system are designed to deliver faster resolution of complaints about dumping.

The government is increasing staff in the International Trade Remedies Branch of Customs and Border Protection over the next 12 months by 45 per cent, from 31 to 45 staff, to ensure cases are resolved as quickly as possible. Recruitment of additional staff to work on dumping complaints has already commenced, with new staff starting shortly.

Legislation introducing a 30-day time limit on minister’s decision-making has already passed the House. No longer will we see the long delays we saw under the Howard government when a minister repeatedly refused to decide antidumping cases for more than a year. From more than 365 days to 30 days—this will help faster decision-making.

The changes will also enable consideration of the need for provisional measures at the earliest opportunity in the investigation, if there is adequate information to do so, rather than waiting until verifying all data, as has been the case historically.

**Better decision-making**

It is not just about making decisions faster, it is about improving the quality of decisions in the interests of the Australian economy, and Australian jobs. Antidumping cases are complex matters and I commend the work of the branch for the diligence with which they apply themselves to an often thankless task.

The government will be providing additional resources to support them in this difficult work. Specialist knowledge of particular industries and particular countries and experts in forensic accounting will supplement existing staff knowledge in complex cases and provide advice on key issues. The government is settling a protocol with the forum for accessing the right expertise in the right cases.

The government is also making significant changes to the appeals process. The use of an appropriately supported panel of review officers will ensure a review officer with appropriate skills and experience hears appeals in a timely manner. The review officer will be able to make recommendations directly to the minister, supported by targeted reinvestigation of particular findings.

Work has commenced on reviewing the effectiveness of Australia’s ‘particular market situation’ provisions, with a newly formed working group to report to me by the end of this year.

The definition of what constitutes material injury caused by dumping will be amended to allow a more inclusive consideration of the impact of dumping on employment and investment, and I will issue a direction to clarify that profits forgone and other injury caused in new or expanding markets are relevant injury considerations. The branch will also clarify how it determines whether dumping or other factors have caused injury.

**Improved access**

The government will improve access to the antidumping system for Australian businesses. For example, more practical support will be provided to small and medium enterprises, who face the greatest barriers to accessing the antidumping system. We are funding a small and medium enterprise support officer within industry to assist more businesses make effective use of antidumping measures. That officer will
work with businesses, helping them to prepare applications, including through compiling evidence that may be needed for investigations to be initiated, and then working with other businesses that wish to participate in ongoing investigations.

The government is working with the forum to determine the best way to resolve the particular problems faced by primary producers in accessing the antidumping system.

Parties will also more easily be able to update measures that are already in place because of changes that will allow a partial review of these measures, instead of requiring a de facto reinvestigation.

**Comparable countries**

The government is ensuring that Australia's antidumping system is administered more in line with comparable countries, taking into account relevant cases and practices in other countries.

We are strengthening the approach to parties who choose not to cooperate in antidumping investigations. This will ensure that parties do not manipulate the antidumping system by not participating or by engaging in selective participation, and that the branch has the best information available to make a decision about the existence of dumping.

The branch will take a more flexible approach to determining the appropriate form of a dumping or countervailing duty, and in the method used to determine the non-injurious price. This will ensure that dumping remedies more effectively prevent further injury to Australian industry.

The government is also clarifying that the parties permitted to participate in investigations, including by making submissions, include relevant industry associations, unions and downstream industry. This will make sure people and businesses affected by dumping get a real say in dumping decisions.

**Stronger compliance mechanisms**

The government will ensure there are stronger compliance mechanisms in place, so that Australian industry actually gets the protection of measures where dumping or subsidisation has caused them material injury.

There will be increased monitoring of compliance with antidumping measures with the creation of a dedicated position to develop and implement an improved and proactive monitoring program. Further, the government will work with the forum to develop a framework to prevent the unfair circumvention of measures by the modification of products, sending products through third countries or exporters with a lower duty rate, or assembling parts in Australia.

**Conclusion**

The government’s reforms get the balance right for a modern antidumping system and bring Australia into greater alignment with the practices of comparable trading nations.

The comprehensive package of improvements the government is implementing re-affirm the commitment on this side of the House to the world trading rules, while better serving our industries and helping our workforce enforce their rights against unfair dumping practices.

We are providing better access to antidumping remedies for businesses, irrespective of their size, and will support the branch to resolve investigations more quickly. Greater resources and expertise will improve decision making.

Our suite of improvements will help keep our economy strong and provide greater certainty for Australian business, including
manufacturers, primary producers and importers and, importantly, their workers, families and communities.

The government wants to maintain confidence in the benefits of international trade, and that means everyone having confidence that everyone follows the rules of trade.

We will support local business and give them confidence to invest in the future.

I present a copy of my ministerial statement and I ask leave of the House to move a motion to enable the member for Indi to speak for 10 minutes.

Leave granted.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR: I move:

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent Mrs Mirabella speaking for a period not exceeding 10 minutes.

Question agreed to.

Mrs MIRABELLA (Indi) (10:12): I have to say I am not really sure what the point of that ministerial statement was because it was largely a rerun of the same themes from the speech of the Minister for Justice on the Customs Amendment (Antidumping Improvements) Bill 2011 a few weeks ago. There was nothing new in anything we have just heard although there was an interesting statement when he said that the changes would bring Australia's antidumping system into greater alignment with the practices of comparable trading nations. If only the government would apply that standard to the current carbon tax proposals they are wanting to introduce. If we were to have a system comparable with our trading nations then we would not be having this job-destroying, economy-crushing carbon tax. So that is a welcome standard that the minister has applied.

I do find it curious that the minister is becoming increasingly aggressive in his language around these issues and everyone else is apparently to blame including now blaming the Howard government. We have mentions of the high dollar but we have no mention of the IMF and the RBA both saying that if we were in surplus then interest rates would not be as high and of course the dollar would not be as high. So getting the basic fundamentals of the economy right does affect Australian manufacturers.

It is actually quite ironic that, given all these criticisms, given the Rudd and Gillard governments did everything possible they could to evade making changes to Australia's antidumping system until they were shamed and panicked into it in June because almost every single affected stakeholder was demanding that they lift a finger and finally do something about it, we had the announcement at the end of the day trying to perhaps hide the announcement, not maximise its publicity and be proud of it.

From 2008 to mid-2011 they strenuously avoided any action. Let us bear in mind that the minister who is now complaining about inaction is also the same minister who did everything in his power to defer any government decision about all of this until both the 2010 election and the 2011 budget.

Now methinks he doth protest too much. What I suspect the statement is all about is that the government is now desperate to try to appear as if it is doing something to help Australian manufacturing, with the tidal wave of criticism of its obviously atrocious record in this area and its refusal to subject its record to examination in a formal national inquiry. Sadly, it appears the government also wants to hide its rejection of the eight-point plan on manufacturing policy that the opposition last week invited it to adopt in a bipartisan effort to immediately improve the current policy framework for Australian manufacturers. In trademark style and with trademark spin, its main aim seems to be
simply to be seen to be doing something, and the customs minister's increasing interest in playing the role of a wannabe hard man is an obvious pointer to the ALP's increasing frustration about its complete lack of success in the area of industry policy.

Anyway, he has effectively decided to rehash the debate on the Customs Amendment (Anti-dumping Improvements) Bill. Let me take the opportunity to restate the coalition's position as well. In general terms, we are happy to support the changes the government is making, not least because many of them are obvious and represent a long-overdue response to the pleas that key stakeholders have been making. If we do not agree to these modifications to the system now, you can also be sure that it will take years for the Labor Party to do anything about the issue of anti-dumping again. So the timing to do something now is obviously preferable.

It is also worth restating that there has been considerable and growing frustration over recent years in Australia with the lack of timeliness and effectiveness of the investigation process undertaken in Customs and the significant costs imposed on businesses which wish to raise possible cases for consideration under the current anti-dumping regime. The system is widely regarded as being too expensive to access and largely unworkable. The minister says he is providing additional resources to Customs, but essentially he is shifting employees in Customs from one area to the anti-dumping regime. What will happen with increasing border protection problems is what has happened elsewhere in the world where the anti-dumping regime is administered by customs departments: resources get taken out of the anti-dumping section to be applied to border protection. I am sure we will see that pattern followed here, as has been the case.

The current structure of the system also typically works against the best interests of Australian manufacturers. It represents another burden on them at a time when they are already encountering a range of unwanted costs and pressures, a series of poor and clumsy policies from a government that simply has no empathy for their plight, and a Prime Minister who says, 'Manufacturers will just get on with it; they'll innovate; they'll do what they've always done,' without having a genuine understanding of the problems these businesses face at the coalface of their industry. They want a system that works for them, not one that thwarts them, especially at a time when they are already confronted with so many pressures and so many regulatory costs.

Against that background, anything that can be done to strengthen the integrity and quality of the administration of our anti-dumping regime, of course, should be supported. However, there is still plenty of work to do, and I am disappointed that the minister's statement today provides no indication of when most of the proposed changes will be legislated. I am worried that the government, despite promising change, has again reverted to its normal modus operandi and is now intent on dragging its feet again.

I had also hoped, when I heard last night from the member for Gorton that he was planning a ministerial statement on anti-dumping, that he might finally be relenting on the government's decision to not allocate a single extra dollar to Customs as part of its anti-dumping changes. I had heard that he was providing a ministerial statement, and I was bitterly disappointed—but, then again, we must always have some hope that eventually something positive will come from this government in a real sense, in providing real resources to this very
important issue of anti-dumping. It would have been appropriate for him, rather than continuing to pretend he is increasing Customs resources, to have been upfront today and specified exactly where the cuts were being made to other parts of the agency to fund the changes to the structure of the trade measures review branch.

Today's debate on this ministerial statement also represents a good opportunity to point out that, in the time since we were here debating the anti-dumping improvements bill, new figures released by the ABS show that the total number of manufacturing jobs in Australia has now plunged to 945,000; that over the past 3½ years 136,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost in Australia; that over the past year, from August 2010 to August 2011, 53,800 manufacturing jobs have been lost; and that over the last six months almost 49,500 manufacturing jobs have been lost. Over the past quarter, from May to August, 30,700 manufacturing jobs have been lost in Australia. That is a rate of more than 2,500 manufacturing jobs lost a week. That is one gone every four minutes. The new Treasury modelling released this morning also points to even worse outcomes under existing policy settings for sectors like aluminium than have been admitted previously.

It is a record of unutterable shame, and the ALP must move beyond its modest and straightforward anti-dumping changes to embrace a more comprehensive industry policy—indeed, any industry policy at all. Australian manufacturers are suffering and the government remains paralysed in responding to their problems, whether in the area of coming up with a robust and genuinely reformed anti-dumping regime, in axing unnecessary regulatory costs or in actually engaging in genuine tax reform. Wasn't it ironic yesterday when there were reports of the Prime Minister saying she wanted to help manufacturing and industry with genuine tax reform? I have an idea for her: she can start with a very simple action. She could axe the carbon tax. That would be a very simple, very commendable first step in tax reform in helping industry and the manufacturing sector in this country.

**BILLS**

Clean Energy Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Income Tax Rates Amendments) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Household Assistance Amendments) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Tax Laws Amendments) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Fuel Tax Legislation Amendment) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Customs Tariff Amendment) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Excise Tariff Legislation Amendment) Bill 2011
Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas (Import Levy) Amendment Bill 2011
Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas (Manufacture Levy) Amendment Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Unit Shortfall Charge—General) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Unit Issue Charge—Auctions) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Unit Issue Charge—Fixed Charge) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (International Unit Surrender Charge) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Charges—Customs) Bill 2011
Clean Energy (Charges—Excise) Bill 2011
Clean Energy Regulator Bill 2011
Climate Change Authority Bill 2011
Steel Transformation Plan Bill 2011

Second Reading

Debate resumed on the motion:
That these bills be now read a second time.

Mr ANDREWS (Menzies) (10:22): I rise to speak on the carbon tax legislation, euphemistically named the 'Clean Energy' bills by this government. Can I say at the outset that, apart from the Prime Minister's broken promise—'there will be no carbon tax under a government I lead'—there is a gross deception at the heart of this legislation. Time and again, day after day, week after week, month after month, Labor members proclaim that this is a tax only on the 500 biggest polluters in the nation, the implication being that the financial penalty of this legislation will only fall upon these companies—500 companies, of course, that the government cannot, or refuse to, actually name. They do not know which 500 companies they are. A company could be No. 499 or No. 501 and they would have no clue at the moment as to which one they were.

But, leaving that aside, let us tackle this proposition from the government that this is a tax the financial and fiscal impact of which will only fall on the 500 biggest polluters in the nation. The implication being that the financial penalty of this legislation will only fall upon these companies—500 companies, of course, that the government cannot, or refuse to, actually name. They do not know which 500 companies they are. A company could be No. 499 or No. 501 and they would have no clue at the moment as to which one they were.

The fact is that this tax will be passed on by the companies that are taxed and it will cascade through every transaction associated with the product of that company—of course, that is what it is designed to do. But we have this political obscuration by the Labor government in the hope that ordinary Australians will think otherwise. The reality, however, is that they increasingly recognise the deception and are opposed to this package. In particular, power and transport prices will increase. The government hopes that Australians will ignore this as it blames other factors. At least President Obama in the United States, who has now abandoned his plans for a similar scheme, was more forthcoming. He told the San Francisco Chronicle in 2008: 'Under my plan of a cap and trade system'—the equivalent of what we are getting here—'electricity rates would necessarily skyrocket.' That is what President Obama was prepared to say in 2008 about what he was then proposing for the American economy—namely, under his scheme, 'electricity rates would necessarily skyrocket.' But do we hear any such truthfulness from this government? No, we just hear more spin that somehow only the 500 biggest polluters will pay. That is, frankly, a joke.

What we have seen with energy prices so far has been a substantial spike over the last few years. As any Australian can tell you, electricity prices have gone up. It does not matter which state or territory in Australia you reside in; the reality is that electricity prices have gone up on average by more than 40 per cent across the country. Gas prices have gone up by something like 28 per cent. The cost of food has gone up. The cost of...
health care and pharmaceutical products has gone up. All of these things have gone up substantially. The reality is that many Australians are facing cost-of-living pressures the like of which they have not faced for some time. In fact, in my journeys around the country, talking to family service agencies in the honourable member's state of Western Australia recently, family service agencies, whether in Perth or any other part of Australia, are saying that they have more people turning up to their doors in necessitous circumstances than any time in a generation. That is what the family service agencies are saying. So the reality is that, for many Australians, cost-of-living pressures are hitting them in a way that they have not before—and yet, on top of that, we have this tax that the government is proposing to impose over and above all these increases in costs in energy, transport, food et cetera.

Look at what is going to happen. In my state of Victoria, Deloitte Access Economics did a survey, some analysis, of what the impact would be, just in Victoria alone. And they said, after their analysis—one of the leading accountancy and financial firms in the country, employed not only by governments but by a whole range of private sector organisations from time to time to provide analysis of the economic impacts of certain measures and policies—that the carbon tax will make Victorian households $1,050 a year worse off, cost 35,000 jobs and hit the state budget bottom line by $660 million by 2015. That is just in Victoria alone. You can multiply that right across every state and territory in Australia, with the compounding impact that that will have across this country.

There is something else I want to address in relation to this legislation—and that is what I describe as the 'green jobs myth'. A consequence of this legislation, following on from what the honourable member for Indi was speaking about earlier, will be the destruction of Australian industry and jobs. As she pointed out, in the last 12 months, in manufacturing alone, we have seen the loss of 54,000 jobs in Australia. And you can see that that has been compounding over the last few months—49,000 manufacturing jobs gone in Australia in the last six months; 30,000 manufacturing jobs gone in Australia in the last three months.

We hear now and again about the closure of some major manufacturing business. But the reality is that day after day and week after week we see, in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne, which I represent in part, and in those sorts of areas in this country, the closure of small manufacturing operations, plants and businesses—often simply closing because they can no longer remain competitive or moving offshore because that is the only way they can keep their business alive. This is happening day after day, week after week, not just the headlines that come up when a major business closes now and again. The reality is that this is happening all the time and that of course is borne out by the data that 54,000 jobs have gone in manufacturing in the last 12 months alone.

With manufacturing already suffering, businesses closing or moving overseas and jobs being lost, Australians are naturally worried about their future and their employment future. When studies indicate that significant additional job losses occur, particularly, to take Victoria again, in places like the Latrobe Valley, the power hub of the state, then they rightly question the indecent urgency of this Labor government to impose a scheme in the absence of similar schemes elsewhere around the world. Nor are they mollified by glib assertions of Professor Garnaut that new jobs will be as numerous as the old jobs that have been lost.
It is in this context that I wish to examine the claim that tens of thousands of jobs will be lost—what Professor Garnaut refers to as structural change. I am sure if you lose your job, you do not refer to it as structural change and that somehow they are going to be replaced in this country in the coming few years by new green jobs. Professor Garnaut acknowledges that:

All Australians want to know where the new jobs and new incomes will come from…

But his response from everywhere to quote him again is 'hardly convincing in the light of overseas experience.'

Let me turn to some recent developments overseas. In the United States:

A $38.6 billion loan guarantee program that the Obama administration promised would create or save 65,000 jobs has created just a few thousand jobs two years after it began.

According to a report last week in the Washington Post:

The program—designed to jump-start the nation’s clean technology industry by giving energy companies access to low-cost, government-backed loans—has directly created 3,545 new, permanent jobs after giving out almost half the allocated amount; half almost of $38 billion, 3,545 jobs.

President Obama made green jobs a showcase for his recovery plan, vowing to foster new jobs, new technologies and more competitive industries, but the loan guarantee program came under scrutiny after the collapse of Solyndra, a solar panel maker, whose closure will cost taxpayers as much as $527 million. Indeed last year President Obama visited this company in Northern California and hailed it as the future of clean energy. According to a Washington Post report:

Obama’s efforts to create green jobs are lagging behind expectations at a time of persistently high unemployment. Many economists say that because alternative-energy projects are so expensive and slow to ramp up, they are not the most efficient way to stimulate the economy.

Even claims by the US Energy Department that a green jobs program saved 33,000 jobs at the Ford Motor Company have been queried. Several economists said they doubt the loans program saved these jobs. Josh Lerner from the Harvard Business School said:

I always take these job estimates with a big grain of salt.

…

There tends to be a lot of fuzzy math when it comes to calculating these benefits…

Or Mark Muro, from the Brookings Institution, who researches the clean-tech industry, said:

…the agency appears to be counting every employee working in upgraded plants, when the more relevant question is how many workers would have been laid off without the loans.

Solyndra, the first company backed under the greens loan scheme, has now declared bankruptcy and closed its doors just two weeks ago. In fact it has been raided by the FBI since. The failure of the solar panel manufacturer, which got a $535 million government loan guarantee and later direct government loans, led to the lay-off—not the putting on—of 1,100 workers.

Energy Department officials claim the program will create or save 60,000 jobs. But, if the 20 companies that have won loans so far deliver all the new jobs they have promised, they will hire a total of just 8,050 new workers for permanent positions. According to the same report in the Washington Post report, half of those 20 companies have neither created nor saved any permanent jobs yet; several won their loans only recently.

If the revised 60,000 target is reached, it will work out at about $640,000 in loan guarantees for every job created or saved. If
the companies do well they will not draw down on the guarantees but if, as what happened with Solyndra, it collapses and declares bankruptcy then of course the American taxpayers will pay the bill.

This comes on top of President Obama's claim that his stimulus bill created or preserved 225,000 clean energy jobs. That is $355,000 per job. However, the reality is that when this was analysed in further detail that much of this money went not to firms and businesses in America but to China. Despite the claim of green jobs, the overwhelming majority of stimulus money spent on wind power went to foreign companies, according to a new report by the Investigative Reporting Workshop at the American University's School of Communication in Washington, D.C.

According to a report recently on the American ABC World News, nearly $2 billion in money from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has been spent on wind power, funding the creation of enough new wind farms to power 2.4 million homes over the past year. But the study also found that nearly 80 per cent of that money had gone to foreign manufacturers of wind turbines.

The third largest maker of solar panels in the US, Evergreen, is closing—not opening, not expanding—its main American factory, laying off the 800 workers and shifting production to a joint venture with a Chinese company in central China, despite having received more than $43 million in assistance from the state of Massachusetts.

Michael El-Hillow, the chief executive, said in a statement that his company had decided to close the factory in response to plunging prices for solar panels. World prices have fallen as much as two-thirds in the last three years, including a drop of 10 percent during last year's fourth quarter alone. This is reflected in their share prices. If you look at Evergreen stock, it traded at just over $100 per share in 2007 and had dropped to just $3.00 per share by the start of this year. This follows First Solar, another American company and one of the world's largest solar power vendors, whose products are already made overseas. Reeling from this experience, the US administration announced last week that it is again delaying a plan to curb greenhouse gas emissions from power plants.

This overseas experience, real data of what is happening, points to two consequences; first, it is a myth that green jobs are being created in large numbers, and, secondly, every job created comes at an enormous cost to the nation. This reflects the experience in the United States. A similar study in Spain found that for every green job created there were two or three other jobs lost in the economy. Not only will families pay the extra costs for energy and transport; the so-called green jobs are a myth. It is no wonder that workers in places like the Latrobe Valley are worried about their future. (Time expired)

Ms VAMVAKINOU (Calwell) (10:37): I am very pleased to be speaking on the Clean Energy Bill 2011 and related bills. As many people on this side of the fence who have spoken before me have said, these are very important bills. I have long supported the need to tackle the effects of climate change on both our economy and the environment. I have gone on record on this issue on a number of occasions.

Climate change has been in local, national and global discourse for quite some time. It is an issue that challenges the hopes and aspirations of present and future generations. It is also an issue that has caused much emotion, passion and contention on both sides of the debate. I say 'both sides of the
debate’ because I recognise that there is a difference of opinion on this issue amongst members here in this place, in the community and in my own community. That difference of opinion has been brought home to me in the many emails and letters I have received from my electorate. Some have asked me to support the bills before us and others have asked me not to support them. I have been asked to be a hero and vote against these bills and I have also been asked to secure their future and vote in favour of them. I respect the views put to me by my electorate. One could say that you could be a hero in support of this legislation, and that is what I am doing here today.

It is my view that climate change is a real phenomenon and that human activity is a contributing factor to this change. Many years ago when I was a child I used to wonder where the billowing white or grey clouds that emanated from the various industrial sites in my home town of Melbourne went. I had a particular fascination with the white clouds over the Amcor paper mills in Fairfield. I always wondered what the effect of a few hundred years of such pollution would do to the atmosphere. It does not surprise me that today's young people, including my own children, also wonder the same thing. In the days when I was a child there were no answers to my questions and there was no local, national or global discussion. There was no scientific voice and no political voice. Today, however, there is. There is discussion and there are answers. We may not all agree with them, but human activity and its effect on our planet and climate is a real concern and must be considered.

A new generation of Australians are asking us to act on this defining issue of our time that is pertinent to our future and their future. It is a challenge that requires leadership and a policy approach that gives Australia direction in rising to this challenge and preparing us for an economy geared towards a clean energy future. The government has responded to this defining issue of our time, and before us is significant, far-reaching and progressive legislation that harnesses the need for us to do something significant to arrest climate change that threatens our natural environment and has action designed to protect our future on this planet.

We have to act in a practical and defining manner. Importantly, we have to act collectively as a global community. There is no other way. In doing this we have to look to, and concentrate on, the immense opportunities we have as a nation to capitalise on Australia's innovative capability in a new, developing economy. I say this in particular because many people, including my constituents, have expressed concern about the possible loss of jobs. The action taken by the government through these bills will not destroy jobs and job opportunities. On the contrary, this action provides for a whole new range of job opportunities and new jobs in the new, emerging green economy.

We are changing the way we live our lives and the way we make things. We are doing it for the sake of our future. We are not alone in our endeavours to take action on climate change, as the opposition would have us believe. We are not a lone ship sailing on uncharted waters. As we look to strengthening our economy and position it for the future we have to examine the economic direction of our trading partners and recognise the economic trends and forecasts of global development and the low-emissions products and technologies that will power the clean energy future. These are the markers of the future global economy.
Australia has some of the best renewable energy resources in the world, and a price on carbon will be the driving force for growth and opportunities. Without it we will be squandering not just our environment but our potential in vast manufacturing and innovative capabilities. Imagine if our research and development were geared towards a 1980s style economy whilst both industrialised and developing economies are investing in the development of technologies for the 21st century? What markets would we tap into and which markets would look to us? It would take a lot more than the opposition's policy of spin to convince our trading partners that Australia is part of the future and that we are a part of global economic and social development.

These major economic transformations are not taking place in isolation, as I have said. Our top five trading partners—China, Japan, the United States, Korea and India—and another six of our top 20 trading partners are implementing policies for a clean energy future with billions of dollars of investment in developing that clean energy future. These are opportunities and we are in as good a position as ever to grasp them. The trend amongst our top global trading partners to use energy more efficiently and to cut energy waste in an effort to save money, drive productivity and cut emissions will allow Australia to tap into these opportunities before us. This is what these bills seek to do.

As global investment in clean energy and energy efficiency continues to grow, the economic benefits that will arise through these bills will increase productivity through innovation across a range of industries, creating not only green jobs but jobs in our traditional sectors. Manufacturing has a strong presence in my electorate. The reality is—and my constituents recognise this—that advanced manufacturing is the hallmark of a modern, technologically sophisticated economy. In the 42nd Parliament, I was chair of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Innovation and the consistent, verifiable evidence from patterns that arose out of various inquiries of the standing committee was that companies with innovative technologies are twice as likely to report increases in productivity and up to four times as likely to boost their employment. They are also 41 per cent more likely to report higher profits.

This means that in order to capitalise on our strengths in the manufacturing sector we need to be innovative. Innovation is not about stalling and it is not about regression to old technologies, but rather about taking advantage of opportunities by using capability to reach our potential. It involves a drive towards new technologies that tap into not only the heightened demand for manufactured inputs to clean-infrastructure projects stimulated by the government's new investments but also the global marketplace that is geared towards a clean energy future that will drive investment and productivity. Importantly the manufacturing industry and manufacturers which have a strong presence in my electorate will be assisted by tailored programs worth $500 million for steel manufacturers, food processors and metal foundries and forges with an $800 million grants program that will help manufacturers invest in low-pollution technologies.

What is important for me is what the clean energy bills mean for the people of my electorate and how jobs and households in Calwell will be supported as Australia undertakes the important economic reform of assisting businesses and households transition to a clean-energy future. I ask the people in my electorate to focus on what the bills do for them. Every dollar raised from putting a price on carbon, which puts the onus of payment on Australia's biggest polluters, will go to support jobs and
households and to invest in clean energy programs through a combination of tax cuts, higher family payments and increasing pensions and benefits. The government's household package bills will help my constituents deal with any additional financial pressures.

Up to 25,000 pensioners in Calwell will receive in their pension payments an extra $338 per year if they are single and up to $510 per year for couples combined. More than 18,500 families in Calwell will receive household assistance through family assistance payments, up to $110 for each eligible child for families receiving family tax benefit A and up to $69 per year in assistance for families receiving family tax benefit B. More than 700 self-funded retirees in Calwell will receive an extra $338 per year in assistance for singles and up to $510 for couples combined. More than 6,600 jobseekers in Calwell will get up to $218 extra per year for singles and up to $390 per year for couples combined. More than 3,000 single parents in Calwell will get an extra $289 per year. More than 4,300 students in my electorate of Calwell will get an extra $177 extra per year. In total more than 52,600 people in my electorate of Calwell will receive household assistance through the transfer system through Centrelink.

On top of this, taxpayers in Calwell with an annual income of under $80,000 will all get a tax cut, with most receiving at least $300 per year. Taxpayers receiving family tax benefit A and up to $69 per year in assistance for families receiving family tax benefit B. More than 700 self-funded retirees in Calwell will receive an extra $338 per year in assistance for singles and up to $510 for couples combined. More than 6,600 jobseekers in Calwell will get up to $218 extra per year for singles and up to $390 per year for couples combined. More than 3,000 single parents in Calwell will get an extra $289 per year. More than 4,300 students in my electorate of Calwell will get an extra $177 extra per year. In total more than 52,600 people in my electorate of Calwell will receive household assistance through the transfer system through Centrelink.

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ignore the possibilities of a clean energy future? What kinds of jobs and apprenticeships will be available to the next generation of young Australians?

It is the possibilities that are open to them through the passage of the bills before this parliament that is most encouraging. I have full confidence in Australia's ability to tap into all the possibilities associated with the global push to tackle the effects of climate change through fundamental social and economic reform. It is for these reasons that I commend the bills to the House.

**WYATT ROY** (Longman) (10:51): I rise to voice my strong opposition to the Labor government's carbon tax. There is no denying that climate change is a significant challenge facing Australia—indeed, facing the world. It is a challenge that deserves a response. I note that the members opposite are trying to detract from this response. They are trying to mislead the Australian people by making this debate one based on ideology rather than a policy debate seeking pragmatic and commonsense solutions. Let me make something clear: there is no dispute about the goal of reducing carbon emissions by five per cent by 2020. What is up for debate is the best way for us to achieve this reduction in emissions, and what is important in this debate is the cost to our economy: the personal cost to jobs, to families and to small businesses—the forgotten Australians that the Labor Party has walked away from, the forgotten Australians that the Labor Party lied to when the Prime Minister said before the last election, 'There will be no carbon tax under the government I lead.' It is important that we find methods of reducing emissions without attacking our way of life and the intrinsic economic advantages that we as a resource-rich nation enjoy.

The best way to reduce carbon emissions is not with a carbon tax which is going to hurt families, small businesses and Australia's economy and fail to effectively reduce Australia's emissions. The best way to achieve this reduction in emissions is through a direct action plan—a direct action plan which will not be another cost to families, not force rises in the cost of electricity and not be another great big new tax on business; a plan which is costed and capped and funded; a plan which is not going to be an uncontrolled burden on the economy for years to come.

Let me outline what a pragmatic, common-sense policy looks like, delivered by a Liberal administration. When Campbell Newman was Lord Mayor of Brisbane—and I remind members that Brisbane City Council is a local government with a budget bigger than the Tasmanian state government's—Brisbane City Council became Australia's largest purchaser of green power. Impressively, Brisbane City Council buildings run 100 per cent on renewable energy. Council purchased 500 new buses, which all run on Biogreen Diesel, which is cleaner than gas; that is one bus going into service every three days. Brisbane City Council planted two million trees. All of these environmental gains were made through direct action by a Liberal administration. That is what direct action looks like. All of these measures were good for the economy, good for business, good for lifestyle and good for the environment, and all were achieved without a new tax.

Recently I held a series of listening posts in my electorate specifically to hear the concerns and opinions of those in my community about the carbon tax. 'Concern' is not strong enough to accurately represent the emotion of many of the individuals who made the effort to visit me at one of my many listening posts. People are angry. They are angry that their voice has been ignored by the Prime Minister and the Labor
government. They are angry that they were lied to by the Prime Minister before the last election, and they are angry that now they are being afflicted with a tax that they do not want, and a tax that they did not have a say on, all for no real environmental benefit. Indeed, the government's own modelling shows that emissions will not decrease in Australia. From 2012 to 2020, emissions will rise from 578 million tonnes to 612 million tonnes per year.

I have spoken in this place before about the challenges my community faces, and the cost of living is always one of the first issues which is raised with me when I am out in my community. It comes as no surprise then that, in the context of this carbon tax debate, the rising cost of living has been on the minds of countless locals. Members of my community are wondering how they will keep up with the rising tide of the cost of living brought about by this new tax. At one of my recent listening posts, I had a young mum tell me that she was afraid to go to her letterbox because there just might be another electricity bill there. How is she, and the many like her, expected to cope with the rising cost of her electricity, her transport, her groceries, her rent, her water bills and her rates? The fear she expressed to me is justified. Based on the Labor government's own modelling, families will be hit with at least a $515 increase in their costs. This means a 10 per cent rise in electricity and a nine per cent rise in gas. And that $500-odd increase comes on top of a 50 per cent increase in electricity, a 46 per cent rise in water rates and a 20 per cent rise in rent since 2007.

The list of rising costs facing members of my community goes on. These costs, coupled with an extra tax, are pressures that families should not have to face. In introducing this new tax, the Labor Party has forgotten the challenges facing Australians and walked away from the very people they once claimed to represent. This Labor government is trying to impose a new tax which is going to hurt Australians. Then, at the height of insulting the people of Australia, this Labor government is dangling the promise of a handout. Well, I suggest that the Australian people deserve better. They deserve honesty. The Australian people are not fools. They know that you only compensate once you inflict pain, and the best thing that the government can do is: leave them alone. Do not invade their lives and inflict pain in the first place.

Recently I held a community forum in my electorate about the carbon tax with my friend and colleague the Leader of the Opposition. I was impressed by the quality of the questions, ideas and comments that people from my local community were able to contribute. The locals in my community do not want the political spin that this Labor government is serving up in the form of a carbon tax. They want to feel confident that their government is going to do the right thing by them—that it is not going to impose a tax which will see their household costs continue to go up and up and up. They want a government that makes their lives easier, not harder.

One of the attendees at the forum, Neil from Burpengary, asked, 'What will farmers do in the face of rising operating costs?' Farmers' profit margins are already slim and they are incapable of passing on their costs. My electorate is home to about 70 per cent of Queensland's strawberry farms, as well as to many other primary producers. I think Neil asked a valid question, and one which deserves a response from those members opposite. Are these farmers, these small business owners, expected to absorb the costs caused by this carbon tax—costs which they are unable to pass on and will not be compensated for?
The prospect for farmers, families and small businesses under this carbon tax is not an optimistic one. I am discouraged to think what the impact will be for many small businesses in my community whose overheads are already high and whose margins are low. I recently visited Atlas Heavy Engineering in Narangba with the shadow Treasurer, Joe Hockey, to hear their concerns about the impact of the carbon tax on their future. It is very concerning when a business such as Atlas Heavy Engineering, which employs over 65 locals, cannot be certain about exactly how the carbon tax will affect their prosperity and ongoing operations. Atlas is a great local business and electricity is its second highest cost. The general manager of Atlas, Mr Rex Vegt, said to me he is concerned because he just does not know how much this tax will cost Atlas. Atlas Heavy Engineering relies on two main resources, steel and electricity, both of which will be hit hard under the carbon tax. We know that the costs of these resources are going to up and up and up under this Labor government. Rex went on to point out that Atlas is a medium-sized business with a direct connection to the mining boom, a strong position compared to that of local small businesses, which will be hit hard under the carbon tax. While he was rightly worried about the business, he really feels for the small business owner and questions how they can possibly get ahead in an already difficult climate. This is a good question, one which has been frequently repeated by many of the small business owners in my electorate since the announcement of the Labor-Green government's carbon tax.

I have said in this place before that the economy in my community is dependent on small business, retail, tourism and light industry, all of which are dependent on confidence in the marketplace—confidence which is under attack by this Labor government. This tax is generating nothing but uncertainty. The only certainty is that the costs for businesses are going to go up and up and up. In introducing this, the Labor Party has again attacked what should be the engine room of the economy—small business. I have a simple challenge for those members opposite: go out into their communities and find one, just one, small business that will tell them that this carbon tax is going to make it easier for them to run their business; just one that will say it is going to make it easier for them to reduce their overheads and to employ people.

Madam Deputy Speaker, let me tell you another story of a local small business, Rangeland Quality Meats. Like many other small businesses, this butcher will be hit multiple times under the carbon tax: once in transporting stock from farm to abattoir, again in transporting meat from abattoir to store, and yet again with the refrigeration cost in store. The burden on small business in my electorate is enough. The last thing they need is more cost increases brought about by an unnecessary tax that will be completely ineffective for the environment. For many small businesses, a carbon tax will be the straw that breaks the camel's back.

In light of all of this, why is the government seeking to impose an economy-wide carbon tax? The Productivity Commission highlighted that 'no country currently imposes an economy-wide tax on greenhouse emissions or has in place an economy-wide ETS'. It is imperative that we as a nation consider what introducing this tax will do to our economy and our competitive advantage when compared with the rest of the world. This is a notion that was not lost on Penny Wong when she was climate change minister. As the minister said:
The introduction of a carbon tax ahead of effective international action can lead to perverse
incentives for such industries to relocate or source production offshore—

**Dr Leigh:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I raise a point of order. I know the member thinks respect is for other people but I ask that you ask him to refer to members here and in the other place by their official titles.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs D’Ath):** Noted, thank you. The member for Longman can ensure that he refers to members by their correct title.

**WYATT ROY:** I referred to the minister as the former climate change minister. She went on to say:

... and there is no point in imposing a carbon price domestically which results in emissions and production transferring internationally for no environmental gain.

These are not my words but the words of a current Labor government minister. If the Labor Party thought that this was such a good policy, why did they mislead the Australian people at the last election? The Treasurer and Deputy Prime Minister is recorded as saying:

... certainly what we rejected is this hysterical allegation that somehow we are moving towards a carbon tax ... We certainly reject that.

Well, under this carbon tax Australia will be at a competitive disadvantage to the world. Those causing the most pollution—China, India and the United States—have no plans to introduce economy-wide carbon taxes. Let us put this into perspective. Even if the carbon tax were 100 per cent effective, China’s increase in emissions until 2020, just the increase alone, would be 100 times larger than the maximum amount that we could hope to reduce our emissions by. Members opposite have held up the European Union’s emissions trading scheme as an example of what can be achieved. Yet the Australian Crime Commission has revealed that the European scheme has been rorted to the tune of $5 billion. That is not a model we need to emulate.

The Labor Party is embarking on a process that is more about wealth redistribution than environmentalism. The coalition has a plan, a direct action plan which is fully funded, which will not increase the burden on households, which is not going to unfairly increase the operating costs of small businesses and which will have a significant practical benefit for the environment. It is a plan that is costed and capped at $3.2 billion over the first four years.

We in the coalition are a party of action, of forward thinking and of practical solutions. Our solution is not to tax everyday Australians but to effectively and efficiently implement strategies which will deliver practical environmental action. Our plan will give Australians the chance to play their own part in positive change through direct action. It is a plan which will invest in solar renewable energies, green armies, an additional 20 million urban trees, soil carbon to replenish the land, cleaning up our dirtiest power stations and incentives for industries to reduce their emissions. Direct action will use incentives rather than penalties, funding the most cost efficient projects, staying within the government’s means.

In opposing the Labor government’s carbon tax, we on this side of the House are standing up for the locals in my electorate. We are standing up for those small businesses that will bear the brunt of this unfair tax. We are standing up for those families whose everyday costs are going to rise with this tax. In conclusion, I encourage those members opposite to also stand up for their communities and vote against this unfair carbon tax.

**Ms KATE ELLIS** (Adelaide—Minister for Employment Participation and Childcare)
and Minister for the Status of Women) (11:06): I rise to support the clean energy package before the parliament. I know that it has not been without its controversy and certainly not without misinformation from those who seek to stand in its way, but I am proud to stand here today showing my support for re-election on the critical issue of human induced climate change. In all of the three elections that I have contested to represent the very good folk of Adelaide I have made clear a commitment that I would fight to ensure that Australia meets our responsibility on climate change—a responsibility that we have to the environment, a responsibility that we have to the economy and a responsibility that we have in this nation's long-term interests. Whilst this is complex in the detail in other ways, there is actually a very simple principle behind the determining positions on this debate. If one believes in climate change and believes that we need to act to address it then the only outcome is to support the measures before the House in this bill. We can all see that, for far too long, as a parliament we have argued, procrastinated and delayed. This cannot be allowed to continue indefinitely. Carbon pricing and climate change policy have been debated widely in this country for literally decades now, including through a staggering 35 parliamentary committees and inquiries on that topic.

We argued for far too long about ratifying the Kyoto protocol. Eventually we got to the point where John Howard himself concluded that pricing carbon was the best approach and proposed an emissions trading scheme. Following our government's election in 2007, we worked long and hard, in consultation with the opposition, to form a bipartisan agreement on a carbon pricing mechanism, the CPRS. After detailed negotiations—and hard work by many on both sides of the House, I would add—we reached an agreement on the package, but of course we all know what happened next. Having struck this agreement about how to move our country forward on this terribly important issue, the coalition decided to split, to roll their leader over the issue by a single vote, to move in the opposite direction with the election of the member for Warringah as their leader, and to commence their now well-established routine of just saying no to anything that goes before the House.

Despite this, our hard work has soldiered on. Following an election where it became clear that no party had the numbers on the floor of this parliament to pass their climate change policy, we determined that the issue was too important and had been delayed for far too long, and we set out to work on a bipartisan position. So we established the multiparty climate change working group, which the coalition opted to sit out on. This multiparty group has worked hard, has consulted widely, has heard from experts and has come up with the package that we see before the parliament today. This is a good package, and it is one that we must act on now; we must not waste yet another parliamentary term.

Since the announcement of the package, I have had many discussions with families in the electorate of Adelaide about what the carbon price means for them. Most people that I have spoken to do support action on climate change. They believe the science and they expect their government to do something about it. They want a better, cleaner future for their children and grandchildren. What they do not want is misinformation and trash talk. The people of Adelaide, who I am so proud to represent, want to understand these proposals. They want to understand the package and how it
will work. They want the facts. They do not want a scare campaign.

I think it is important to spend a moment outlining these facts. A broad-based carbon price is the most environmentally effective and cheapest way to reduce pollution. A carbon price will put a price tag on that carbon pollution so that the 500 most polluting companies in our country will have to pay for each tonne of pollution they release into the atmosphere, not individuals. This establishes a strong disincentive to pollute and subsequently a strong incentive for companies to invest in cleaner technologies and innovate with new operating approaches and less carbon pollution.

Whilst it is these companies who pay and not individuals, of course we realise that some of them may pass this on by increasing their prices. It is for this reason, and to meet modest impacts on costs, that the government is providing fair and generous household assistance, with tax cuts, higher family payments and increases in pensions and benefits that will see nine out of 10 households receive assistance.

These bills allow for a fixed-charge period to provide stability and predictability, allowing businesses to get used to a new system and start planning on how they will reduce their pollution. This fixed charge of $23 a tonne in July 2012 will move automatically to a flexible and market-driven approach from July 2015. From then on the market will set the price of carbon and businesses will be able to buy and sell the right to pollute under an emissions trading scheme, as long proposed by members of both sides of this House.

As was made abundantly clear by the independent Climate Commission, the case for taking action on climate change is very real. In fact, the evidence that the world is getting warmer is unequivocal. The decade from 2001 to 2010 was the warmest on record, and here in Australia every single decade since the 1940s has been warmer than the last. There is a clear consensus amongst climate scientists that human activity is causing climate change and that we need to act, and we need to act now, to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions or risk the incredibly serious side effects of dangerous climate change. Australia is a hot and dry continent, and we face risks of climate change above and beyond much of the rest of the world. Research from the CSIRO, the Bureau of Meteorology and the Australian Academy of Science all tells us that we must act to urgently reduce carbon pollution in order to reduce the impact on our planet.

This package will assist with these environmental challenges. The carbon price will see Australia's annual emissions reduced by at least 159 million tonnes in 2020 from where they would otherwise have been. To put this in context, this is the equivalent to taking around 45 million cars off the road. By 2050 we will have taken over 17 billion tonnes of carbon pollution from the atmosphere. Treasury modelling shows that the incentive for business to innovate will be significant. With a carbon price, Treasury says it is likely that by 2050 $100 billion will have been invested in renewable energy and over 40 per cent of Australia's electricity generation will come from renewables.

Australia has an opportunity to move to a clean energy future and cut pollution now before that task becomes even more difficult and more costly. These are the realities. These are the very simple facts of the matter.

I know that there are some climate change sceptics on that side. They have made that clear, and I had the pleasure—or displeasure—of listening to one proudly stand and boast about that yesterday. But what I find most disgusting is that I know
that, in addition to the sceptics, there are some opposite who know that climate change is real. They know that we need to act, but they are failing to stand up and be counted on the right side of history. What I find disgusting is that instead they stand parroting the 34 pages of misinformation and falsehoods that the opposition have now been publicly exposed as encouraging their members to stand and deliver in this parliament and the misinformation they are being encouraged to spread in their own communities. They stand side by side with the radical fringe groups who are intent on arguing that scientists and economists have all got it wrong, whilst they know that this is real and that action is required. They do this because they see it all as a game. They see what we are doing here in the parliament as a game and, like the Leader of the Opposition, that it is much easier in this political game to just say no. This is not about games. This is about standing up to our responsibility; this is about reaching the responsibility that we owe to the people who elect us to this place.

Similarly to climate scientists, economists have made clear the case for immediate action on climate change and, indeed, the hefty costs of inaction. Treasury have undertaken extensive modelling on the economic impacts of pricing carbon and have concluded in that 'the world and Australia can significantly reduce the risks of dangerous climate change and maintain robust economic growth'. More particularly, they have warned that 'delaying action increases the risks and costs of achieving any given environmental goal'.

A lot has been said about jobs in this debate. There has been some disgusting misinformation and there has been shameful scaremongering of Australian workers. Let's talk about jobs. On this side of the House, we are proud to stand by our record on this topic. More than 750,000 jobs have been created since we came to office and now we have an unemployment rate which is the envy of much of the world. This was also the case throughout the global financial crisis. We are a Labor government, and keeping ordinary Australians in work will always be a key priority for us.

The government recognises that the transformation of the economy to a clean energy future presents both opportunities and challenges for industry. Through our Jobs and Competitiveness Program we will support jobs in high-polluting industries with competitors in countries where those industries are not yet subject to comparable carbon constraints. Increased government investment in clean technology will also support manufacturers to make investments in the innovative energy-efficient producing technologies of the future. This in turn will support the creation of new jobs in these cleaner and more efficient industries.

Modelling makes clear that under a carbon price the economy grows, jobs grow and income grows, all whilst we are serving our environmental interests and standing up to the responsibility we have to future generations. In fact, modelling shows that an extra 1.5 million jobs will be created in Australia under this carbon pricing scheme, so how about we lay off on the scare campaigns and grasp the opportunity that we now have to ensure that our nation is at the forefront of job creation in a new age with new industries.

On a final matter, as Minister for the Status of Women, I of course have a particular interest in the economic security of Australian women. We know that the majority of income support recipients and age pensioners in this country are women. These women will be provided with direct financial assistance which will cover more than 100 per cent of their expected costs
under a carbon price. Secondly, and perhaps most significantly, the carbon pollution package not only covers the impacts of any cost increases but also includes tax reforms, which will be particularly important for people working part time or hoping to enter or re-enter the workforce. This is particularly good news for women, especially those with caring responsibilities who will be encouraged to join the workforce.

Changes to the tax-free threshold will benefit 3.7 million women with taxable incomes under $80,000, with most receiving a tax cut of $300 per year. These tax reforms will be particularly significant for women who work part time. The tax-free threshold will be more than trebled to $18,200 in 2012-13. Together with the $445 of low-income tax offset, this means that women who earn up to $20,542 per year will pay absolutely no tax. They will keep everything they earn. This is true of these Australian women workers but, of course, it is true of all Australian low-paid workers who fit this category. In fact, half a million people will go from having to pay tax to paying no tax at all as a result of the package of reforms before the House today. They are important environmental reforms but they are also important economic reforms. Of those half a million people who will go from having to pay tax to paying no tax at all as a result of this package, 300,000 are Australian women, and we are working hard to encourage their increased participation in the workplace. Forty-four per cent of taxpayers are women, but sixty per cent of the people who will get this tax cut are women. This is tax reform for working women and women who want to work more, but it is also a tax reform for our national interest, knowing that we need to work to boost participation and increase the number of women participating in the workforce.

I am proud to support action on climate change. I am proud to be a part of a reformist government. I am proud that we are fronting up to our obligations to act for the economy, the environment and the national interest. I am proud that we are standing up and putting facts on the record rather than running around with misinformation and scare campaigns about people's jobs and cost of living increases. The shameful thing is that it has been pointed out to those opposite that they are knowingly spreading misinformation. That is something that we on this side of the House will never do. In fact, we will front up to our responsibility to act now and act for future generations. I urge all members to support these bills and real action on climate change. (Time expired)

Mr WYATT (Hasluck) (11:21): I rise to speak on the Clean Energy Bill 2011 and related bills. The speech of the member for Adelaide was interesting, because it is our responsibility as members of this House to debate issues when they impact significantly on all Australians, families and individuals. There must always be the opportunity to look at the elements that are constructive within legislation but also the elements that have flow-on, consequential outcomes that we do not plan for. What disturbs me is the number of bills that have been introduced into this House and rammed through this parliament. I do not think that there would be too many members of this House who have read each of the bills thoroughly. If it were the case that the coalition had force-fed its members with a set of fact sheets in order to deliver speeches, it would not be dissimilar to the case of government members. It would be an interesting test to see how many members have read every one of the bills thoroughly and understood them.

Mr Champion: How many people read Work Choices? How many people read that? No, you don't want to talk about that.
Mr WYATT: We are talking about the carbon tax, not Work Choices. Work Choices is dead and buried. But prior to the 2010 federal election the Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, stated the following, clearly and concisely, as an election promise to Australians: 'There will be no carbon tax under the government I lead.' Prior to the 2010 federal election Treasurer Wayne Swan stated the following as an election promise, again clearly and concisely:

No, it's not possible that we're bringing in the carbon tax. That is an hysterically inaccurate claim being made by the coalition.

Isn't it interesting to hear members of the government now using that as the antithesis for our debating the points of concern around this legislation? The Labor Party under Julia Gillard's leadership was elected in August 2010 on the basis of the promise not to introduce a carbon tax, but in February 2011 Prime Minister Gillard announced that a carbon tax would be introduced in Australia by June 2012, despite her very plain pre-election promise not to do so.

In a speech at an AiG luncheon on 6 February 2008, former Minister for Climate Change and Water, Penny Wong, stated:

The introduction of a carbon price ahead of effective international action can lead to perverse incentives for such industries to relocate or source production offshore. There is no point in imposing a carbon price domestically which results in emissions and production transferring internationally for no environmental gain.

Time and time again we have heard references to the government's own documents that showed we will not get the emission reductions that they purport to be able to achieve. Senator Wong admitted that imposing a carbon tax would encourage or force industries to go offshore, losing Australia's valuable resources and creating unemployment. The government's former climate change minister also admitted to the Australian newspaper on 23 February 2009 that a carbon tax:

…is a recipe for abrupt and unpredictable changes, as the government would need to adjust the tax frequently to try to meet the emissions reduction target, each time subjecting these adjustments to the inherent uncertainties embedded in the political process.

She went on to say:

A carbon tax does not guarantee emissions reductions.

Her admissions prove that the government has known for some time that a carbon tax is not really the way to guarantee the reduction of emissions. Therefore, in my mind it has only one other purpose, and that is to raise revenue for the government. It is more than obvious that the carbon tax is really a scam to fleece the Australian public of billions of dollars, with no guarantee that the emissions will be reduced because of it.

When I read through the Clean Energy Bill—and I read it from cover to cover and found it fascinating—I found some areas I would like to debate in the future. The objects of the act are to give effect to Australia's obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, a document which sets out the premise for carbon emission reductions in UN member nations, and the Kyoto protocol.

When you read through it, it is a very interesting document. Having it enshrined in domestic legislation means it now applies within Australia. The bill puts a price on greenhouse gas emissions in a way that encourages investment in clean energy and supports jobs, competitiveness in the economy and Australia's economic growth, while reducing pollution.

The United Nations framework is fascinating, because it talks about the parties to this convention. It says:
Noting that there are many uncertainties in predictions of climate change, particularly with regard to the timing, magnitude and regional patterns thereof …

… … …

The Parties should take precautionary measures to anticipate, prevent or minimize the causes of climate change and mitigate its adverse effects.

That mitigation would apply equally to a number of other factors. Instead of ramming through legislation without proper debate that would allow its examination to occur—

Mr Champion: It was 20 years ago.

Mr Wyatt: It does not matter whether it was 20 years ago or not. You have an obligation to the constituents in your electorate to be open and honest with them. The convention goes on to say:

Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty—

and this is interesting—

should not be used as a reason for postponing such measures …

It is fascinating that you have a scientific argument but you say that 'in the times of uncertainty' you are prepared to proceed and not hear the opposing views. In the science field there are many on both sides who have the logic of argument for the basis of why there should or should not be a carbon tax. People who challenge the views of those who are proponents are called either 'flat earthers', like Al Gore did in the lead-up to his election campaign and certainly in his current role of creating a fear campaign around the globe, or 'climate deniers', as members of government would say when people raise issues. It is scary within a democracy that we try to shut down debate because a philosophical position of a government prevails over the top of further debate within our society.

Mr Champion: Read some more emails! See who is trying to shut down the debate!

Mr Wyatt: I do not have to read any more. It is important that you also do some reading. The convention continues:

… taking into account that policies and measures to deal with climate change should be cost-effective so as to ensure global benefits at the lowest possible cost.

It also says:

Take climate change considerations into account, to the extent feasible, in their relevant social, economic and environmental policies and actions, and employ appropriate methods, for example impact assessments, formulated and determined nationally, with a view to minimizing adverse effects on the economy, on public health and on the quality of the environment, of projects or measures undertaken by them to mitigate or adapt to climate change.

Our solution? The Labor-Greens government has no mandate to introduce the carbon tax legislation, and the coalition will oppose carbon tax legislation every step of the way. Our position is clear: we will vote against the carbon tax legislation to ensure that the measured debate that needs to occur happens.

I want to reflect on my father's comments. He always said to me the Labor Party looks after the working man and the working family.

Mr Champion: He was right. You should have listened.

Mr Wyatt: He was right in that era and in that period. What I see now are members on the other side who are not prepared to stand up for the families within their electorates and defend them against a tax that has a cascading flow-on effect. Maybe in the past they did, but the Gillard government does not, and it has demonstrated that in this debate.

The carbon tax will mean $9 billion in a new tax year and a 10 per cent hike in electricity bills in the first year alone. I have people in my electorate who will feel the
impact of that measure whereby they will not use that electricity. There will be a nine per cent hike in gas bills in the first year alone, higher marginal tax rates for low- and middle-income earners and a $4.3 billion hit on the budget bottom line. Who pays for this? Not members of the government but individuals and families of Australia.

I also want to express my concern that the tax cuts and cash grants are inevitably subject to the vagaries of annual budgets and, therefore, are always at risk. Additionally, I am more a supporter of direct action to improve engineering and procedure practices of pollution sources as more reliable and permanent methods of producing solutions. Some of my constituents—I have had a lot—stop me in the street. I have never had this experience of people walking up in droves, saying, 'Get rid of this tax.' I want to cite three of my constituents.

I would love to know how I can help stop this Carbon Tax.

Another:

I wish to register my disagreement with the carbon tax, which I do not believe our current government has a mandate to introduce. I have emailed the Prime Minister my concern along the same lines … Please voice my concern against this tax.

Another:

I will be ineligible for any type of compensation under the proposed new carbon tax scheme. I am already struggling to pay ever-increasing electricity bills. I cannot afford solar panels or other expensive green gadgets to cut energy consumption. I have a heart condition that requires me to use air conditioning in summer, but I will no longer be able to afford it—thanks to this government.

This is Business Voice now. I have been talking to small businesses.

The worst thing about it is that there are no proven facts that is going to change anything. I am keen to help the environment but not to be the only country in the world that is taking these steps. Costs are high enough running a business. We have a lot of staff here and we want to move on past the GFC, not go backwards.

That is from Michael Roberts, the Centre Manager of Pirtek Fluid Transfer Solutions in Midland. Another group says:

We are a group of hardworking people who believe the carbon tax is a tax on both businesses and the people in them. We do not want bigger Government to re-distribute wealth in the name of the environment. We feel this tax is a front to fund an ideology, with no material benefit to the environment. We run a flourishing recycling business which we formed and funded to assist the environment, and we did not ask others to pay for it, based on our ideologies. Care of the environment is a science not a religion.

That is from Damien Cole of the Damien Cole Group in South Guildford. Another says:

I do not like to be negative and I've always believed in attacking the job and not the person. I travel over sea's several times a year mostly to China and India. I tell myself these places are humanity out of control and the planet cannot sustain this grow, more and more people relying on less and less people to grow their food. I believe all of us need to be accountable for the life we live.

This applies to carbon emissions and the Gillard Government proposal is fundamentally flawed by just penalizing a few big companies and cooking the books to show how it will financially viable for everyone. I believe we all should be accountable for the carbon emissions not just a few big companies. If everyone is accountable for reducing carbon emissions then it is logical that one simple law effecting everyone will change everyone's outlook, which will automatically control the big polluters.

If we are not all held accountable there will always be an excuse why it's someone else's problem. If Australia set a simple effective template on carbon control for everyone to embrace, then the worlds big countries and polluters will hopefully follow.
That was John Power, the Managing Director of Equipment Search Proprietary Limited at Maddington. Another says:

The Carbon Tax will just be used by the Prime Minister to redistribute money to people three months before the election to buy votes. It will have no positive impact on the environment, but the companies affected will just pass on their costs and many smaller businesses will take advantage of this and increase their prices. All this for no real impact on the environment.

That is Ian Lavington, Managing Director at Hydraulic Resource at Bellevue. Jarrod Hewitt at Stihl Shop Midland also registers his opposition to the carbon tax this morning.

When I visit shopping centres and people in the streets, they all say there is a need for debate. They cannot comprehend how this government is so keen to ram this legislation through the House. What I see, fundamentally, is cascading taxes in the way in which we pour champagne into a stack of glasses and watch the flow-on effect of the champagne from that top glass down to the others. I have within my electorate families who will suffer under this taxing regime. They already struggle now.

I do not think there is any member in government who would go without food at any time on any day or have to relinquish the opportunity of buying medications and the necessities of life like I see families do in my electorate. I will continue to champion and advocate for families who will be affected by this tax. I will continue to debate it as long as I need to in order to protect their interests and give them the quality of life that they richly deserve. (Time expired)

Mr CHAMPION (Wakefield) (11:36): I listened very carefully to the member for Hasluck and have rarely heard a more confusing speech. One minute he is talking about cascading champagne and, the next minute, the great concern for the poor. It is a very strange speech. One minute he is saying there has been plenty of debate and, the next, we are trying to close down debate. There have been 20 years of debate in this House and in the community. Of course he would not remember the debate we had in the previous parliament. He would not remember a very good speech made by the member for Wentworth. He should go have a look at that speech. It was a very good speech from when he crossed the floor—and exceptionally good speech, actually. I will talk a bit about that later. The choice before the country is basically whether we are going to have practical solutions to practical problems or whether we are going to resort to absolutism and the politics of extremism and delay. As I said before, we have had 20 years of talking about this issue and having bills before this House in the last parliament. It was debated extensively. We had contested debates. We had passionate debates. We have had 20 years of talk, committee reports and parliamentary inquiries.

There are piles and piles of information out there in the public sphere and lots of debate in the community and that is a good thing. But what we do know, what the government knows and what members of the opposition know, if they cared to look at this problem and examine those reports and evidence, is that climate change is a problem. I referred to a speech given by the member for Wentworth on 8 February 2010. It was a very good speech, a passionate speech, a decent speech and a speech that showed a great deal of courage. It is a very hard thing to do, to say to your party they are wrong. It is a very hard thing to do on the floor of the House of Representatives. This is what the member for Wentworth said last year:

Climate change is the ultimate long-term problem. We have to make decisions today, bear costs today so that adverse consequences are avoided, dangerous consequences are avoided many decades into the future. It is always easy to
argue we should do nothing, or little or postpone action.

That is what the member for Wentworth said last year.

We know that in previous incarnations the opposition and indeed the Liberal Party in government embraced emissions trading schemes. Prime Minister John Howard said in a release on 21 October 2007:

This year, the Government decided to implement a national emissions trading scheme, to commence no later than 2012. It will be the most comprehensive scheme in the world.

That was John Howard's commitment in 2007 to the Australian people and we know that that was matched by the opposition. This was a matter of bipartisanship. It was a matter of consensus. We know that we had a degree, at one point or another, of consensus about how to deal with this problem. It was a practical problem to be dealt with through a practical solution—emissions trading, a market based system.

We know that we have choices. We know that we have the choice to do nothing. We have the choice of public subsidies, which is the opposition's current problem. It is $3 billion to deal with a problem that many of them do not think exists. We have the option of dead hand regulation or we have the market based mechanism. we know that market based mechanisms are the best way of rewarding efficiency, of allocating risk and of getting the job done. We know that because there have been cap-in-trade systems in the United States, and I have talked about this in other speeches, to deal with the elimination of leaded petrol and to deal with acid rain. Cap-in-trade systems have already worked. We know that is the best way to go.

We talked a bit about the speech made in contribution to this debate by the member for Hasluck. He used a whole lot of language like 'scams' and whether or not emissions trading would work and said it 'won't do anything' and he talked about wealth redistribution. You have to wonder what drives these sorts of speeches. They have moved so far from the Shergold report, from Howard and from Turnbull. They have moved so far from that rational, basic thinking. They have moved so far away from that public policy framework. You have to wonder what drives it.

Conservatives around the world, including Prime Minister Cameron of the United Kingdom, have praised the carbon trading system. A letter was written to Prime Minister Gillard saying that they praised our approach to dealing with carbon. So you have to wonder what has driven this approach and change of emphasis in the opposition. It is rank opportunism. What we have seen is a desperate opposition, desperate to get into government and desperate to run a fear campaign for their own base political desire to get into office. People listening can say that all politicians are driven by that desire but it is not in the national interest to always be driven by votes. That is basically why they are running this fear campaign: 'The sky is going to fall', 'There is going to be a massive cost' and 'It is a great revenue churn.' That is what you hear from those opposite.

What is perhaps more concerning than that fear campaign—which is not based on fact but rather on fiction—is the assault on science and the assault on experts and this constant criticism and assertion that somehow we are trying to shut down debate. We have had 20 years of debate. We live in a free country. We have had rallies out the front. We have had many programs in the public sphere about the science. There has been a lot of questioning and rigor put upon that science. You just wonder what drives it.
It is evident what drives it, and I spoke about this in previous speeches. Last year we had Lord Monckton come and spread his particular brand of corrupted science around the country. We had him meeting with the member for Warringah. We knew that drove a lot of the email campaigns and we understand that changed Tony Abbott's position. We know that on 12 December 2009 Tony Abbott said, 'The argument on climate change is absolute crap.' We know that on 27 July 2009 he said, 'We can't conclusively say whether man-made carbon dioxide emissions are contributing to climate change.' We know that he previously said, 'I think the science behind the policy is contentious to say the least.' We know that on 27 July 2009 he said, 'I am, as you know, hugely unconvinced by the so-called settled science on climate change.' In the Herald Sun on 5 January 2010 he said:

And it seems that notwithstanding the dramatic increases in man-made CO₂ emissions over the last decade, the world’s warming has stopped.

We have had this constant assault on science. We have seen it in his language and his statements to the media. We know that many on the other side of the chamber question the science. Nobody is debating their right to do so but one has to question why they have adopted the same target for carbon emissions as the government. One has to question why they are going to spend $3 billion on their direct action plan. We have heard very little about direct action in this place. There have been oblique or passing references to it.

This is not a contest, as I said before, about practical solutions for practical problems; rather it is just rhetoric from the other side for rhetoric's sake. They come into this place and they attack and attack. They spend barely any time on their plan because they know it will not work and it will cost a lot. When you get right down to it it is a fig leaf to cover their extremism. We know that this extremism within the Liberal Party is being driven by the email campaigns of those on the far Right.

But for the internet, these people would be sitting in a log cabin somewhere waiting for the United Nations to invade or waiting for whatever conspiracy they think is going to unfold before them. The language of many of these people is very similar to the language of the member for Hasluck. The Galileo Movement is out there saying that carbon pricing is one big scam somehow to impose communist government on this country or that it is one big scam to embrace some sort of wealth transfer.

And then there is this revolting campaign against science and scientists. We had the Four Corners program last Monday night, where Professor Ian Chubb and Professor Will Steffen talked about the emails that they get, including death threats and abusive emails. I will not read them out in the House because they involve fairly extreme statements and threats. You have to wonder what drives people to send those to scientists. It is one thing to have a crack at politicians; it is another thing entirely to try to worry scientists and prevent them from doing their jobs in research and communicating that research to the public.

On that Four Corners program one scientist who was visiting this country, Professor John Schellnhuber, was addressing a climate conference in July. A protestor—a demonstrator—got up. No-one is complaining about the right to demonstrate but the protestor got up and presented a noose to a scientist at a conference. You have to worry about the state of our democracy when that happens in our country. Presenting a noose to someone is a threat. This is something that has been completely absent from Australian public life.
It is a disgrace that that happened and it is a worry that that happened. It is all being driven, I think, by the importation of extremism from other parts of the world. We have seen politicians encouraging this and importing these techniques from the far Right in the United States of America. Senator Bernardi is one of those people. He has been exposed as doing this through Menzies House. He calls it activism but, let's face it, it is all about the embrace of extremism. If you are in the Liberal Party you should be very concerned that people are moving slowly but surely away from John Howard's moderation and away from Malcolm Turnbull's moderation—their commitment to markets—to this bizarre ideology of being fearful of the world, fearful of international cooperation and fearful of markets. And because of that fear people are willing to allege treason, to present nooses, and to issue threats and they underpin all of this with a sense of absolutism and extremism.

I think those opposite need to move back to the moderation of John Howard and the Shergold report. They need to move back to Malcolm Turnbull's great speech to this House defending an emissions trading system. It is all about practical solutions for practical problems. We have had 20 years of debate; it is about time we actually implemented our plans. Too many times in this parliament the emissions trading scheme and strong environmental laws have been frustrated by the politics of extremists—extremists on the far Right, who want to delay and prevent this scheme, and extremists on the far Left, who believe it does not meet some 110 per cent principle.

This government is about doing things. We are going to implement this practical solution to a practical problem. I think that on 1 July next year everybody will shrug their shoulders and just get on with a prosperous economy and an increasingly efficient and green society and economy.

**Mr VASTA** (Bonner) (11:51): I rise today to speak on the Clean Energy Future package of bills otherwise known as the carbon tax legislation. Labor's proposed carbon tax is neither logical nor fair. After all, what could possibly be logical or fair about yet another massive new tax which has dubious impacts on the very thing it is trying to mitigate—Australia's carbon emissions? The fact that we are even debating this piece of legislation in the House, when the Prime Minister herself declared, 'There will be no carbon tax under the government I lead,' is laughable. But I cannot find it in myself to laugh when the Labor Prime Minister of this country shamefully broke her election promise to my constituents. When reflecting on Labor's horrendous financial record and abject policy failures, it is little wonder that the people of Australia are genuinely scared that Labor wants to rush through some of the most structurally complex tax changes this country has ever seen. Labor knows this tax is not good for Australia. Labor knows that this tax is not the answer to climate change and that they are trying to avoid scrutiny by rushing through ill-conceived, reactionary legislation in this House.

I want to make it clear from the onset that this debate is not about being a climate change sceptic or believer. For the record I think that we can all agree that there is an overconsumption of resources on this planet that cannot be sustained in the long term. Rather I believe that this debate is about whether or not a massive new tax is really in Australia's best interest, especially when considering Labor's own admission that this carbon tax will actually see carbon emissions continue to rise. Penny Wong, as the Labor climate change minister, admitted:

A Carbon Tax does not guarantee emissions reductions.
I want to thank Penny for her honesty.

The carbon tax has been introduced by a government in turmoil, with no handle on reality of what the people of Australia want or need. This tax has been introduced by a Labor government who knows that a referendum on this matter would have shown decisively that the people and businesses of Australia do not want this tax and, more importantly, simply cannot afford this tax. How do I know this to be true? Because poll after poll has proven unequivocally that this is the case.

In my home state of Queensland, which will be one of the hardest-hit states by Labor's carbon tax, businesses and individuals are deeply concerned. For example, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland recently undertook a survey of over 750 Queensland businesses in order to gauge an understanding of how Queensland businesses feel they will be affected by Labor's carbon tax. The results are staggering but certainly not surprising. Nearly 90 per cent of Queensland businesses—I am going to have to repeat that, 90 per cent—believe that a carbon pricing mechanism or carbon tax will have a negative impact on their business.

This is not some insignificant survey to be easily dismissed. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland is the peak business organisation in Queensland, representing the interests of 25,000 businesses and 135 chambers of commerce across the state. Their findings are in black and white. There is virtually no support by Queensland businesses for Labor's carbon pricing mechanism. The survey also reports the Queensland businesses are deeply concerned that a carbon tax will profoundly increase the cost of running their businesses, that resulting higher electricity costs will make them uncompetitive in an international market, and that they will be unable to maintain current employment levels. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland summarised their report succinctly:

... the reality is that a price on carbon is little more than a multi billion dollar new tax that would decrease Queensland and Australian businesses competitiveness and the incentive to invest and provide jobs.

Nowhere is this more evident than at the Visy recycling centre at my electorate of Bonner. The plant at Murarrie is one of Australia's largest recycling companies, undertaking very important work. For every tonne of carbon emissions this plant produces it saves 1.6 tonnes. So although this plant does emit carbon, net emissions are reduced because of its work. Despite its highly significant contribution to reducing carbon emissions, the Brisbane Visy plant will become one of the many victims of this government's perverse environmental policy. By taxing this plant, emissions will not decrease but it will be severely strained financially and in doing so this tax will no doubt place jobs in my electorate in jeopardy. Visy employs around 200 people. Future expansion at this vital facility has now been put in jeopardy by Labor's tax. I believe the government policy should be to encourage the expansion of recycling operations, not hinder the good work that plants like this do in reducing emissions. Visy is just one of the many examples I could give you in my electorate. So much for Labor's assurances that only the big polluters will play.

This is not just businesses who are filled with trepidation about this tax. In my seat of Bonner my office has been inundated with constituents who have literally begged me to fight against the imposition of this tax. Bonner is a snapshot of middle Australia. The demographics range from young
professionals, growing families and a higher than average number of retired or semiretired people. This translates to precisely the demographic which will be adversely affected most by this toxic carbon tax. My constituency is already labouring under the yoke of consecutive budget deficits and crippling government debt. Families are working overtime to meet the increasing costs of living alongside higher mortgage repayments. Overwhelmingly, the response of my constituents in Bonner, since talk of this carbon tax has emerged, is that the Labor government is out of touch with everyday people. Only a government who is out of touch with the realities of working families would inflict a tax which would see a blow of $515 a year to the family budget. Bear in mind that this is just the first year alone. It can only go up from there and continue to go up. After all, as Labor has admitted, if the carbon tax doesn't hurt, it won't work. The kind of people that it will hurt the most are the people of Bonner.

The carbon tax's assault on households' bottom line does not stop there. The Australian Food and Grocery Council already estimate that the carbon tax will add $120 a year to household grocery bills, three times Labor's estimate of $40. Families in Cannon Hill can expect to see prices rise for household necessities, rise due to the costs that will be passed on from the manufacture. National electricity prices have soared by about 50 per cent since 2007 alone. This outrageous tax will also see electricity prices rise by at least another 10 per cent. How can working families who are already under tremendous pressure cope with this? The reality is that the Labor government wants to make the cost of electricity so expensive that people will not be able to warm their homes in winter or cool them in summer. Gas prices have already increased by 30 per cent since 2007. The carbon tax will see gas prices rise by an extra nine per cent. Bonner residents will not escape paying for this tax.

This is a prime example of how the legislation will work: changing consumer behaviour by hiking up the price of goods and services so we use them less and so reduce emissions. As I have said, this tax is not fair and it is not logical. Forget homely comforts. Labor believes that you are not entitled to them. The simple fact is that this tax raises $9 billion a year which will ultimately be paid by consumers.

That brings us to the crux of the matter. Labor's carbon tax fails to take into account basic business principles. It is a fact that those forced to pay the carbon tax will simply pass the extra costs down the supply chain, ending up in a grocery store in Wynnum and at a local fuel station in Carindale. It is simple economics. Not so for the Labor government. This is a government that does not understand how to run the Australian economy, a government that has already plunged Australia into historic debt levels. There are numerous unanswered questions floating around about the carbon tax, but I suggest the most important question that Labor must answer is: why us? Why Australia? Where is the sense in Australia, who only contributes 1.4 per cent of total global carbon emissions, leading the way when the rest of the world has overwhelmingly rejected the Australian model of a deep, punitive carbon tax? If the three largest emitters in the world—China, India and the United States—are not about to adopt a carbon tax or an equivalent system, it can be likened to Australia buying shout after shout of drinks at the pub with no-one else paying for a round. Our efforts would be futile unless the major emitters take comparable action to reduce their emissions. The failed Copenhagen negotiations demonstrate that there is no international
agreement and such an agreement may never be possible.

We need not look further than China to put the matter into stark perspective. Between 2005 and 2020, Chinese carbon emissions will increase by 496 per cent while Australia reduces its emissions by five per cent. Playing on a seesaw in a playground is no fun when the person on the other end weighs 90 times as much as you do. Labor’s carbon tax will be the harshest in the world but will achieve no tangible environmental benefits. There are far more effective ways of reducing Australia’s emissions without compromising Australia’s future. I fully support the coalition’s direct action plan, which is costed, capped and fully funded. Our plan ensures that the government lives within its means. It will not hurt the hip pocket of Australian families or cost Australian jobs.

In conclusion, this tax is a proverbial wolf in sheep's clothing. It masquerades as a panacea for the environment when it is really an unwarranted tax which will devastate jobs, ruin industries and ravage our economy. The Prime Minister of this country has no mandate to impose this tax. She broke her promise and, in doing so, she wilfully betrayed the Australian people by denying them their right to have their say on the carbon tax. Households and businesses in Bonner will be amongst the hardest hit by Labor’s carbon tax, which will literally increase the cost of everything regardless of the false promises made by Labor to the people of Bonner. The reality is that every community group, every business, every family and every individual will pay and continue to pay the carbon tax as industry and business pass the cost on to consumers. I want the manufacturers, retailers, business individuals and families who have raised serious concerns with me about the impact of this tax to know that I have listened to them, and that is why today I speak against the imposition of a carbon tax.

Mr MELHAM (Banks) (12:02): The Parliament House website provides a definition of Australian government. The Australian Parliament consists of three elements which make Australia a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy. The definition then outlines the five important functions of parliament:

- to provide for the formation of a government;
- to legislate;
- to provide the funds needed for government;
- to provide a forum for popular representation; and
- to scrutinise the actions of government.

It is important today for us to revisit the functions of the parliament, given its current state. Consider the last of the five functions—to scrutinise the actions of government. This is the role of an opposition: to provide an alternative to government actions or policies. In this capacity the opposition scrutinises the government and seeks to hold them accountable for their decisions. I have served both in government and in opposition. Never in all those years have I experienced the vitriolic and disingenuous attacks orchestrated by this opposition. Worse, the attacks are destructive, not constructive, as the Westminster tradition would have it. Of course the opposition must fulfil its role to question and to probe government policies. It would not be doing its job if it did not do so. This parliament has a history of robust and healthy debate, as it should. House of Representatives Practice 5th edition, chapter 2 states:

The Opposition is an important component in the structure of the House and is considered to be essential for the proper working of democratic government and the parliamentary process in the Westminster system.
The critical question today is not whether the coalition is in its rights to oppose the government but how the opposition opposes. There we have our dilemma. Let me outline one of the myths being perpetuated by this opposition, who are insisting that the clean energy future legislation is being 'rushed' through the parliament. What rubbish!

The Multi-Party Climate Change Committee was established on 29 September 2010 and held its first meeting on 7 October 2010. The opposition, as we all know, chose not to participate. A series of meetings was held in most months between then and May this year to develop the framework for a carbon price. The final agreement was released on 10 July 2011. So for a year the opposition had the opportunity to participate. If we accept the fact that they did not participate to make a political point, they still had access to the communiques to keep an eye on how the agreement was progressing.

On 28 July, the Treasurer, together with the Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, released the exposure drafts of the key bills in the government's clean energy legislative package. They sought submissions from the public. The bills were finally introduced into the parliament on 12 September. To any reasonable person, on any reasonable test, this is not 'rushing'. As shadow minister for justice and customs, I recall being sent complex bills dealing with national security at 9 pm one night—these were the terrorism bills—with the instruction that they were to be debated at 9.30 the next morning. That is rushing. I recall saying to the parliament on 13 March 2002:

The Howard government tabled these bills right after the dinner break last night. They delivered 119 pages of legislation and 123 pages of explanatory memoranda under the cover of darkness—and they expect us to consider the legislation overnight and to come back this morning with our response.

And I further said:

Labor is committed to rigorous scrutiny of these bills. Where they provide a sound framework for tackling terrorism without intruding into our society's freedoms, the bills will get our support. I note that subsequently 95 per cent of the opposition's amendments were picked up by the government and there was bipartisan support for that legislation, but that was not how the process started. The Leader of the House has made it crystal clear that time will be made available for debate. This opposition refuses to accept the premise for their behaviour, which is that they are not the government. What I find most offensive and what is so abominable is the deliberate misleading of the Australian public. My colleague the member for Eden-Monaro, on Wednesday, 14 September, referred to what was in his view the most shameful aspect of this debate as 'the deception, the distortion and the denial that we have seen demonstrated by the coalition'. I could not agree more. What I cannot abide is the deception that is being practised on the public. The behaviour and the claims made by the opposition demonstrate clearly that the opposition are not fit to hold office.

I am confident that a majority of my constituents believe that climate change is real and that action to reduce its causes and effects is necessary. However, I also acknowledge that many members of the community have been misled, deceived and scared by the campaign against this reform. The style and conduct of this debate have made it impossible to have a rational discussion on a complex policy challenge. I intend to outline some of the more outrageous claims made by the opposition in the past months. On 1 June in this place the Leader of the Opposition claimed:

Let there be no doubt about the intentions of the authors of this carbon tax legislation: they want to kill manufacturing industry in this country.
The truth is that this government, unlike its predecessor, fully supports a vibrant and innovative manufacturing industry. In August the Leader of the Opposition continued his scaremongering on manufacturing when he said:

We aren't going to stop using steel under a carbon tax, it's just that it's much more likely to be imported steel than locally made steel.

That was stated in an interview on Radio MTR on 23 August 2011. Do not let the facts get in the way of a good story! The truth is that steel manufacturers BlueScope and OneSteel have both said the carbon price will have no impact on their competitiveness. The government will shield locally-made steel from 94.5 per cent of the impact of a carbon price. A $300 million steel transformation plan will provide further assistance to BlueScope and OneSteel to invest and innovate in steel manufacturing operations.

In an interview on the Sunrise program on 14 July, the Leader of the Opposition said:

This carbon tax is going to drive the cost of living for vulnerable pensioners up and up and up.

The reality, of course, is completely different. The government is providing assistance to help meet any price impacts for pensioners. That assistance will be permanent. In my own seat, more than 22,100 pensioners will receive an extra $338 per year for singles and up to $510 per year for couples in their pension payments. More than 11,400 families in Banks will receive household assistance through their family assistance payments of up to, per year, $110 per eligible child for families receiving family tax benefit A and up to $69 for families receiving family tax benefit B. More than 1,400 single parents in Banks will get an extra $289 per year in increased income support. They will also receive assistance through increased family payments.

More than 3,200 job seekers in Banks will get up to $218 extra per year if they are single and $390 per year if they are couples. Students, depending on the rate and the type of payment they receive, will get up to $177 per year. More than 2,300 self-funded retirees will receive an extra $338 per year if they are single and up to $510 if they are couples. It is expected that the carbon price will add 0.7 per cent to the consumer price index. The impact of the GST on the CPI was 2.5 per cent. The household assistance package will directly assist those who need it and it will not—I repeat: it will not—drive up the cost of living for vulnerable pensioners.

Why did The Leader of the Opposition continue his claim on the impact of the carbon price on pensioners even after it had been disproved? On 8 September, he said at a seniors forum in Tumbi Umbi, 'The compensation to pensioners is temporary; the tax is permanent.' The truth is that the government will provide permanent increases in pensions and benefits. There will be lump sum payments from May to June 2012 followed by increases in fortnightly payments from March 2013. Pensions, allowances and family benefits will then keep pace with the cost of living, as they are indexed in line with the consumer price index. I am appalled by the Leader of the Opposition's deceit and disingenuous claims, which are all aimed at hurting people.

The Leader of the Opposition continues to utilise simplistic arguments squashed into mindless sound bites. The Leader of the Opposition is playing a game of misleading the public. Again this was demonstrated in an interview on 7 July on Radio 2SM when he said:

One of the things that people haven't quite twiggled to is that carbon dioxide is invisible, it's weightless and it's odourless, how are we going to police these emissions?
The reality is that Australian corporations have been reporting their emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases since July 2008 under the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007. When the Leader of the Opposition's colleague the member for Wentworth introduced this legislation into parliament he said: 'The bill I am introducing today lays the foundation for Australia's emissions trading scheme. Robust data reported under this bill will form the basis of emissions liabilities under emissions trading.' Even after details of the carbon price were released, the Leader of the Opposition has continued to make false claims and grand assertions, such as, 'The thing about the carbon tax is that it will clean out people's wallets and it will wipe out jobs big time.' He said that on 15 August 2011 at Parliament House. Treasury modelling shows that there will be an extra 1.6 million jobs by 2020 under a carbon price while gross national income per person in today's dollars will be $9,000 higher. The Leader of the Opposition's irresponsible scare campaign continues. Last week in parliament he said:

The New South Wales Treasury modelling— and this was modelling originally undertaken for the New South Wales Labor government when Michael Costa was the Treasurer of New South Wales— predicts that 31,000 jobs will be lost in New South Wales by 2030 as a result of the carbon tax …

Not surprisingly, the truth is different. The New South Wales Treasury commissioned modelling by Frontier Economics in August this year under the New South Wales Liberal government. Frontier's report finds employment in New South Wales will grow to 2030 under a carbon price, but by 0.45 per cent less than it would without a carbon price. Modelling by federal Treasury shows 400,000 extra jobs will be created in New South Wales by 2020 with a carbon price.

Recently I have been receiving emails from constituents on the opposition's latest fatuous claim that Australian taxpayers will spend an estimated $3.5 billion in 2020 to buy up foreign carbon credits. Naturally the reality is quite different. When the carbon price mechanism moves to an emissions trading scheme, the government will sell a fixed number of carbon permits each year to polluters covered by the scheme. Polluters who do not buy enough Australian permits to meet their obligations will then have to either reduce their pollution or buy international permits up to 50 per cent of their liability. It will be the polluters who buy the international permits to meet their carbon price mechanism obligations, not the government.

Earlier in the debate, the member for Hasluck complained that a constituent in his electorate said they would no longer be able to afford the electricity that they need for a heart condition during summer. The member should not be fuelling their fears; he should be honest with his constituent and comfort them. The government will introduce a new essential medical equipment payment from 1 July 2012 which will help eligible concession card holders who have high electricity usage as a result of equipment they need to use in their home to help manage their disability or medical condition.

The essential medical equipment payment will provide $140 per year to the 110,000 eligible concession card holders who have high electricity usage due to the equipment they need to help manage their disability or medical condition. That $140 is expected to cover the entire impact of the cost of running a kidney dialysis machine, which is the highest-energy-use machine expected to be covered. They are the facts. So let us have a
debate on the facts—not on false facts, facts that are manufactured to try to support a particular view.

I think another point needs to be made in relation to the carbon price and this argument about an emissions trading scheme: bipartisanship went out with the election of the member for Warringah as the Leader of the Opposition. It was John Howard who took an emissions trading scheme on behalf of the conservatives to the 2000 election. It was the member for Wentworth who supported an emissions trading scheme for the former Prime Minister Mr Rudd. It was politics that led the opposition to split in relation to their support for an emissions trading scheme.

That is what we are confronting here today: a campaign of fear. It is easier to run a negative campaign, a campaign of fear, than actually have a debate on the facts. At the end of the day, this is a defining debate, and the opposition stands condemned. I know that there are people on the other side who support a price on carbon and who support an emissions trading scheme. There is not unanimity there but there is an acceptance of the collective view and the majority view on their side of politics. Let's have an honest debate, not a dishonest debate. Let's argue the facts; I think the facts speak for themselves. There is only one way forward and that is to support this legislation.

Mr SLIPPER (Fisher—Deputy Speaker) (12:18): I am pleased to have the opportunity to participate in this debate on this group of bills in relation to the carbon tax. It will not be a matter or surprise for other honourable members to know that my constituents on the Sunshine Coast do not want me to support these bills. In this parliament I will be voting against these bills for the reason that I do not believe that they are good for our economy or our nation.

There is no doubt that there is respectable public opinion and respectable scientific opinion both in favour of and against the various positions on man's involvement in climate change. What is not disputed is that climate has always been changing. The reality is that climate will continue to change and that many people believe that the impact of man has accelerated that climate change in a way that is adverse.

While I accept that there are contradictory scientific points of view points of view out there, I am quite happy personally to give the environment the benefit of the doubt and, if there is something that we collectively as a world can do to repair what we have collectively created, then that is a step very much in the right direction. I believe there should be a world solution to a world problem. The difficulty I have with this legislation is that the rest of the world is not following suit. We will suffer economically to a very great extent as a nation if this package of bills becomes law and these bills are not repealed after the next election. Sure, it will make us as a country feel good. We will have this nice, warm inner glow believing that we are doing something to repair the world environment, but the reality is that we will suffer and inflict on ourselves the most incredible amount of pain while we will not be providing the world environment any particular benefit. So it is a question of all pain and no gain.

I am advised that, were this legislation to be implemented, the impact on the world environment would be minimal. We are committing a form of national economic suicide; essentially, in a political and economic sense, we are slashing our national wrists. We are exporting jobs. We are making it less viable for us to export items, and the result is that we will damage our economy and yet we will not improve the world environment.
I think all of us need to make sure we do whatever we can in a personal sense to improve our environment and to help the planet so that the future of the planet is brighter than it would otherwise be. At home, my wife, Ingrid, and I do the best that we can with respect to the little things that all households can do to help our environment. For instance: we have a solar system on the roof, we recycle as best we can, we mulch our garden, we have planted extra trees—we have an acreage block so there is plenty of room for trees—and we mulch around them. These are all small efforts that collectively, if everyone did similarly, would have an impact. I know that many people take the same approach.

As I said, Australia is clearly part of the problem and we should be part of the solution. The difficulty with the carbon tax proposed by the government is that it is not a solution. It will result in significant cost increases for individuals, couples, families and seniors across Australia, yet these cost increases will not be accompanied by any substantial reduction in emissions and they will not have any noticeable impact on the environment. While the government is correct to say that many people will be compensated for the impact of the carbon tax, there is a very significant minority of the community which will not be compensated, and those people will certainly be worse off.

It is interesting that in a radio interview earlier this year the government's own climate commissioner noted:

If the world as a whole cut all emissions tomorrow, the average, the average temperature of the planet's not going to drop for several hundred years perhaps as much as a thousand years...

Figures suggest that Australia contributes only about 1.2 per cent to 1.5 per cent of global emissions. That is a fairly insignificant figure—though it is not a figure that we should be proud of—and it is important, given the fact that we are a relatively low emitter, that we do not introduce measures that will create a cost burden for Australians and the economy but not have any impact on the area it is supposedly designed to improve. The very real threat is that the carbon tax, which is a $9 billion new tax, will lead to an increase of 10 per cent in electricity prices in the first year alone and that household budgets will also be adversely affected by such things as a nine per cent increase in gas prices for—I repeat—no substantial positive benefit for the environment.

While the government tells us that only big polluters will pay, the tax will have a flow-on impact on all areas of household spending, including on groceries. It will impact on the spending habits of Australians in general. Their life will become more difficult, and it will be harder for young and not-so-young people to get a job. Areas such as the Sunshine Coast, which I am privileged to represent in this place and which is heavily dependent on tourism and construction, will be amongst the areas most badly affected.

There have been suggestions that the carbon tax will have an impact of at least $515 a year on the cost of living of households. It is worth remembering that the price increases brought about by the carbon tax will follow closely on the coat-tails of massive rises in household costs in recent years. Like the rest of us, Madam Deputy Speaker Livermore, you run a household, so you would be aware that in the past four years electricity prices have risen on average by 51 per cent, gas prices have risen on average by 30 per cent, water and sewage costs have increased by around 46 per cent, health costs have increased by an average of 20 per cent, school fees and other education...
costs have increased by around 24 per cent, and rent has increased by about 20 per cent.

I know that it is not popular to quote Lord Monckton—I can see the Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, Mr Dreyfus, who is at the table, indicating by his smile—

Mr Dreyfus: I'm agreeing with you.

Mr SLIPPER: that he does not think it is a good thing to quote Lord Monckton, and I recognise his interjection. I am a great admirer of the parliamentary secretary—I think he has been given a really difficult job in having to sell this unsaleable tax, but if anyone can do it he certainly can. However, I suspect that, given the feedback from my community, even the parliamentary secretary's competence will be inadequate to turn people's opposition to the carbon tax—which will devastate our economy—into support. I am told that Lord Monckton suggests that, if the Labor government's plan is introduced and omissions are cut by five per cent by 2020 in line with the plan, carbon in the atmosphere will be reduced by just 0.013 parts per million: from 412 parts per million down to 411.987 parts per million. The government is focusing, quite appropriately, on the need for the world to do something about climate change; however, the plan the government has introduced will not achieve what the government wants it to achieve, and at the same time it will make the very existence of many Australian families so much more difficult than it already is.

I mentioned earlier that the Sunshine Coast is heavily dependent on tourism and construction. Tourism is among the industries that are most vulnerable to a carbon tax and the associated impact on prices. It is potentially a big victim of the carbon tax because it depends so much on the spending power of visitors. Madam Deputy Speaker, I know you have been to the Sunshine Coast, so you would be aware that we boast wonderful beaches, a relaxed way of life and modern conveniences. I know that the area you represent also has wonderful beaches—though the surf there is nowhere near as good!

The Sunshine Coast has many unspoiled attractions for families. We have our coastline, national parks and walking tracks, camping grounds and caravan parks for reasonably priced family holidays. We have modern and luxury unit complexes. We have Australia Zoo—which is run so effectively by Terri Irwin, whom I greatly admire—Aussie World, the Ettamogah Pub, Underwater World and the Big Kart Track as well as the natural attributes of the coast and hinterland and much more. These attractions help to directly and indirectly provide employment for many people who in turn provide for many families. The survival of these attractions depends on the many visitors who come to our area, yet all these visitors will have their lives disrupted by the imposition of the carbon tax and the associated increases in costs.

Households, families, individuals and the elderly around Australia have been finding things extremely difficult, and it is wrong to impose on Australians an additional tax that would see costs rise further—and dramatically—without the tax having any impact on pollution. I have been advised that costs will rise considerably after three years, when the government's initial set price of $23 per tonne for carbon will no longer be fixed but instead become a floating figure out of control of government and at the mercy of market forces. Households will bear the cost and be forced to cut back in yet further areas. The government says that the carbon tax is estimated to rise to $29 per tonne in 2016, but the Centre for International Economics suggests that the
figure will be closer to $49 per tonne. The government's figures suggest the price will rise to $37 per tonne in 2020 and to more than $350 per tonne in 2050. All of these prices are significant, and I just hate to think what the impact of this carbon tax is going to be like for families in the future if it is not rejected by the parliament or repealed by an incoming government. As I said, the Sunshine Coast has benefited from its construction industry—the building of homes, unit complexes and commercial premises. They have all catered for our growing population and brought visitors to our region.

It really is unfortunate that the government has decided to proceed with the carbon tax legislation. It is obvious that the community is not in support of this proposal. The government really ought to recognise that it has no mandate for this tax. After all, it was the Prime Minister who, prior to the last election, said that there would be no carbon tax under any government she led. I consider that, if the Prime Minister has changed her mind—and, if she has, I certainly respect that—she should do what Prime Minister Howard did in 1998 when he changed his mind on the introduction of a GST.

Mr Bruce Scott interjecting—

Mr SLIPPER: As the member for Maranoa points out, the Prime Minister of the day said: 'Circumstances are different. While I did say that I would never, ever introduce a GST, it is now necessary for the economy.' But he gave the people of Australia the opportunity to vote for that change of policy at an election. If the government feels strongly about its carbon tax legislation, and I suspect that it does, it should say, 'This is the legislation which we plan to bring in if we are returned by the Australian people at the next poll.' It is wrong, in my view, to say one thing before an election and then change one's mind and one's policy and bring in a contrary policy after the election.

This legislation cannot be described as good legislation. It will encourage businesses to manufacture offshore. It will encourage people to holiday offshore. It will make it more difficult for young Australians and older Australians to obtain work. I just think that it is a very heavy price for us as a community to pay—bringing in this tax so that we all feel good but ultimately destroying our economy, reducing our competitiveness and assisting countries which are worse emitters than us to profit in the international marketplace at our expense. It is not too late for the government to withdraw this legislation. It would be in the national interest for it to do so.

Ms PARKE (Fremantle) (12:32): There has not been a more important set of bills debated in this place in the first 11 years of this century than those before us. Like my colleagues, I am very pleased to be able to speak in support of what is without question an extremely well designed and carefully balanced scheme for setting Australia on the path to a low-carbon economy, on the path to greater global cooperation in the fight against dangerous warming and other climate effects on the planet we all share.

This is a distinctively Labor reform. In a critical but difficult and complicated area of policy, this policy response has been hard work and hard-won. That work and that struggle continues. Both the driving imperative and the basic structure of the Clean Energy Future package have been clear for some time. Our imperative is the need to address climate change; it is the need to reduce Australia's carbon emissions as
part of a shared commitment to global emission reductions that is aimed at limiting to two degrees the increase in average global temperatures by the end of this century. Beyond that kind of increase, we know that the consequences will be grave and extremely difficult to mitigate.

The clear imperative to act is founded on the fact that climate change is occurring and that it will deliver environmental, social and economic impacts that must be avoided. The well-founded and exhaustive analysis in this country and elsewhere shows that it will be both more effective and cheaper if we act to interdict as many of the consequences of climate change global warming as early as we possibly can. Without question, the starting point for all of this is the phenomenon of climate change. The scientific evidence for the existence of climate change, and for the contribution that we are making to it, is irresistible. On that point I note where the Garnaut climate change review update 2011, from May, states:

Since 2008, advances in climate change science have broadly confirmed that the earth is warming, that human activity is the cause of it and that the changes in the physical world are likely, if anything, to be more harmful than the earlier science had suggested. I have replaced the premise of the 2008 Review that the reputable science was right 'on a balance of probabilities', with the premise that it is 'beyond reasonable doubt'.

That view is shared by 89 developed and developing countries, representing more than 80 per cent of global emissions and approximately 90 per cent of the global economy, which have pledged large cuts to their emissions under the Cancun agreements. All those countries accept the science; they accept the environmental, social and economic imperative; and they believe that a shared commitment to reducing the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is essential for our shared future.

Australia accepts its part of the challenge. With approximately 1.5 per cent of global emissions, there are only 10 countries who contribute more greenhouse gas to the atmosphere than we do, and of course we contribute the most on a per capita basis. I note, from an opinion piece that appeared in Monday's Australian by Adair Turner, the chairman of the UK Committee on Climate Change, that Britain's commitment to an 80 per cent emissions reduction on 1990 levels by 2050—which has been law since 2008—will deliver a reduction in Britain's per capita pollution from 14 tonnes to two tonnes per person by mid-century. By contrast, Australia's emissions are currently 27 tonnes per person. It is absolutely right that a country like Australia, with a strong and well-developed high-carbon economy and with a tradition of making key contributions to efforts that require international cooperation, now play its part in the urgent global effort to address climate change.

The simple facts are these: climate change can only be addressed by concerted global action, Australia is a significant contributor to the problem and Australia is a country that is more susceptible to the worst effects of climate change than many other nations. The reality, then, is that the only argument worth having on the issue of climate change concerns the nature of the Australian response to climate change.

Unfortunately, that is not the only argument we are having. There are those—including a number of those opposite—who do not accept the science, do not accept the economics and do not accept the logical and moral imperative for Australia to be part of a coordinated global response. Such people clearly do not accept the evidence that has
been gathered and analysed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, NASA, the CSIRO, the Australian Academy of Science and the Australian Bureau of Meteorology, among others.

Of those who acknowledge that the world has warmed and is continuing to grow hotter decade by decade, there are some who believe that this is simply part of the earth's natural climate variation. They do not accept that human activity has anything to do with global warming. To take this position, you have to turn away from the accumulated evidence and the near-universal recognition of the phenomenon of climate change and our part in causing it. You need to move beyond scepticism, which is healthy, and into conspiracy theories, which are not. You have to turn away from the science and turn instead to the something-for-everyone kaleidoscope of the worldwide web, wherein fragments of all kinds of half-baked pseudo-science cluster about in threads of self-reinforcing delusion.

It is a matter of common sense and a measure of both good judgment and good governance to heed the advice of the scientists and the economists when their evidence and their analysis demonstrates that acting now and acting to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases through a market mechanism is the most cost-effective approach to the clear and pressing danger of climate change.

That is the position taken by the OECD. It is the position reached through the exhaustive green and white paper processes that this government put in place. It is the position that has been expressed in the following terms:
Managing climate change will be one of the great challenges of the 21st century: it represents an important economic shift, and will require a portfolio of responses.

In Australia's case, we are moving toward the progressive pricing in of the cost of carbon into the way our economy operates. This is 'big history' in the making—perhaps the most significant economic decision in a generation.

That is well said, I think, and in 2009 it was the considered view of Greg Hunt, the opposition spokesperson on climate change. Of course, it is also the view of their former leader, the member for Wentworth, who said:

You won't find an economist anywhere that will tell you anything other than that the most efficient and effective way to cut emissions is by putting a price on carbon!

At a time when many Australians bemoan the lack of political cooperation in the national interest, it is a shame that we no longer have a bipartisan commitment to tackling climate change. Nevertheless, the government is determined to act in the national interest, and with these bills we have set out a comprehensive portfolio of responses that addresses the need to reduce carbon emissions and does so on a low-impact, least-cost basis using a carbon price that is fixed for three years before making the transition to a floating price under an emissions trading scheme.

Under the Clean Energy Future package the price of carbon emissions will be paid by Australia's largest polluters, and liability will be assessed under the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting System, which has been in operation since 2007. The independent Climate Change Authority will advise on the setting of pollution caps and will monitor international progress with an eye to adjusting those caps towards greater reductions as the global momentum gathers pace. This will secure emission reductions of at least five per cent on 2000 levels by 2020, which means an effective reduction of projected emissions by 23 per cent. It will be the framework through which we achieve an
80 per cent reduction on 2000 levels by 2050.

The funds raised by the carbon price will underwrite a massive investment in renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies; it will buffer households from the expected small impact of the price flow-through into the general economy; and it will support jobs in sensitive industries. The Clean Energy Finance Corporation will administer $10 billion in finance and equity support to turbocharge our burgeoning renewable energy industry, and the Australian Renewable Energy Agency will manage a further $3.2 billion as it coordinates the research and development and commercialisation of clean energy technologies. Treasury modelling predicts that the carbon price will drive around $100 billion in investment in the renewables sector over the period to 2050, which will transform our energy sector and create a considerable number of jobs. Not only will these jobs be in new industries but jobs will also be supported in traditional industries such as construction, electrical services and steel making, to name just a few. Simply put, our clean energy plan is good for jobs.

Unfortunately, it is clear from reports this week in the *Financial Review* that the uncertainty surrounding the coalition's opposition to these bills is directly hurting our economy, by placing an additional cost on new investments and the creation of jobs. For instance, AGL Energy Ltd. chief economist Dr Paul Simshauser made clear that Australian companies are putting off their investments and those who are proceeding are paying more. He said:

Project financing in Australia has become a bit more problematic. We're a bit of an anomaly globally. The only thing we could put it down to was we were having one of the most ferocious debates in the world on a price of carbon.

This was further reinforced by Martijn Wilder of Baker McKenzie, who said:

Until the opposition makes it clear what its actual policy is, there will be uncertainty. It is critical, therefore, that the parliament passes the clean energy legislation and provides certainty to business—so that they can start to invest in our clean energy future.

The modest price impact on householders of having a carbon price in the economy, according to Treasury modelling, will be 0.7 per cent. The increase in assistance to age and disability pensioners, carers, students, single parents and job seekers will be 1.7 per cent—and it will be permanent. The weekly price impact on the average household will be $9.90; the compensation provided to the average household will be $10.10.

All this is designed to ensure that a cost incentive exists for the largest polluters and for any business with an indirect carbon cost component in their product or service while at the same time ensuring that low-income households are fully protected. It will put a price signal into the economy that will drive emission reductions in the name of cost reduction, and give low-carbon products, services, and processes an appropriate competitive edge. Taken all together, this reform will create a lower pollution and lower carbon economy; it will create a stronger, more sustainable energy profile; and it will foster innovation.

These features of the package have been spoken to in great detail by many of my colleagues, including the Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, Greg Combet, whom I congratulate. I also take this opportunity to congratulate, for the Mount Everest of work that has gone into this momentous reform: the former minister for climate change, Senator Wong; the parliamentary secretary, Mark Dreyfus; the staff of the ministers; and the Department of
Climate Change and Energy Efficiency and Multi-Party Climate Change Committee.

I want to finish by noting that, in the community I represent, there is a considered and longstanding desire to see the Australian government take action on climate change. As I speak in support of these bills, I feel very strongly that I am supporting a policy approach that accords not only with the scientific and economic logic and with my principles but also with the carefully reasoned and strongly felt views of the people I represent—the people of the Fremantle electorate. Every day I receive more emails from constituents that encourage me to support this policy, that urge me to be a part of positive and necessary change. Of course, I also get emails, letters and calls from people who worry about the effect this reform will have on their personal circumstances, but in many cases when the detail of the policy is explained those people also accept that this reform, though confronting for some, is a step we need to take, and a positive step.

Back in 2008, one of the most significant community events that I hosted in the first 12 months after I was elected to represent Fremantle was a climate change forum. It was attended by nearly 200 people, and it was clear to me then just how much interest, engagement and passion there was for a policy response to the problem of climate change. Earlier this year, when the Prime Minister and cabinet attended a community forum at South Fremantle Senior High School, there was a delegation from the Australian Youth Climate Coalition, and they presented the Prime Minister with a card that thanked her for taking the necessary steps to safeguard Australia’s climate, energy, environmental and economic future.

In Fremantle, the potential for a clean energy future is being embraced as I speak. As I drive through the suburbs of my electorate, street after street shows the proliferation of photovoltaic cells on the roofs of houses, and in the space of four years these solar panels have gone from being a relative rarity to being commonplace. There should be no surprise in that, because we have supported the installation of something like 150,000 solar PV household units since coming to government, after the Howard government managed only 12,000 in 11 years. White Gum Valley, a suburb in my electorate, has the largest take-up of ‘green power’ in the Perth metropolitan area. Carnegie Wave Energy, located in North Fremantle, has conducted a successful commercial trial of its wave energy technology off Garden Island, which produces emission-free power and emission-free desalinated water. A company called Quickstep developed its new and less expensive carbon fibre production process, with all the fuel efficiency benefits this will offer, at its factory in Coogee, not far from my electorate office. The City of Fremantle was the first carbon-neutral local government in Australia, and this year the City of Cockburn was a winner in the 2011 National Awards for Local Government for its greenhouse gas emission abatement, sustainability and climate change program.

All these individual and community efforts, these business endeavours and these local government actions are part of a change that has been in progress for several years. This change, which included a change in government in 2007, has seen Australia ratify the Kyoto Protocol and now sees us join the dozens of countries around the world with firm emission reduction targets, and a market framework for decreasing our reliance on carbon and for increasing our efficiency, innovation, and use of renewable energy.
The Clean Energy Future is a bright future, but it is a long way off, and it will need to be hard won, which is why this package of reforms in the long-term national interest is a quintessential Labor task. There has not been a more significant reform debated in this place this century, and I am proud to be here to speak in favour of these bills.

Mr BRUCE SCOTT (Maranoa—Second Deputy Speaker) (12:47): I rise to make a contribution on this carbon tax legislation, the bundle of bills. I have to say that, when the government introduced these bills last week with two to three weeks for the parliament to consider them, it really was a disgrace. I must also say that the effect this carbon tax will have across this nation, in all corners of the nation, will be dramatic. No one will escape the effect of these pieces of legislation if they pass this House and the upper House. I say 'if' they pass this House because they can pass the lower House only with the support of some of the six members who sit on the crossbenches.

The introduction of these bills represents also a very significant breach of the trust of the Australian people, because these bills will forever change our nation, yet the people of Australia have been denied an opportunity which is their fundamental right, I believe, in a democracy: to have their say. When this Prime Minister went to the people at the last election, it was a contest of ideas and minds. The voters of Australia value their vote and they made their decision based on what either side of this parliament had to say in the lead-up to that election. Of course, the Prime Minister said quite clearly that there would be no carbon tax under a government that she led. That statement, I think, meant that the government we have today was elected on the basis that there would be no carbon tax under a government that was led by Julia Gillard. Since that time, of course—since the announcement by this Prime Minister—my office has been absolutely inundated with people concerned about the effect that this will have on their business, their farming operation or their family wherever they live.

Mr Deputy Speaker, let me give you and the House a bit of an overview of the constituency that I represent, the seat of Maranoa. It represents over 42 per cent of the land area of Queensland and it is one of the powerhouses of this nation. It is certainly a powerhouse in Queensland. It is one of the electorates that are resource rich, and of course the expansion of the resource sector in my electorate is well documented and is happening as I speak in the House today. The growth of the resource sector, the coal seam methane gas, the coal developments and the associated industries that go with that—small businesses—means that there are growth opportunities, job opportunities and small business opportunities as a result of the expansion of the resource sector. But, of course, there is also our traditional base. Since our early pioneers established farming and pastoral interests out in Maranoa, those interests have been a base—and they will always be a base—of the electorate of Maranoa. Whether it is cotton, beef, grain, olives, fruit, wool, vegetables or stone fruit—you name it—it is also a food bowl as well as a growing energy hub in Queensland.

One of the things about Maranoa that do have an impact when it comes to the cost of transport wherever you look is the tyranny of distance, which is a factor in everyone's day-to-day life. The electorate is a regional and rural electorate; that is no secret, and it is no secret also that regional Australia will be one of the areas hardest hit by this carbon tax. The tyranny of distance—whether it is when businesses have to send their product to their market or when they have to bring in goods to farms or small businesses—requires
transport, and the transport sector is going to be hit by this carbon tax. Access Economics has found that a $26 a tonne price on carbon will cost more than 126,000 jobs in regional Australia. How can anyone in this place support legislation that Access Economics says will cost 126,000 Australians their jobs? Deloitte predicts that there will be a loss of 21,000 Queensland jobs, with separate Queensland Treasury modelling predicting 12,000 jobs will be lost in Queensland. How the Premier of Queensland, who is the federal president of the Labor Party, can support a carbon tax as she leads to the next election and say, 'I'm supporting a carbon tax and I know it's going to cost Queenslanders 12,000 jobs,' on her own Treasury's modelling, is beyond me.

Another industry in my electorate is electricity generation. I have three coal fired power stations, Tarong, Millmerran and Kogan Creek, in my electorate. These are large, baseload power stations. There are also a number of gas fired power stations and we are soon going to see a very large solar thermal power station established just near Chinchilla. The workers in those power stations and in that industry and also those working in the coal and the gas industries in my electorate are worried. They went to the last election thinking that if they voted for the government, for Labor, there would not be a carbon tax under a government led by the now Prime Minister.

As I travel my electorate, from east to west and north to south, people are not only worried about the future for their families or their businesses, they are now becoming angry at this government. What they want is an election. In numbers of calls to my office and from what I hear when I meet people in the street, people are saying: 'How can we have an election, because we want a say on this? We want to have our say on whether we should have a carbon tax and this bundle of bills.' They want their say, and that is their democratic right. They value their vote. They believe we live in a democracy. Today under the electoral cycle, in the information provided by the parties and anyone wanting to represent a constituency, people read and are well informed. They are worried about this legislation and what it will mean to their families and their jobs, particularly their jobs.

For the benefit of the House I will read what one of my constituents emailed to me recently. Paul is from Crows Nest, in the very east of the electorate. It is very near the Tarong power station, but I do not know where he works. In his email he said:

When it comes to the carbon tax fiasco, I used to be, and I say used to be, a Labor supporter. But now with the recent events over the past 12 months, I can no longer support the Labor movement. I am totally disgusted with the push for the carbon tax that will hurt my family who is already struggling to pay the bills, the mortgage and put food on the table. I have been told by my employer that if this tax goes through, that I would LOSE my job along with others because they will not be able to afford to pay the tax and keep the current workforce.

That is from a person who emailed my office and said he is a Labor supporter, and I respect people like that. But he is concerned for his family. He is concerned as to how he is going to pay his mortgage—and what is so precious in every family is the family home. Being able to own their own bit of Australia, their family home and their backyard, is very precious to them. He is so concerned that, as a supporter of the other side of the House in the past, he is prepared to email my office and tell me his story and his concern.

A resident of Stanthorpe, Ian, has also written to me. He said:

As a resident of Stanthorpe and an Australian taxpayer, I urge you to strongly come out and force Julia Gillard to not bring in this new tax. We, like
many other families are struggling to survive as it is with out any further rises in the cost of living. Every time we turn around, power, fuel and food are going up. All this government can think of is how to waste our tax dollars.

Once again, this is from a family. I will talk about small businesses in a minute, but this is another family concerned about their future, concerned about how they are going to pay the bills and put food on the table and pay the mortgage.

Among some of the most vocal opponents of the carbon tax in the Maranoa electorate have been small business owners. I received this letter from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland:

A carbon tax will flow through the economy, affecting the price of all goods and services and increasing costs for all businesses including those without a direct carbon price liability. Trade exposed and small and medium-sized businesses have limited ability to pass these costs on to customers and are at even greater risk of business competitiveness and viability. Given the importance of coal mining and minerals processing in this state, Queensland businesses face an even greater impact from the introduction of a carbon price. These industries are key employers in regional and rural areas in Queensland, directly and indirectly supporting a large number of local and medium-sized businesses.

This letter is on behalf of many chambers of commerce in my electorate. Those listed as signatories are: the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland; the Border Rivers Chamber of Commerce, based in Goondiwindi; Commerce Roma, in my home town; the Charleville and District Chamber of Commerce, in a pastoral zone in western Queensland; the Inglewood Chamber of Commerce; the South-West Chamber of Commerce; the St George and District Chamber of Commerce, the Stanthorpe Chamber of Commerce; and the Wandoan District Chamber of Commerce.

Transport businesses in my electorate have written to me. One of them is Frasers Livestock Transport, which is based in Warwick but has other offices and transport centres in Roma, Longreach and Cloncurry, and mainly moves livestock. Ross Fraser is one of the partners and I will precis what he said to me rather than quote him. Ross said that if this tax was $40 a tonne—and we know this is a $23-a-tonne tax bill as presented to us, but we know it will rise under this government, as they know how to put up taxes and spend but not how to save and manage the economy—then it will cost their business $600,000 a year. Not only will it cost his business $600,000 a year but he will have to pass that cost on to his customers and they will pay the bill. This tax is such a retrograde tax because it cascades at each point. It will impact through the economy. Ross went on to say that they employ 110 people and their wages bill is $150,000 a week. This is a small business in a regional town in my electorate. So concerned are they about their future that they said they will have to pass it on if the industries can afford it, absorb it or cut back on their operations. Warwick is also home to the Big W distribution point where Wickham Freight Lines put 100 trucks a day on the road distributing supermarket goods across Queensland, New South Wales and into Victoria.

I will relate a similar story about Crisps Coaches in Warwick. Russell Crisp told the Warwick Daily News, the local newspaper, that he believed the tax would have a negative impact on his customers. Crisps Coaches in Warwick is a bus company that is not subsidised by a local authority in a capital city. It operates whether there is one passenger on board or 50 or board. It runs a magnificent service in Warwick. I often see its coaches down here. Its coaches bring schoolchildren down here to Parliament
House. Russell Crisp said the tax will impact on his business because of the cost of fuel. He wants to know, as so many of my other small businesses want to know, whether he is one of the big polluters this government is talking about. We do not know. We cannot find out who they are. Who are the big polluters? We on this side believe those that are considered big polluters by the government are great big job creators in this economy.

There is a whole lot more I would like to say, about the Kyoto protocol and how we as a government were able to meet our obligations, as many have done for years, through a direct action plan. We will continue to propose what can be done to reduce carbon emissions through a direct action plan and without an impact on jobs and businesses across the nation and particularly across my own electorate of Maranoa.

Ms SAFFIN (Page) (13:02): In rising to speak in support of these clean energy bills, I want to talk about the Northern Rivers region, where I live and where my seat of Page is. Some of the seat of one of my colleagues, the honourable member for Richmond, is also in the Northern Rivers region. I note she is here in the chamber. I will be talking about my seat but also about the Northern Rivers, which covers a broader area. In our area we have communities which have embraced adaptation for climate change. They are ahead of it. They are not waiting for everybody to act. They are taking action themselves locally. What I want to address is a particular collaboration of groups called Sustain Northern Rivers. I will go through what it is doing in some detail because it is happening in our area.

The Northern Rivers region covers approximately 20,732 square kilometres and incorporates seven local government areas. Five of those local government areas are in my seat of Page. It is home to more than 292,000 people, almost 5,500 medium-sized businesses and tens of thousands of small businesses. Our region has a growth rate of up to 2.6 per cent compared to the New South Wales rate of 1.2 per cent. So it is a growth area.

Sustain Northern Rivers—SNR, as it is called—was formed in 2008 in direct response to climate change. It is a collaboration of 20 peak regional organisations working together to provide a local response to a global threat that impacts on us locally. The SNR is a collaborative platform that consults, collaborates and communicates. It empowers local communities to become self-sustaining. The focus is in four key areas: food, transport, energy and behavioural change—all of the areas that we need to address in adaptation to climate change.

Sustain Northern Rivers is a broad network. In the network are Byron Shire Council, which is in the seat of Richmond; a catchment management authority, which covers the whole area; Lismore City Council; Local Communities Services Association; Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority; North Coast Health Promotion; North Coast TAFE, which covers a huge area all across the North Coast; North-East Waste Forum; Northern Rivers Community Colleges, Northern Rivers Social Development Council; Northern Rivers Tourism; Northern Star Pty Ltd; Northern Rivers University Department of Rural Health; New South Wales Department of Industry and Investment; New South Wales Department of Education and Training; Regional Development Australia—Northern Rivers; Richmond Valley Council, which is in my seat of Page; Southern Cross University; Tweed Shire Council; and Northern Rivers Youth Environment Society.
I am told there are others joining that network and collaboration to prepare and work to adapt to climate change.

What does the SNR do? It helps Northern Rivers communities live and work more sustainably. It helps cut the collective carbon footprint of the Northern Rivers, fosters networks that stimulate innovation and action, facilitates collaboration amongst regional organisations, pools resources, shares knowledge and learns from past failures and successes. It maximises outcomes by coordinating our efforts and it sustains outcomes from time limited project grants. It also builds the adaptive capacity of Northern Rivers communities. Recently I had the Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency in Lismore. We held a forum on the clean energy package and he got to meet with Sustained Northern Rivers who were able to put to him what they were doing and what their case was. They are also looking at the package and the opportunities available in the clean energy package, and there are many. People come into this place and I hear the other side always talking about the threats. They live in a world of absolute fear and threat.

Mr Frydenberg: Work Choices!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you—if you wish to speak next!

Ms Saffin: It must be awful to wake up in the morning and see the world through the prism of fear and threat. Why not look for opportunities and challenges, because that is what we have to do and, as leaders, that is what we do in our communities.

There are four key areas for Sustain Northern Rivers. Firstly, to sustain food by increasing local food consumption and the uptake of sustainable food production methods. Are they sitting back and waiting for that? No. There is already a whole range of initiatives that have taken place around food in our area and helping local food producers and farmers. Secondly, to sustain energy to empower and enable the Northern Rivers community to reduce its ecological footprint. The Northern Rivers area has one of the largest take-ups of solar power and panels across the state. In fact Lismore had the highest take-up, and it was across all age groups and all wage groups, which is really interesting.

The third key area is to sustain transport. That is more of a challenge in rural and regional areas because there is not a lot of public transport. But we can still do things, and transport is one of the key areas. The aim is to reduce transport emissions and increase transport options, physical activity, social capital and resilience.

This is a digression—not from the bills but just from talking directly about Sustain Northern Rivers, a collaboration—but when we are looking at reducing transport emissions, in my seat I have an internationally renowned project being undertaken at Harwood Sugar Mill, called Ethanol Technologies Ltd, Ethtec. It is a world-class second-generation ethanol pilot plant and is now almost halfway to full commercialisation. Ethtec's director and chief scientist, Dr Russell Reeves, and his team are converting lignocellulosic materials to sugars that can be fermented to produce ethanol, bioplastics or other high-value renewable chemicals. It is a fully-patented process involving the innovative use of concentrated sulphuric acid and an acid-sugars separation process using cutting-edge technologies developed in Australia and overseas. It is an important breakthrough because it means biofuel production does not have to be at the expense of our food crops as we enter a period in which food security is and will become a major issue for regional communities.
I was speaking with the Southern Cross University Forest and Timber Industry Forum. They are also very interested in this because the forum advocate the conversion of small wood and wood waste to biodiesel as a way of creating local energy markets for forest and mill owners. They would like to see conversion of lignocellulosic materials to biofuels included in RETs. Ethtec has already managed to raise $11 million in private sector investment and they have a $2.9 million Climate Ready grant from the Australian government—our government—to complete the first two phases of their four-phase project. It is estimated that it will cost a total of $22 million to reach full commercialisation. I am working with Dr Reeves and his fellow Ethtec directors, Robert Carey and Lance Rodman, to increase awareness of this project particularly among colleagues here in Canberra.

I did have the minister for agriculture visit too. He had a look at a demonstration of what is happening. So when I talk about sustaining transport, there are things happening—positive things, opportunities and people rising to the challenge to produce some clean fuel and not get into that food versus fuel debate.

The fourth area for Sustain Northern Rivers is to sustain change. That is about promoting sustainability initiatives with the focus on social learning. When we look at clean energy and what is being done in Australia to transition this, we know that we are looking at behavioural change, and that is important. Sustain Northern Rivers say: why are we doing it? We recognise that we are in the front line of the impact of climate change. Our biodiversity is at risk. We have the highest biodiversity in New South Wales, and third highest in Australia—that is, in our region of Northern Rivers.

Northern Rivers is one of the fastest-growing regions in Australia. Those living in the Northern Rivers are older than the rest of the state. It can be hard to get around. We have a huge number of volunteers from many of our community services and we rely on them. Our communications are not up to speed, but they are coming up to speed. We have the NBN in our area. It started in Coffs Harbour on the North Coast and is rolling out in our region. We are a cross-border region, a region that has a traditionally high unemployment rate.

Sustain Northern Rivers has targets. To empower, as an energy priority, to enable the North Coast to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20 per cent compared to 2000 levels and increase the proportion of renewable energy sources to 20 per cent by 2020. To sustain transport, the aim is to improve an integrated regional transport network which increases human movement options by 20 per cent by 2020 and reduces infrastructure costs. To sustain food, the aim is to build a resilient Northern Rivers food economy, making a contribution to national food security and sovereignty. And to sustain collaboration, the intent is to create a vibrant collaboration that supports engagement and empowerment of the community to respond to climate change challenges. Those are some of the overall goals and some key projects across those four areas. This is an example of a community taking action themselves and not burying their heads in the sand. They are saying that climate change is real and they are taking advantage of the clean energy package. That is what they are looking at at the moment.

Also in my area a lot of farmers are quite excited about the Carbon Farming Initiative. They are seeking the opportunities. Some farmers in my region are already doing wonderful things in terms of increasing production and decreasing their greenhouse
footprint. Now they will be eligible to get other more tangible benefits under the Carbon Farming Initiative. I am helping organise for technical people to run a Carbon Farming Initiative project in my area for farmers across the Northern Rivers, so it will cover a broader area again. It is something that the member for Richmond and I have followed up on after the visits we had from both the Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency and the Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government. People across our region are keen, want more information and want to be ahead of the changes in this area.

I want to say a few things in closing. Let us get some things clear. Jobs are not about to be lost. Some jobs will change and some jobs will be created, and we already have a good indication of that. People talk about this being a tax. It is a price on pollution. It is a price on the 500 biggest polluters in Australia. It is a price that needs to be there to effect the change we have. It is the twinning of changes to our economy and the environment that we must make. It is not a choice we have anymore—do we or don't we; will we or won't we? It is something that has to happen.

We talk locally about who you trust. Some people say you cannot trust the science, but that is just ridiculous. All of us, including a lot of farmers, go to the Bureau of Meteorology website every day. It is the most popular website. We look to it and we trust it. We look for the weather and all sorts of things. You should go there. CSIRO believe in climate change and know we have to embrace clean energy.

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong) (13:17): This parliament has seen many significant contests over recent years—the GST, the Iraq War and Telstra's privatisation all spring to mind—but in my brief parliamentary career the debate over the carbon tax is certainly the most contentious, both because of what it is and because of how it came about. First, it is the most significant economic change we have seen in decades. It is a new tax on everything. Energy powers our way of life. Increase its price and the cost of everything we do and use will go up. Second, the Prime Minister five days before the last election emphatically declared in her own words, 'There will be no carbon tax under the government I lead.' This was a fundamental undertaking to the Australian people: not an off-the-cuff comment made during some laborious parliamentary debate but a solemn promise made to 23 million Australians, who now bear the ultimate burden of her prime ministerial backflip.

Without the Prime Minister's promise, millions of Australians would in all likelihood have cast their vote differently, changing the outcome of the election and rewriting the pages of history. In the days leading up to the election the Prime Minister was acutely aware of how reticent the electorate was to embrace a carbon tax. The Prime Minister was at pains to emphasise that she would first seek community consensus on the issue via a citizens assembly before making any preemptive move. But everything was to change once the Prime Minister reached the Lodge and a new government was formed. Wanting to pander to the Greens and secure her minority government, this fundamental pre-election promise was unceremoniously dumped without contrition or atonement. What now follows with this legislation put before us represents a dereliction of prime ministerial duty and a fundamental breach of faith between the parliament and its representatives.

The fact that these 19 bills, which are more than 1,100 pages long, are being rushed through the parliament, with members being
given speaking times equivalent to less than one minute per bill, only compounds the problem. If the Prime Minister were so bold as to say she would wear out her shoe leather selling her tax, why is she not prepared to let her fellow members wear out their voices?

For me the issue of a carbon tax is not one of belief or of ideology. It is a test, however, of what is the most effective way of simultaneously enhancing our environment and our economy—twin objectives that are not mutually exclusive. I am not here to debate the science; I am here to hold the government to account. I am here to hold the government to account for its misguided decision to pursue a carbon tax in the absence of an international agreement. I am here to hold the government to account for its damaging decision to pursue a carbon tax at a time when our industry and households are feeling the pain of a challenging domestic economy. I am here to hold the government to account for a fatally flawed policy that will simply redistribute wealth in society without any commensurate pay-off for the environment.

This is not just bad policy; it is bad faith. First and foremost a carbon tax will have a punishing impact on the cost of living. In the first year alone a $23 a tonne carbon tax will represent a $515 hit to the average household. With electricity bills to increase 10 per cent and gas bills to increase nine per cent, it is not just the household bills for heating, lighting and cooking that will be impacted; the flow-on effect to the weekly grocery bill will also be significant. What is more the carbon price has a built-in escalator; it will not be fixed. It starts at $23 a tonne but on the government's own forecast will jump to $29 in 2016, $37 in 2020 and over $350 in 2050. It is more than a coincidence that the Greens took to the last election a carbon price of $23 a tonne—now that their figure has become the government's figure, Green senators like Sarah Hanson-Young have started to call for a higher price—namely, $100 a tonne.

I say to those opposite, caveat emptor—let the buyer beware. Your support today for a carbon price is locking you into a cycle of an ever-rising tax on every Australian family. It is a heavy responsibility to bear. What is more the government's entire strategy is flawed. It cannot readily change consumer behaviour. Some goods like energy are relatively inelastic. It does not necessarily follow that the more you charge the less you proportionately use. People will simply be forced to pay more, leaving them with significantly less to spend.

It too is insufficient for the government to claim they are compensating the householder. Originally the Prime Minister and her ministers claimed they would return all of the $9 billion raised in the first year to households. Now we are told it is around 50 per cent. When it comes to the government's proposed tax cuts, the exact opposite is true. Some of the marginal rates will in fact increase, including from 15 to 19 per cent and 30 to 33 per cent.

No wonder the Treasurer in an interview on Sky News is on the record as saying, 'We can't guarantee that no-one will be worse off ...' Indeed, in my own electorate of Kooyong, I was contacted by a constituent Gabrielle Whiting who as a single, self-funded retiree under the age of 65 with an income of $35,000 has been told after repeated calls to the government's clean energy hotline that she will receive no compensation. In fact, using the household assistance estimator on the website she is $251 worse off. When I asked the Prime Minister in question time about Ms Whiting, who will pay higher electricity and gas prices under the carbon tax but will receive no compensation, the Prime Minister had no
answer. Unfortunately, Gabrielle Whiting is no one-off. There are hundreds of thousands like her, left behind by an incompetent Gillard government.

Like the average household, small business will also feel the pain of this carbon tax. Do not take my word for it. This is the view of Peter Anderson, CEO of the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Employing more than four million people, our two million small businesses, more than 10,000 of which are in Kooyong, are the backbone of the Australian economy. But who will compensate them?

My local drycleaner in Kew told me his electricity and gas bill has risen in just over a year from $23,000 to $28,000 and with the introduction of a carbon tax it will rise another 10 per cent. He works six days a week, employs four others and is in a daily struggle to meet the higher costs of keeping the doors open. He wants a carbon tax like a hole in the head. So why are we giving him one?

It is a sentiment shared by many. Deloitte Access Economics have modelled the regional impacts of a carbon tax in Victoria. They found that by 2015 there would be 23,000 fewer jobs across the state and the economy would be $2.8 billion worse off if the tax goes ahead. According to the Deloitte's document, the Boroondara area, which closely resembles the boundaries of my electorate, would be among the worst hit.

What is particularly pernicious about the proposed carbon tax, is that the government is going against the international tide. In the United States, a cap-and-trade system is no longer on the agenda. Earlier this year in Canada, Prime Minister Stephen Harper won the most comprehensive electoral victory for the Conservative Party in over 100 years campaigning against a carbon tax. It too is simply false to suggest that rising powers China and India are rapidly weening themselves off their dependence on fossil fuels. In the period between 1990 and 2020, China will increase its emissions by a remarkable 496 per cent and India by 350 per cent. Professor Garnaut in his report details the projected increase in Chinese emissions between 2005 and 2020 from five to 12 billion tonnes of CO₂ per annum. With China's growth in emissions 100 times greater than the cuts Australia seeks to make over the same period, it is easy to see that China is where the real game is.

In fact the Productivity Commission has found that Australia is alone among the nations of the world in proposing an economy-wide carbon tax. Little wonder then that so many of our business leaders who are exposed to the global market are deeply concerned about the impact the carbon tax will have on the nation's competitiveness. BHP's CEO, Marius Kloppers, called the tax a 'dead-weight cost' on the coal industry, noting that other competitor countries in the market, including South Africa and Indonesia, did not apply a carbon tax.

The Gillard government simply fails to appreciate the extent to which Australia is a net importer of capital, relying on foreign investment to fund the development of our lucrative resources sector. Global capital is fungible; it is up for grabs. There is no sentiment involved. Investors go where money is to be made and sovereign risk is limited. If we pursue a punitive carbon and mining tax, it is simply inevitable that investors will take their money elsewhere. This will cost jobs across the economy. The fact that the government has not even had the courage to name those companies it is promising to tax—first numbering 1,000 then 500 and now 400—means there is even greater uncertainty among many of our economy's largest employers.
The government makes the mistake of telling us that lost jobs will be replaced by new jobs in the renewable energy sector. International experience does not bear this out. In a UK study earlier this year it was found that 3.7 jobs were lost for every green job created and similar findings were reached in a 2009 Spanish study.

Not only does the government's carbon tax raise the spectre of sending Australian jobs offshore but it also sends billions of dollars of taxpayer funds offshore to buy emission permits. Because the government acknowledge that, even with a carbon tax, emissions in Australia are projected to increase by 43 million tonnes from 578 million tonnes to 621 million tonnes by 2020, they have been forced to allocate $3.5 billion in 2020 to purchase carbon credits. It is hard to believe but by 2050, funding for these foreign carbon credits is estimated to reach $57 billion per year or 1.5 per cent of GDP. It is of great concern that Australia will have limited transparency and control over these foreign trading schemes where corruption and fraud is legion. Significantly the Australian Crime Commission details in its 2011 report the state of international investigations into carbon tax evasion, including in Norway where Europol is investigating allegations that up to €5 billion of revenue has been lost and in Italy where organised crime groups are reportedly tapping into the European wind energy sector.

Since coming to power in 2007 this government has had an extremely poor record in management and implementation. There is no reason to think that their ability to implement a complex, economy-wide carbon tax will be any different from their monumental failures, which we have seen with the school halls, pink batts, Green Loans and NBN programs. In contrast, the coalition has put forward a fully funded, costed, incentive focussed and technologically focussed alternative with our Direct Action policy. We will clean up the dirtiest power stations, invest in renewable energy and carbon sequestration, plant more trees and establish an emissions reduction fund that will source the lowest cost abatement, helping us achieve the bipartisan commitment to a five per cent reduction in CO$_2$ levels by 2020. At $3.2 billion over four years, it is a far cry from the Prime Minister's big government, big spending carbon tax which will hurt the economy without delivering any real environmental benefit.

I finish where I started. In my brief career, the parliamentary debate over the government's proposed carbon tax is the most contentious issue with which I have been involved. But, given its implications for our economy and our future, it is a debate that must be had. Our policy, based on incentives and initiative, will always trump that of a punishing new tax based on a broken promise. In the end, the pages of history and their judgment will be on our side.

Mr Murphy (Reid) (13:32): Global warming is a reality that is already with us. The CSIRO, the weather bureau and scientists around the world are recording that the planet is warming and that high levels of carbon pollution risk environmental and economic damage. The first decade of this century was the warmest on record. Each decade in Australia since the 1940s has been warmer than the last. Australia faces significant damage in a warmer changing climate, leading to extreme weather events such as droughts, heatwaves, bushfires, floods and cyclones, which are becoming more frequent and severe. These deadly events are also threatening our homes, businesses and communities, and our supplies of food and clean water are becoming less secure.
According to *Warnings from the Bush*, prepared by Anna Reynolds and published by the Climate Action Network Australia, material that was peer reviewed by Dr Lesley Hughes of the Department of Biological Sciences at Macquarie University and Dr Mark Howden of CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems, climate change is a threat to the diversity of life on the Australian continent and to many of our great natural icons, including our World Heritage area: Kakadu, the Wet Tropics, the Great Barrier Reef and the Blue Mountains.

What does this material warn us about? I only have enough time today to provide their summary of their findings, and they are as follows:

- 90 Australian animals have been specifically identified as at risk from climate change, including the State Emblems of Victoria (Leadbeater’s Possum), South Australia (Hairy-nosed Wombat), and Queensland (Koala). However the number of animals at risk could be far higher if broader studies were undertaken.
- Animals identified as at risk include mammals, birds, reptiles, frogs, fish and invertebrates from all Australian States and Territories.
- Many of Australia’s remaining native forests will change or be damaged by the effects of climate change. For example, Australia’s wet tropical mountain rainforests will decrease by 50% with only a 1°C rise in the global temperature. …
- Within the next few decades many species of Australia’s famous gum trees (Eucalyptus) will have their entire present day population exposed to temperatures and rainfalls under which no individuals currently exist.
- Mount Kosciuszko, Australia’s highest mountain, will lose its alpine environment.
- Current efforts to repair the Murray Darling river system will be undone by 2050, with climate change causing a reduction in the river’s mean flow of up to 30 percent.
- Few of Australia’s diverse environments, from the ocean to the deserts, will be immune from climatic stress and loss of species.
- Many of our national parks that currently protect endangered species may not have a suitable climate in the future for these species.
- Regional communities that rely on the natural environment for tourism income, fresh water and local recreation will be affected by the impacts of climate change on these ecological services.
- The damage caused by climate change will have a negative economic impact on the tourism, fishing, forestry and agricultural industries in regional Australia.

Finally, in their summary of findings, they said:

- Most of these changes will occur within our lifetimes and will be difficult to stop if greenhouse gas emissions continue to accumulate in the atmosphere at higher and higher levels.

Now let me turn to the bushfires like those experienced in New South Wales in 2002 and 2006. Such fires will continue to occur more regularly, causing serious and irreversible damage to national parks, forests and private property. The fire of November 2006 in the Grose Valley kept burning, even at overnight temperatures down to zero, because the fuel load was completely dry. Every year the Blue Mountains are becoming hotter. Snow in winter is becoming a rare event.

The Black Saturday bushfires in Victoria on 12 February 2009, when 173 people died and 414 were injured, are a good example of what a three-degree warming scenario will look like. Most animals find it difficult to survive even a two-degree temperature rise in their environment. Before the fire started on Black Saturday, possums were dropping dead out of the trees. The three-degree rise was enough to completely dry out the normally fire-resistant wet sclerophyll areas
of bush so that the temperature of the fire fronts rose from the normal 1,100 degrees to a staggering 1,500 degrees. This was enough to melt steel structures. As we have seen, such fires are unstoppable.

There is plenty of other available evidence for those prepared to look for it. According to the American Institute of Biological Sciences, before the industrial age the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere was about 280 parts per million; today it is over 360 parts per million. That is an increase of about 30 per cent in fewer than 300 years. The institute has pointed out that there is now much more carbon dioxide in our atmosphere than ever before in human history. For the earth, this is an unprecedented rate of change—about 10,000 years worth of change compressed into 100 years. The earth has been able to adapt to slow changes, not fast changes. Slow changes allow the biosphere and earth's species time to adjust. Quick change may cause biological chaos and disrupt agricultural production. Carbon dioxide is critical to controlling the atmosphere's temperature because it absorbs infrared radiation, better known as heat. Mr Deputy Speaker, to illustrate the greenhouse effect, try sitting in your car in the sun with the windows rolled up. The sun's rays pass through the car's windows and hit the car's seats. There, the visible light is absorbed and reradiated to the interior of the car as heat. The car's glass windows, while transparent to visible light, are opaque to heat, so the heat is trapped within the car and the car's interior temperature can quickly become that of an oven. That is why scientists think that increasing the amount of carbon dioxide in the air will cause the earth's atmosphere to get even warmer.

The issue of rising sea levels is of direct interest to some of my constituents. At the northern boundary of my electorate is Sydney Harbour. The institute is telling us that the global sea level rise is caused by two factors. The first factor is water running into the ocean through the melting of surface ice such as mountain glaciers and polar ice caps. Current evidence of global warming includes the melting of glaciers on five continents. The second factor is the thermal expansion of water within the oceans. As the temperature of the water in the oceans rises and the seas become less dense, they will spread, occupying more surface area on the planet. Increased temperature will accelerate the rate of sea level rise.

Since the end of the last ice age, 18,000 years ago, sea level has risen by 120 metres. Geological data suggest that the global average sea level may have risen at an average rate of 0.1 to 0.2 millimetres per year over the last 3,000 years. However, tide gauge data indicate that the global rate of rising sea levels during the 20th century was one to two millimetres per year—that is, 10 times as fast. Low-lying Pacific island nations will be inundated as the rising sea level invades their drinking water reserves. What the institute has been telling us is not new. We know that as the sea level rises some Pacific Islands are under threat. Tuvalu has experienced low-land flooding. It comprises nine coral atolls. Its highest point is only five metres above sea level. Saltwater intrusion is adversely affecting drinking water and food production. Tuvalu's leaders predict that the nation will be submerged in 50 years. In March 2002, Tuvalu's Prime Minister appealed to Australia and New Zealand to provide homes for his people when his country is submerged. The Cook Islands and the Marshall Islands are also under threat and, in addition to island countries, low-lying coastal areas of other countries, including Australia, are threatened by rising sea levels.
I now turn from the American Institute of Biological Sciences to Geoscience Australia, a government organisation which tells us that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has found that warming of the climate system is unequivocal and that human induced greenhouse gases are very likely responsible. The IPCC's approach is very conservative. Geoscience Australia predicts that global warming will accelerate into the future due to continued human induced greenhouse gas emissions, and this will affect the sea level. Global average sea level rose at a rate of 1.8 millimetres per year from 1961 to 2003. From 1993 to 2003, this rate increased to approximately 3.1 millimetres per year. This is a high degree of confidence that the sea level will continue to rise and possibly accelerate over the next century and beyond through thermal expansion of the oceans, melting of glaciers and Antarctic ice sheets and changes in water storage on land. Changes in sea level will be felt through increases in intensity and frequency of storm surges and coastal flooding, increased salinity of rivers, bays and coastal aquifers, increased coastal erosion, inundation of low-lying coastal communities and critical infrastructure, loss of important mangroves and impacts on coral reefs. Geoscience Australia concludes that any or all of these changes may have a severe impact on urban communities if unmitigated.

Australia generates more carbon per person than any other developed country, including the United States of America. Of the world's 195 nations, Australia is the 15th highest polluter overall. Australia's carbon pollution is high because our electricity is generated mainly by burning coal. We need to produce and use energy in a cleaner and smarter way. Under a business-as-usual scenario and the do-nothing policy of the opposition, future generations face a very bleak future. Nevertheless, the worst effects of global warming can be avoided if we reduce carbon pollution before it becomes too difficult and too costly. That is why we are acting with this legislation. Countries around the world are already taking action—35 countries have already started carbon pollution reduction schemes. Some have carbon taxes as well. Globally, more money is now invested in new, renewable power than in old, high-pollution energy. China is now the world's largest maker of both solar panels and wind turbines—you would not know that from some of the contributions by the opposition—and Germany is not far behind. Both are reaping the economic benefits, as we will with this legislation in the future.

The government's clean energy plan will cut pollution by at least five per cent by 2020, compared with the 2000 levels. This will require cutting net expected pollution by at least 23 per cent in 2020. The government wants pollution to be cut by 80 per cent of 2000 levels by the year 2050. Large-scale renewable electricity generation, including hydro, is projected to be 18 times its current size by 2050. Total renewable generation, including hydro, will be around 40 per cent of electricity generation by 2050. Millions of tonnes of carbon will be stored in the land through better land and waste management. Between now and 2050, around 460 million tonnes of carbon pollution will be reduced or stored instead of entering our atmosphere under the Carbon Farming Initiative. Putting a price on carbon is the most effective and cheapest way to cut pollution. This is recognised by economists around the world, the OECD and the Productivity Commission. Why does the opposition not get it? Currently, there is no charge for polluting the air despite the fact that it is harming our environment. Charging Australia's largest
polluters creates a powerful incentive for all businesses to cut pollution by investing in clean technology or operating more efficiently.

The carbon price is not a tax on households. Around 500 of the biggest polluters in Australia will need to pay the charge, and every dollar raised will be used to support households, jobs and to reinvest in clean energy and climate change programs. There will be tax cuts and increases in pensions, allowance and benefits. You do not hear that from the opposition, do you?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! It being 1:45, the debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 43. The debate may be resumed at a later hour, and the honourable member for Reid will then have the opportunity of continuing his remarks.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Queensland Natural Disasters

Mrs PRENTICE (Ryan) (13:45): It has been many months since the devastating floods which caused so much heartache in the electorate of Ryan, and we have worked very hard to bring some semblance of normality back to our community. We have watched the vegetation regrow, we have watched the council repair the roads and we have watched the rubbish cleared away. We have delighted as our neighbours have begun to rejoin communities and move back into their homes. Sadly, not all of our neighbours are doing so well, and the coming of the new season seems a good time to remind ourselves that there are still friends in need and work to be done.

It was with this in mind that I attended the Flood Relief Jazz Concert on the afternoon of Saturday, 17 September with some 800 members of the community at the Fig Tree Pocket State School. It was an event organised by local resident Joanne Bullock-Saxton to raise both money and awareness of the families in the area who are still rebuilding or have not yet returned to their flood damaged homes. With two hours of music from the University of Queensland Big Band, Boston based singer Amanda Carr and members of the new Galapagos Duck band, families relaxed in the warm weather with picnics or food from the school's P&C group.

I commend the efforts of the volunteers and businesses, including Westpac, who donated money, time and resources to support our community for a successful and happy event.

Finance Minister of the Year Award

Mrs D'ATH (Petrie) (13:46): I rise today to congratulate the Treasurer and Deputy Prime Minister first and foremost for his excellent stewardship of the Australian economy but in particular for his recognition by Euromoney magazine as international Finance Minister of the Year. Determined by leading finance and banking experts, this award is a well-deserved honour recognising the Treasurer's swift and decisive action over the past four years to ensure the Australian people are safeguarded from the worst impacts of the global financial crisis.

Government members interjecting—

Mrs D'ATH: Euromoney has credited the Treasurer with 'getting the important decisions right', including his commitment to implementing the stimulus and a consistent, strong and steady performance in 'imposing the fiscal discipline that many other finance ministers refused to adopt' to make our country the best performing economy of the world's developed economies. The Treasurer's hard work since coming to office has helped us become a nation that is one of just three OECD countries to stay out of recession since 2008.
Euromoney in their report said:

Australia's position within the global financial community has never been stronger than it is today. Its banking system is strong and the envy of many other developed nations. Its economic foundations are sound, with strong exports, low unemployment and rising incomes.

Importantly, these achievements impact on Australians, and tweeters around the country have congratulated the Treasurer. Ben Strachan tweeted:

Congratulations on your award. I'm a small business owner and I'm thankful for your good work. Well done.

Nick Jatan tweeted:

Congrats mate, plenty of us young families appreciated the government response to the GFC and are grateful for the state of interest rates, thanks.

I give my thanks to the Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind the honourable member who was interjecting from outside her seat that she ought not to do so.

Beaudesert Show Society

Mr BUCHHOLZ (Wright) (13:48): A couple of weekends ago the Beaudesert Show Society, established in 1889, held its annual show. The rain on the first day did not dampen the spirits of those who attended. The rain held up some of the horse and rings events; however, the show went over only two days and was well attended. The Beaudesert Show Society continues to provide one of the best regional shows on the Queensland circuit, a commitment reflected by the Executive Officer of Queensland Agricultural Shows, Mr Mark Bryant.

The Beaudesert Show also promotes the Miss Showgirl awards, and I acknowledge Miss Showgirl Rebecca Holding and Miss Show Princess Courtney Cook, Showgirl runners-up Christal-Leigh Turner and Heather Barnes, Show Princess runner-up Brianna Turner and South-East Queensland runner-up Roisin Dunne. The showgirls and show princesses are great ambassadors for the local community, and I encourage their participation in the promotion of the significance of regional shows in our regional communities. I would also like to acknowledge the Show Society executive, led by Mr Ian Harrison, and Mr Thomas Dunne, who has been a wonderful patron for 50 years.

With the time I have left I would like to acknowledge in the gallery today a contingent of young LNP troops who have come down from Queensland on a road trip. They are dedicated political tragics who have my full support in their endeavours in the state of Queensland.

To return to my speech, the importance of the success of a vibrant regional show is reflected by community spirit. My community in the electorate of Wright definitely chose those attributes.

Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

Dr LEIGH (Fraser) (13:50): Established a decade ago, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has spent US$22 billion and saved six million lives. The Global Fund accounts for two-thirds of global spending on tuberculosis and malaria and one-fifth of global public spending on HIV and AIDS. These diseases are a real threat to Australia, as we saw with the recent outbreak of tuberculosis in the Torres Strait.

In June, I represented Australia at the Global Fund Partnership Forum in Sao Paolo, Brazil, where we discussed strategies and heard firsthand from some of the people who have benefited from Global Fund work.

This week the high-level independent panel reviewing the Global Fund's financial controls handed down an important report. It
is a major milestone in accelerating reform of the Global Fund to better prevent and detect fraud and ensure funding goes to those in need. It recommends improving financial oversight, strengthening the governance structure, simplifying the grant application process and putting in place a robust risk management framework. We should welcome this rigorous report. It accords with AusAID’s ongoing work to improve risk management and value for money. It should not be an excuse to cut global disease funding.

Australia will attend the extraordinary meeting of the board of the Global Fund on 26 September to consider the report’s findings. This will ensure the Global Fund remains strong and continues to provide life-saving treatment for HIV, tuberculosis and malaria. This is a time for bold leadership, recognising that traditional Global Fund donors—the US, Europe and Japan—are in financial difficulty. To maintain AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria treatment for millions of people, the Global Fund will require tens of billions of dollars in the coming years. (Time expired)

National Rural Health Alliance

Mr OAKESHOTT (Lyne) (13:51): I rise to report to the House on the ongoing work of the National Rural Health Alliance. Yesterday they were in the building with 32 national organisations represented through the peak body and were advocating strongly for better health outcomes in rural and remote Australia. Yesterday they launched the Centre of Research Excellence in Rural and Remote Primary Health Care with a range of universities involved, really trying to lift the robustness and timeliness of data collection so we can get better policy outcomes through research and development through our leading institutions working with rural and remote communities. As well, we are not far away from the official launch of regional health Australia.

An opposition member: Rural health Australia!

Mr OAKESHOTT: Or rural health Australia. The issue that has been burning rural and regional communities for some time is the inequity in the delivery of resource distribution formulas, both at a state and a national level. The principle of equity needs to be upheld. National Rural Health Alliance identifies between $1 and $2 billion a year, not making it through to its proper source, even based on the states’ own funding formulas. So regional health Australia will crack heads and work on making sure the principle of equity is met. These are two significant outcomes in the last 12 months and the start of a significant change in health care in Australia. (Time expired)

Queensland Natural Disasters

Ms ROWLAND (Greenway) (13:53): I rise to congratulate the Kellyville Bushrangers Rugby League Club, which comprises many local residents, including residents from Stanhope Gardens and Glenwood, on their generous efforts to help those affected by last summer’s natural disasters in Queensland.

In response to these tragedies, the Bushrangers raised $3,500 from a raffle at Stanhope Village Shopping Centre on 22 January and also received donations of jerseys and equipment from club supporters, which they have delivered to one of the worst hit junior rugby league clubs in Queensland, the Theodore Roosters.

Earlier this year I joined the Kellyville Princesses—their all-girl pink-jersey team—for their open day. Club Secretary, Penny Morgan, told me how moved she and other members were by reports that a local football, just like theirs, was left devastated
by the floods. They all resolved to do something about it.

Thanks to their virtual adoption by the Kellyville Bushrangers, the Roosters were still able to take to the field this year despite floodwaters destroying their club. Last weekend the Bushrangers flew the 1,200 kilometre journey north to Theodore in Central Queensland to play a one-off match against the Roosters on the ground they helped rebuild.

I congratulate efforts of all the Kellyville Bushrangers, especially Penny and their club president, Jeff Quick, for digging deep to support our friends in Queensland in their time of need and demonstrating the spirit of community in north-west Sydney, which does us all proud.

Disability
Small Businesses

Mr BILLSON (Dunkley) (13:54): I want to take a few moments to extend my respect and congratulations to all the efforts of the Community Lifestyle Accommodation organisation operating out of my electorate, seeking to collaborate with local councils state and federal governments to provide accessible community based housing for people with profound disabilities. Having access to reasonable accommodation for families caring for a person with profound disabilities should not be like winning lotto. It is too hard. It is too frustrating and it is too difficult to count on the type of accommodation best suited to people with profound disabilities. Parents that are ageing themselves and have given selflessly so much of their lives to care for loved ones deserve our support.

I look at the likes of Paul Lyons, Sandra Smythe and Marie Hell and I thank them for all their efforts. We did think we had identified a parcel of land in Baxter which might be the basis of a funding application to state and federal governments. Alas, the local council has indicated they are not prepared to identify that parcel of land as surplus to their requirements and provide a foundation for that funding proposal. We will keep looking, but my respect goes out to each and every one of them. They are out there having a go.

Someone else having a go is the small business community. We know the Prime Minister has said that the economic modelling that has been used for the carbon tax on macro-economic impacts is wrong. It is out by 15 per cent. How about doing some micro-economic modelling on the impact on small business that is quite fearful of the harm and the hurt the carbon tax will introduce? At least do some modelling.

(Time expired)

South Adelaide Football Club

Ms RISHWORTH (Kingston) (13:56): I rise to congratulate the South Adelaide Football Club on their hard-fought win against the Glenelg Tigers in the elimination round last weekend in the SANFL competition. The win takes them into the semifinals this weekend, where they will compete for a spot in the grand final. If successful, it will be the first time since 1979 that the club has gained a position in the grand final. The South Adelaide Football Club has a rich history dating back to 1876. Indeed—

Honourable members interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. Peter Slipper): Honourable members will allow the member for Kingston to deliver her contribution.

Ms RISHWORTH: Charles Cameron Kingston, the man my seat is named after, was secretary and president of the club while Premier of South Australia and Attorney-General. In 1995, the club moved to its current home at Noarlunga Downs where it
has played an important role in our local community. The club is not only committed to elite football but also supports the local amateur leagues and junior leagues. In addition, the club has supported the most disadvantaged in our community, through its Man Made program. This program matches young men and boys in our community who have no male father figure, with senior players from the club becoming their mentor. I wish South Adelaide Football Club the very best in their upcoming semifinal. I have no doubt that they will do South Adelaide proud. The supporters, the club and everyone else are extremely excited about the prospect of making the grand final. As the Premier of South Australia would say, and has regularly been quoted as saying, 'Go Panthers!'

Carbon Pricing

Mr CHESTER (Gippsland) (13:57): The Prime Minister promised she would wear out her shoe leather consulting with the Australian people about the carbon tax. I thought I would save the Prime Minister a little bit of time. I distributed postcards in my electorate and invited people to give some feedback to the Prime Minister, to send Julia Gillard a message. Those opposite like to harangue, they bully and they belittle their opponents, but I invited the people in my community to have their say. This is what they said. Graham from Traralgon said, 'What happened to Labor being the party of the people for the people? This current city-centric attitude of pandering to the Greens is not governing for the people but the noisy minority.' Irene from Traralgon said, 'The carbon tax will be catastrophic for the Latrobe Valley. We simply won't cope with the ripple effect of the lost jobs. Totally over the Greens.'

Prime Minister, here is another one. This is from Marie, in Traralgon. 'Julia, you promised no carbon tax and now you've changed your mind. This is an absolute betrayal to the people who voted for you.'

Government members interjecting—

Mr CHESTER: Sorry, I missed the interjection. Do you think I made them up? Nine hundred people responded and 32 of them were in favour of your carbon tax.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Gippsland will address his remarks through the chair.

Mr CHESTER: I invite those opposite to really make history, to be on the right side of history. Stand up for the workers. Get up and walk across here and help us dump the carbon tax and dump your relationship with the Australian Greens.

F1 in Schools Program

Mr LYONS (Bass) (13:20): I recently reported on Brooks High School, a high school in the northern suburbs of Launceston competing in the F1 in Schools world championships, having won the Australian championship. I am thrilled to report to the parliament today that at the end of day 2 of the competition the PentaGliders were in first place, with the quickest time, and coming a close second in the reaction time in racing. The team also received positive response from the engineering judges and were happy with their presentation and portfolios. I am looking forward to hearing how the PentaGliders progressed. Amy, Tristan, Nathan and Jack—I wish you all the best.

The SPEAKER: It being 2 pm the time for members statements has concluded. If members could please take their places I have a message to report from the Main Committee.
CONDOLENCES
Jull, Hon. David Francis
Report from Main Committee
Order of the day returned from Main Committee for further consideration; certified copy of the motion presented.

Debate resumed on the motion:

That the House express its deep regret at the death on 13 September 2011 of the Honourable David Francis Jull, a Member of this House for the Divisions of Bowman and Fadden from 1975 to 2007 and Minister for Administrative Services, and place on record its appreciation of his long and meritorious public service, and tender its profound sympathy to his family in their bereavement.

Honourable members having stood in their places—

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE
Asylum Seekers

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Leader of the Opposition) (14:01): My question is to the Prime Minister. Given that the government now supports offshore processing and given that the opposition acknowledges the importance of the refugee convention, will the Prime Minister give bipartisan support to an amendment which strengthens offshore processing but prevents people being sent to countries that have not signed the UN convention?

Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Prime Minister) (14:01): To the Leader of the Opposition I say that the position that the government is bringing to the parliament is known to him because he has been briefed on it. It is a position that serves the national interest. It serves the national interest because it does not rule out the policies or plan of either side of parliament. It would enable the Leader of the Opposition, if he were ever Prime Minister of this country, to enact the policy he believes to be the best. On the basis we are not bringing legislation to the parliament that would rule out the Leader of the Opposition's plan, we say to the Leader of the Opposition that it is not appropriate for him to try and change that legislation to rule out the government's plan.

What is required here—and what Australians are looking for—is a moment of resolve from this parliament: a moment where we set aside politics as usual and work for the common ground. And the common ground must be legislation that enables either side of the parliament to have sufficient power to enact the solution that they believe to be best. Consistently I have said in this parliament that I do not ask the Leader of the Opposition to endorse the government's plan for Malaysia. I do not ask that. With the appropriate power and with the implementation of the arrangement I would expect that the Leader of the Opposition in public discourse would continue to maintain criticism of it. That would be his right as the Leader of the Opposition and a participant in our democracy. What I do not expect is for the Leader of the Opposition to come into this place and deny to this government the kinds of powers that governments past have had and used and the kinds of powers that governments in the future may well seek to use.

So, to the Leader of the Opposition I say that what we will support is the legislation that the government will bring to the parliament. It is appropriately constructed to be common ground. It would enable me, as Prime Minister, to implement the plan that the government has announced—the arrangement with Malaysia. It would enable the Leader of the Opposition, if he were ever Prime Minister, to implement the policy he believes is best—that is, Nauru. That is why it is common ground. That is why it is appropriate. Of course, every step of the way this side of the House will honour
obligations under the refugee convention. I understand that to be common ground as well.

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Leader of the Opposition) (14:07): I have a supplementary question to the Prime Minister. How can the Prime Minister say that the test of bipartisanship is agreeing, always and only, with her? How can the Prime Minister say that the coalition is acting against the national interest when half of her caucus opposes the Malaysian people swap, including Senator Faulkner?

Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Prime Minister) (14:05): I say to the Leader of the Opposition that I specifically did not say to him that my definition of bipartisanship is him endorsing the government's policies. I in fact said the complete reverse. What I said to the Leader of the Opposition—and I ask him to reflect on my actual words rather than what he likes to imagine I may have said—were words which I ask the Leader of the Opposition, in an exercise in the national interest to weigh seriously and with a moment of reflection rather than to engage in the kinds of politicking in this area that Australians are rightly sick of. I say again to the Leader of the Opposition that I am well aware, as he is well aware, that this side of the parliament has one plan; that side of the parliament has another plan. I do not ask the Leader of the Opposition to endorse the government's plan. What I do ask the Leader of the Opposition to do—and why this is common ground—is to enable the government, post the High Court case, to put the Migration Act in an appropriate state that this side of the House can implement its policy and, if the Leader of the Opposition were ever to sit on this side of the House in the Prime Minister's chair, he could implement his policy. That it is common ground. That is why it should be an act of bipartisanship. What the Leader of the Opposition is saying to me is in fact an act of high partisanship, and that is why it does not serve the national interest. He is saying to me that the government should endorse legislative amendments which would only enable his solution to be put into place and not enable the government to implement the arrangement with Malaysia. That is why it is a high act of partisanship. That is why it is reckless. That is why it is not in the national interest and that is why it appears that the Leader of the Opposition is now on a course to wreck offshore processing by this country.

And after frothing at the mouth for 12 months about the government and political arrangements with the Greens, what he is now planning to do is to vote with the Australian Greens to destroy offshore processing. That is actually what the Leader of the Opposition is proposing to do. He is proposing to engage in that reckless act of partisanship because he believes that it is in his political interest.

Mr Pyne interjecting—

Ms GILLARD: There is the member for Sturt yelling and interjecting about voting with the Greens. Well, I trust in the divisions that will wreck offshore processing in this country, as the Leader of the Opposition wants to do, that the member for Sturt sits next to the Australian Greens member who will be voting with the Liberal Party. I hope he does that. My point as I articulated was that the opposition likes to yell and scream about the Australian Greens, but they are on a political strategy to lock hands with them, to destroy offshore processing in this country, and if they do that and when they do that then every boat that comes to this country after that moment will be as a result of their reckless conduct.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER (14:09): Order! We have present in the gallery this afternoon a group
of Indigenous female leaders who are in Parliament House today to participate in the Oxfam Straight Talk program, with workshops and activities about the Australian political system. On behalf of members, I extend to them a very warm welcome.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Global Economy

Ms BURKE (Chisholm) (14:09): My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer update the House on the global economic situation and any implications for our economy.

Mr SWAN (Lilley—Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer) (14:10): I thank the member for Chisholm for her very important question. Overnight we have seen the release of the IMF World economic outlook. This talks about the growing instability elsewhere in the global economy and talks about the challenges that are posed for global economic growth. What the IMF has done is give a stark warning that the global economy has entered a dangerous new phase. This does reflect concerns about sovereign debt levels in Europe and it also reflects concerns about weaker economic activity in the United States. What the IMF has done with its forecast is that it has revised down its global forecast to four per cent in 2011 and four per cent in 2012, down from 4.3 per cent in 2011 and 4.5 per cent in 2012.

It was always going to be difficult post the global financial crisis and the global recession. Things were never going to be easy. Of course, we are still living with the legacy of those events some years ago. Many advanced economies have not returned their output to what it was prior to the global financial crisis, and that is particularly the case in terms of the United States. You do not have growth momentum in either the United States or Europe, and what that is producing in those countries is very high levels of unemployment. Many of these countries are also struggling with the weight of excessive sovereign debt and hamstrung fiscal policies.

What we need to see on a global scale is that these issues do need to be confronted, and they need to be confronted with the same determination that the G20 used during the global financial crisis and the global recession. In particular, we do need the major advanced economies to take swift and credible action to restore growth and confidence. This will certainly be the message that I will be taking to meetings in Washington of the G20, the IMF and the World Bank, because international engagement now is as important as it was a couple of years ago.

Australia is not immune from these bouts of instability in the global economy, but we need to remember that our situation could not be more different than what we see in the United States and Europe. In the global economy we stand tall in a position of fundamental strength, because we did act to support jobs and growth at the height of the global financial crisis. What we did in this country successfully—and everyone on this side of the House is so proud of—is we avoided recession.

Government members: Hear, hear!

Mr SWAN: Our economy has grown by more than five per cent since the global financial crisis—not something you could say in many other advanced economies. We do have something we are also proud of and that is an exceptional record when it comes to job creation—750,000 jobs in the time that we have been in office. The consequence of that is low unemployment. We treasure that because in those countries
which have high unemployment, this is what causes not only weak economic growth but the destruction of communities. We on this side of the House understand the importance of jobs and the dignity of work. The dignity of work is so important not just to individual families but to an economy. That is why we put such a high priority on jobs.

On top of that we do have a very big investment pipeline—$430 billion. What we as a country must do is maximise the opportunities that flow from that investment pipeline by putting in place the essential reforms, the long-term reforms, that will maximise our prosperity: pricing carbon, investing in skills, making sure we get a proper return from our resources. If we do that we will continue to create jobs and prosperity for all Australians.

Asylum Seekers

Ms JULIE BISHOP (Curtin—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:14): My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer the Prime Minister to the fact that in the past she supported turning back the boats, but now does not; opposed offshore processing, but now does not; supported temporary protection visas, but now does not; wanted East Timor to host a regional processing centre, but now does not; would not send an asylum seeker to a country not a signatory to the UN convention on refugees, but now will; and closed Manus Island then wanted it reopened, but now has lost interest in it. How can the Prime Minister be trusted to implement any policy in the national interest to protect our borders?

Ms JULIE BISHOP: Mr Speaker, on a point of order: the question was about the numerous policy contortions of the Prime Minister; it was not about the coalition's decade-long policy.

Ms JULIE BISHOP: My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer the Prime Minister to the fact that in the past she supported turning back the boats, but now does not; opposed offshore processing, but now does not; supported temporary protection visas, but now does not; wanted East Timor to host a regional processing centre, but now does not; would not send an asylum seeker to a country not a signatory to the UN convention on refugees, but now will; and closed Manus Island then wanted it reopened, but now has lost interest in it. How can the Prime Minister be trusted to implement any policy in the national interest to protect our borders?

Ms JULIE BISHOP: Mr Speaker, on a point of order: the question was about the numerous policy contortions of the Prime Minister; it was not about the coalition's decade-long policy.
questions are framed in this way they allow for a much wider response.

Ms GILLARD: During that exchange the Leader of the Opposition has interjected at me, 'Consistent over a decade.' At some point the Leader of the Opposition is going to have to start dealing with the facts in the national interest. The facts are these: when the Howard government was in office—and the Leader of the Opposition was a minister in that government—it processed people in Nauru when it was not a signatory to the refugee convention. A fact that cannot be denied. Now apparently the Leader of the Opposition says you can only process people in countries that are a signatory—a complete backflip and inconsistency, part of trashing the national interest in support of their political interest.

Then, of course, the Leader of the Opposition says, 'Oh, you must have legally-binding arrangements. It would be quite wrong not to have legally-binding arrangements.' The Leader of the Opposition is known to use very ugly words about people in election commitments. His own policy document at the election talked about assurances, not about legally binding—another completely sharp act of hypocrisy for them to pursue their narrow political interest. Then the Leader of the Opposition says he could not possibly sleep at night if people were not processed in a signatory country. Meanwhile he says he wants to tow boats back to Indonesia with no guarantees of treatment at all—another huge inconsistency. Why doesn't the Leader of the Opposition just get up and tell the truth? And the truth is he will do anything to prevent this government implementing the arrangement with Malaysia because he is afraid it will work, and he is dreaming of more boats coming to this country because he thinks it will serve his political interest.

Economy

Ms SMYTH (La Trobe) (14:19): My question is to the Prime Minister. Prime Minister, how will the government continue to keep the nation's economy strong, protect jobs and undertake the reforms we need for the future?

Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Prime Minister) (14:20): I thank the member for La Trobe for her question. It is an incredibly important question for Australian families, one that we should be focused on in this parliament today, particularly following the International Monetary Fund report overnight. Our economy, as we meet today, is an economy that is the envy of the world. We are in this state because the Australian people worked together with the government to protect and save jobs during the global financial crisis. The government acted to provide economic stimulus, but the Australian people responded. Employers around the country, big and small, responded to keep people in jobs. Trade unions around the country responded to work with employers to do what was necessary, including short-time arrangements, to keep people in jobs. The government worked with employers and trade unions to keep young Australians in apprenticeships. This is why during all of this global economic turbulence we did not have a recession. We supported the jobs of 200,000 Australians and we kept young Australians in apprenticeships so our economy did not experience the destruction of skills, which comes with young people losing an opportunity for an apprenticeship or having their apprenticeship terminated before completion, and so all those young Australians could have the ticket that makes a difference for a better start in life. Today we should be celebrating the fact that the Treasurer and Deputy Prime Minister has been named as Euromoney's Finance Minister of the Year 2011—something to be
celebrated. It is an award for the Deputy Prime Minister but really an award for our nation, for what we have achieved by working together. This is only the second time an Australian has won this prestigious award in its 29-year history. Of course, the other winner of this prestigious award was Paul Keating, another great Labor Treasurer. I congratulate the Deputy Prime Minister because he views this as an award for the nation and an award for the economy that we have built together.

We will continue to build that economy together and to strengthen it for the future—a future with clean energy; a future with high skills; a future with new technology and infrastructure, like the National Broadband Network; a future with strengthened traditional infrastructure like ports, roads and rail; a future that contains a manufacturing industry still working with vibrancy; a future with a tourism sector and an international education sector which are still working despite the pressures of a strong Australian dollar; and, of course, a future and an economy with a resources sector that is powering ahead with hundreds of billions of dollars of investment in the pipeline.

What makes the Deputy Prime Minister's achievement so remarkable is that he has achieved it day after day after day against the relentless negativity of the opposition and a Leader of the Opposition who slept through the global financial crisis and slept through the important piece of legislation to support Australian jobs. We will always be acting to support Australian jobs and prosperity, no matter what negativity the Leader of the Opposition chooses to pursue.

### Asylum Seekers

**Mr Morrison** (Cook) (14:24): My question is to the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship. I refer the minister to his statement in 2006:

"... asylum-seekers should be treated the same regardless of how they land ... they should be dealt with ... on Australian soil."

and his statement in 2010:

"... from our point of view we've said that the regional processing centre would need to be for the sake of decency, in a country which is a signatory to the refugee convention."

Given that the minister now wants to send asylum seekers to Malaysia, a country not a signatory to the United Nations convention on refugees, how can he be trusted with a blank cheque from this parliament as he proposed in his legislation this morning?  

**Mr Bowen** (McMahon—Minister for Immigration and Citizenship) (14:25): I thank 'Scoop' for his question. Yes, the government has developed its thinking on this issue over time and we have changed our position. We have said, in the light of advice, that we should work with countries in our region—like Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand—to improve protection outcomes. But we will do so in a way where we negotiate with them commitments for them to abide by fundamental human rights principles, and this is particularly in relation to our arrangement with Malaysia. It is one thing for a political party to change its position, as the opposition has done. It was only last year when the Leader of the Opposition said that refugee signatory countries in relation to offshore processing was a furphy. That is what the Leader of the Opposition said 12 months ago. Apparently it is okay for the Leader of the Opposition to do that.

**Mr Morrison:** Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order on relevance. The minister was asked why he could be trusted. The Australian people know that we can be trusted.

**The Speaker:** The member for Cook will resume his seat.
Mr Pyne interjecting—
Mr Morrison interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! That applies to the member for Cook. Again, the point of order went well beyond the way in which points of order should be put. The member for Sturt should feel aggrieved, but the member for Cook is warned. I will allow him to have his point of order but I will not allow him to argue a point. Likewise, in giving the call to the minister, the minister will now—having incidentally mentioned others and argued—come back to the question.

Mr BOWEN: I point out that it is one thing for a political party to change its position and develop its thinking; it is another thing for a political party to have two positions at the same time—for a political party to say, ‘You can't send asylum seekers to a country that is not a refugee convention signatory,’ at the same time as arguing with a straight face that they will turn the boats around and point them towards Indonesia, with no commitments negotiated, which is not a signatory to the refugee convention. The opposition seem to think that they can run two positions at once and walk different sides of the street on this issue. They say we are too tough, and then we are too soft. They say that the refugee convention is not important, and then that it is fundamental. The opposition think they can run two positions at once. I think the Australian people see through the hypocrisy of the opposition.

Carbon Pricing

Mr RIPOLL (Oxley) (14:28): My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer update the House on the modelling of the Clean Energy Future package and what it says about prospects for jobs and growth in our economy?

Mr SWAN (Lilley—Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer) (14:28): I thank the member for Oxley for his question because this morning the government released its update of Treasury modelling on the impacts of the carbon price on the economy. Of course, the update shows the impact of a carbon price starting at $23. It also includes elements for the first time of the Steel Transformation Plan and the Jobs and Competitiveness Program that were not included in the initial report.

The opposition has had a lot to say about the modelling and what it all means. We have heard a lot of rubbish from the opposition about the modelling. They have been claiming that the modelling would be entirely different, and all the impacts would be entirely different, when we put the $23 figure into it. The truth is that the updated modelling does not make any substantial difference to the outcomes of the initial modelling—no substantial difference whatsoever. What it does show—and this is very important—is that the economy continues to grow strongly, and gross national income per person will grow at an average rate of 1.1 per cent to 2050. It also shows that jobs will grow strongly, with national employment expected to increase by 1.6 million jobs by 2020. Incomes will continue to grow strongly, rising by around $9,000 in today's terms, by 2020. Emissions, of course, by 2050, will fall to nearly half of what they would have been without carbon pricing.

What we see here is a picture of strong employment growth and strong income growth. We see a very effective scheme in terms of reducing emissions. This demonstrates that putting a price on carbon in the way we have is the least costly and most effective way of making this very important change. To be a first-rate economy in the 21st century, you have to be substantially driven by clean and renewable energy. What the carbon price does is
provide that incentive for investment, particularly in renewable energy.

But none of this is really understood by those on the other side of the House. The other day we had this real clanger from the shadow Treasurer. He was asked a question about carbon pricing and he said, 'Sorry, one of the biggest, most significant ways to reduce emissions globally has been economic downturns.' That was his seminal contribution to carbon pricing; he wants to do it by having a recession.

Mr Pyne: Mr Speaker, on a point of order—

The SPEAKER: The member for Sturt will resume his seat. I simply indicate to the Treasurer that he has had his wide incidental reference to the other side, and I would caution him on further debate. He may be being directly relevant but, as I said, we are trying to minimise the debate.

Mr SWAN: The really important thing about this modelling is that it shows we can have strong and sustainable economic growth while cutting carbon pollution. This stands in stark contrast to those on the other side of the House who want to tax households $1,300 a year.

Asylum Seekers

Mr VAN MANEN (Forde) (14:32): My question is to the Prime Minister. Can the Prime Minister please tell the House what the government's policy will be to deter people smugglers once the 800-person ceiling of her Malaysian people swap deal has been reached? In other words, Prime Minister, what is plan B?

Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Prime Minister) (14:32): I thank the member for his question; I have answered it on a number of other occasions. The member may want to speak to the Leader of the Opposition about the briefing that the Leader of the Opposition received from the experts who advise government—the very same experts who advised the Howard government. He may want to ask the Leader of the Opposition to explain to him that, in the briefing the Leader of the Opposition received, the experts explained that they expect the deterrence effect of Malaysia to be so strong that we would not reach the 800. That was the expert advice provided to government and to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Ruddock interjecting—

Mr Van Manen: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It was a very simple question: what is plan B if that 800 is reached?

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

Ms GILLARD: I know the facts do not suit the opposition in this debate, but let's deal with the facts. The former minister for immigration in the Howard government, Mr Ruddock, interjected before, and I respond to that interjection: I am talking about expert advice from the same people whose advice he relied on when he was minister. The advice that they are providing is very clear: they expect the deterrence effect of Malaysia to be so strong that we will not reach the 800.

Can I say to the member who asked the question: when he consults with the Leader of the Opposition and gets the fact that he got that advice from the experts—the same experts who advised the Howard government—he may also ask the Leader of the Opposition what plan B is when Nauru is full, if that is what he believes is the right policy.

At the end of the day, this debate about the Malaysia arrangement and Nauru is not the debate that will come before the parliament. If the member genuinely believes that Nauru is the best solution, the best
policy for refugees and asylum seekers, then he should come into this parliament and vote for the government's legislation, because it would give a future government—

Mr Pyne: Mr Speaker—

The SPEAKER: No, the member for Sturt has to resume his place. There has already been a point of order.

Mr Pyne: Mr Speaker, it is a different point of order.

The SPEAKER: I would be very surprised, and I caution the member for Sturt.

Mr Pyne: I realise the point of order on direct relevance has been taken and you ruled that the Prime Minister knew her responsibilities to remain relevant to the question—

The SPEAKER: I think you are putting words in my mouth.

Mr Pyne: My point to you now is that she is defying your ruling.

The SPEAKER: No. I will decide. There is no point of order. Again I remind those who wish to come to the dispatch box with points of order that they can be considered as disorderly interruptions.

Ms GILLARD: In answer to the member's question about the 800—I have provided that answer—can I say to the member: the thing he will be required to vote on is whether government should have the power to implement the offshore processing plan that it believes to be best. That is what the member will be voting on. I would say to the member that, if he believes that government in this country should have the ability to process asylum seekers in an offshore location, then he should vote for that. What he should certainly not do is put himself on a destructive path of wrecking the ability of this nation to have asylum seekers processed offshore. He should not do that. It is not in the national interest to do so.

Mount Isa: Social Problems

Mr KATTER (Kennedy) (14:37): Mr Speaker, may I observe that, if you had been the referee for the Cowboys matches this year, we would have got a much fairer outcome!

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Kennedy will resume his seat, and then we can set his time again.

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: I will admit that I was the rabbit in the spotlight because I am not too sure of the reference—whether I should take it as a compliment or not. The member for Kennedy has the call. He will go to his question directly to save me from this problem!

Mr KATTER: My question without notice is to the Prime Minister. Given that, this year, 21 Australians in Mount Isa have taken their own lives—a rate 23 times higher than the Indigenous average and 80 times higher than the national non-Indigenous average—could a senior officer from the office of the Prime Minister attend the emergency forum scheduled for Mount Isa? Further, could the Prime Minister address some of the applications of state intervention policies which have driven people from north-western and border communities into Mount Isa, causing terminal overcrowding, widespread alcoholism and resultant crime and abuse? Finally, could the Prime Minister consider solutions to address causes—land titles for economic development, plant operated training for mining and build-your-own-homes programs—that have in the past been so successfully undertaken in neighbouring Cloncurry?
Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Prime Minister) (14:39): I thank the member for Kennedy for his question. I know how serious and passionate he is about the issues that he has raised. When I have had the opportunity to travel with the member for Kennedy in his electorate, he and I have discussed suicide in his electorate, and one time he particularly wanted to convey to me an individual family's circumstances. So we did have the opportunity to discuss these issues in some depth.

Understanding how passionate the member for Kennedy is, I believe I can say to him on behalf of all members in this House that that passion for addressing this national tragedy of suicide is shared. I doubt that there is anybody in this place who cannot recount a story of suicide touching their own lives or those of their family, their own friends or the constituents that they see in their electorate offices. This is a major national problem.

Because it is a major national problem, at the last election we made a series of commitments about better investing in strategies that can assist, in what are dark and desperate days, in preventing people getting to the stage where they think the only alternative is to take their own lives. Fortunately, we are aware that there are policies, plans and programs that can make a difference, and it is a question of providing the resources and enabling them to be rolled out in more parts of the country. In the electorate that the member for Kennedy represents, we do have a suicide prevention officer working with the relevant division of Queensland Health, and there is a meeting of stakeholders this week to develop an agreed approach on this. So the federal government is clearly there; the meeting is being organised through the relevant department.

We are also investing in extensions to the Access to Allied Psychological Services initiative, and that will help Australians, including approximately 18,000 Indigenous Australians. We are investing in the Personal Helpers and Mentors Program, which provides services and support for people with severe mental illness, for their families and for their carers. We are investing, too, in family mental health support services. We are also investing in a single mental health online portal, because when people are in dark days they may go looking for help but not feel comfortable having a conversation with another person; however, they may look for help on the internet. We want to make sure that there is access for them to services and reliable information rather than the information they may find on the internet which would not assist them at all during those days of darkness and desperation.

I do understand how seriously the member for Kennedy takes this. I will ask Minister Butler to visit Mount Isa in the following weeks to discuss this with the member for Kennedy and to discuss it with the relevant people in his community, who are also very keen to take localised initiatives to try to address what are by any standards very alarming statistics in the part of Australia that the member for Kennedy represents.

National Security

Mr DANBY (Melbourne Ports) (14:42): My question is to the Minister for Immigration And Citizenship. Will the minister update the House on the importance of effective border protection and asylum seeker policies that work in the national interest? How can Australia work with countries in our region on protection outcomes?

Mr BOWEN (McMahon—Minister for Immigration and Citizenship) (14:43): I thank the member for Melbourne Ports for
his question. Of course the government is committed to working in the national interest and restoring to the executive the power to set Australia’s border protection policies. Our policy is the Malaysia arrangement—the first of its kind in the region. It represents a new level of international cooperation to tackle an international problem and it is negotiated under the regional framework, with protections built in. It includes guaranteed protections committed to by the Malaysian government of non-refoulement, work rights, access to health care and schooling for those transferred. These protections have been worked through with the UNHCR and agreed to by two sovereign nations in good faith.

I am asked by the member for Melbourne Ports about different ways the Australian government can work with countries in our region on protection. The Leader of the Opposition, of course, has a different view—he has criticised the arrangement as not being legally binding.

The SPEAKER: The minister should be very careful in the way he chooses his words; he should not overly debate the question.

Mr BOWEN: Earlier this week, the Leader of the Opposition asked the Prime Minister in this House how she could ensure that obligations would be honoured when they are not required to be legally binding. Apparently, that is a new fundamental principle for the opposition—that negotiations must be legally binding.

The SPEAKER: The minister will go to the matter at hand.

Mr BOWEN: I am asked about different ways of negotiating protections with countries in our region, and there are two different ways: you can negotiate arrangements and get agreements with countries or you cannot. Turning the boats around on the high seas and pointing them towards Indonesia with no protections negotiated is a different approach to the government’s approach of negotiating in good faith with Malaysia.

Last night we saw a new development in this matter, with the Leader of the Opposition realising on the 7.30 Report that it was a problem not to have protections negotiated with Indonesia. He said:

… there is no evidence that the Indonesian Government did refoule people in the past. We have no reason to think they wouldn’t be prepared to enter into the same kind of understandings again.

‘Understandings’? I will have to check with the Attorney-General; I am not sure if an understanding is legally binding. I would be surprised if an understanding with Indonesia was legally binding. Apparently it is okay to send boats to Indonesia with an understanding but it is not okay to send planes to Malaysia when you have a formal agreement with a sovereign country! The weathervane swings again. The Leader of the Opposition is going to negotiate understandings with Indonesia—

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister will now conclude his answer. Making three or four doubtful references is beyond what I will allow.
Mr Bowen: What is clear here is that the opposition will adopt any hypocritical excuse to avoid supporting the government—

The Speaker: Order! The minister will resume his seat!

Mr Billson: The greyhound caller over there—

The Speaker: The member for Dunkley will go to the greyhounds! Meadowglen, Friday nights, out my way, not at Frankston. The member for Dunkley can sit there quietly.

Asylum Seekers

Mr Ewen Jones (Herbert) (14:47): My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister correct her claim yesterday that reopening Nauru would cost $1 billion, given that the total cost of processing asylum seekers on Nauru and Manus Island over the six years they operated was just $289 million? To the member who asked the question, I would direct him to the costing that the minister for immigration released. To the member who asked the question, I would also perhaps direct him to some very simple facts about how far away it is and what the logistical problems with Nauru are. I actually visited the detention centre in Nauru. I am in a different position—

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr Morrison: They said you liked it. That's what they told us.

The Speaker: Order! The Prime Minister has the call. She should be heard in silence.

Ms Gillard (Lalor—Prime Minister) (14:48): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I actually visited the detention centre in Nauru and I have some direct experience with briefings on the logistical challenges of maintaining a detention centre in Nauru. I received them then, when I was shadow minister for immigration, and certainly we have received them in government. What the member might want to recognise is how far away it is and the fact that all resources need to be flown to Nauru—

Mr Morrison: It was just as far away before.

The Speaker: The member for Cook!

Ms Gillard: and the costs of sustaining Australian staff on Nauru. I direct him to the minister for immigration's costings.

I say to the member: the thing he will be required to exercise his vote on in this parliament is where I believe the Australian people are looking for us to act in the national interest. I know as soon as I say 'national interest' the opposition objects. I am not surprised by that.

Mr Morrison: Mr Speaker—

The Speaker: The Prime Minister has the call.

Ms Gillard: The member will be required to vote on legislation which is in the national interest and is about enabling—

Mr Morrison: Mr Speaker—

The Speaker: All right. The Prime Minister will resume her seat. I ignored the member for Cook a moment ago and I remind him of his status in the House and that he was mentioned by me earlier in the question.

Mr Morrison: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, on relevance: she was asked about costings.

The Speaker: The Prime Minister was asked a question and the only point of order pertaining to it is direct relevance. I will listen carefully to the response and the House will remain in order so that I can hear that response.
Mr Albanese: Mr Speaker, on the point of order, in the past you have ruled that the only person who can raise a point of order on relevance is the person who asked the question.

The SPEAKER: No.

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Prime Minister has the call.

Ms GILLARD: In conclusion, I say to the member who asked the question and to all members of this parliament that the way in which they exercise their vote on the amendments to the Migration Act should be in the national interest.

Opposition members interjecting—

Ms GILLARD: I know discussion of the national interest enlivens interjections from the opposition. Perhaps they should save their energy from interjection and think what the national interest is. It is in the national interest that governments make appropriate arrangements for offshore processing. To the member who asked the question: I acknowledge that he probably very seriously believes that there should be a policy about an offshore processing centre on Nauru, but he should vote for legislation to enable that and enable the government to implement its offshore processing plan. That is in the national interest. This cheap politics is not.

Defence

Mr CHAMPION (Wakefield) (14:53): My question is to the Minister for Defence. Why is it important that strategic defence policy, including Australian Defence Force capability, be handled in a considered and responsible way that puts the national interest first? What are the adverse implications for future defence capability if this approach is not taken?

Mr STEPHEN SMITH (Perth—Minister for Defence and Deputy Leader of the House) (14:53): I thank the member for his question and acknowledge his interest in defence matters and defence industry, particularly coming, as he does, from South Australia. One of the highest obligations that an Australian government can have is to protect and defend the national security interests of the Commonwealth. That goes hand in hand with the obligation on the part of an Australian government to protect and enhance the economic security interests of a nation's people.

To protect national security interests, one has to proceed with great care in strategic terms and proceed with great care in making judgments about capability. The mechanism the Australian government uses in that respect is, of course, the 2009 white paper, which is now subject to a commitment to be reviewed every year—so we are expecting a white paper in the first quarter of 2014. The white paper has what is described as the in-built Defence Planning Guidance, which is used on an annual basis to review strategic matters and capability. In the interim, of course, we have a $26 billion per annum budget for defence and the very important one- and two-pass capability mechanisms, which are considered by the Minister for Defence, the minister for finance and the National Security Committee. So these things are always done in a careful, considered and deliberative manner.

The member asked me what adverse implications there are if this approach is not taken. If you do not proceed in a careful, considered and deliberative manner you can send confused and confusing signals. You can send confused and confusing signals to the Australian people, you can send confused and confusing signals to the region and you can send confused and confusing signals to the local defence industry or the international defence industry.
Mr Hockey interjecting—
Mr Robb interjecting—
Mr Abbott interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition should not encourage the minister.

Mr STEPHEN SMITH: I notice that the shadow Treasurer and the shadow minister for finance are indicating that a $70 billion effort in terms of cuts will be made.

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister can talk about the subject matter, but—

Mr STEPHEN SMITH: I am, Mr Speaker. I am talking about approaching these matters in a considered and responsible way. It is entirely appropriate, if the opposition want to, to say that they are proposing to effect $70 billion worth of cuts. They have also made it clear that no area will be excluded from that. So we obviously need to understand what they propose in terms of an orderly way for considering defence in this context.

That is why I was very concerned yesterday when I saw on the front page of the *Australian*, out of the blue, 'Coalition to tear up defence blueprint—an exclusive interview with the shadow minister for defence'.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Fadden will resume his seat. The minister will now conclude the answer. The question as it stood was in order and the response can go to the subject matter but the personalising, debating and argument are, I believe, beyond what people on the outside think should happen in question time.

Mr STEPHEN SMITH: Mr Speaker, I am going to that part of the question which talked about the adverse implications for defence capability if a considered approach is not taken. We have discordant messages from the shadow minister for defence and the Leader of the Opposition and the Manager of Opposition Business on ABC radio this morning.

Mr Hartsuyker interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Cowper! I am listening to the minister. Those interjecting are not assisting their cause at all.

Mr STEPHEN SMITH: We have seen the shadow minister for defence tearing up the white paper, we have heard the Leader of the Opposition saying they will not be and we have seen the Manager of Opposition Business saying that these were musings on ABC radio. You cannot muse about these matters. When you are dealing with national security issues, you have to deal with these matters in a considered and coherent way. You can take the path that the government takes—with the white paper and a considered, deliberative approach—or you can take an alternative approach.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER (14:57): I wish to acknowledge Sir Rabbie Namaliu, former Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea and—maybe even more importantly—former Speaker of Papua New Guinea. He is in the House having last night delivered the inaugural PNG Independence Day Oration. Sir Rabbie, you are a very warmly welcomed visitor in the chamber on all occasions.

Honourable members: Hear, Hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Australian Labor Party

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Manager of Opposition Business) (14:58): My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer the Prime Minister to the resignation of Mr Mike Williamson from the national executive of the Australian Labor Party—a political party regulated by the government's Electoral Act. Given the Prime Minister has refused to
countenance the resignation of the member for Dobell until all investigations concerning the allegations surrounding him have been resolved, did she or her office similarly ask Mr Williamson—

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

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Sturt will resume his seat. This is not directed at the Leader of the House but the cheer squads. I wish the chamber to take these matters with great caution, so the matters that those with the call have should be heard in silence.

Mr Albanese: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The question is not within the parameters of questions allowed in question time that go to the responsibility of the Prime Minister. This is about internal affairs of the union or a political party or something, but it certainly is not in accordance with rulings by Speakers over many, many years about internal matters.

The SPEAKER: I am obliged to listen carefully to the questions because to try to predict where the question is going presents difficulties for me. The House is aware of my concern about questions, so I just say to the member for Sturt that the question has to be very, very tightly framed.

Mr Pyne: Mr Speaker, so that you can consider it in its entirety, I will begin again. I refer the Prime Minister—

Government members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Pyne: Well, how can you not? I refer the Prime Minister to the resignation of Mr Mike Williamson from the national executive of the Labor Party, a political party regulated by the government's Electoral Act. Given the Prime Minister has refused to countenance the resignation of the member for Dobell until all investigations concerning
responsibility of a Prime Minister, not backbench members.

Mr Abbott interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition cannot think that he can get away with just interrupting me. On that occasion, you will remember, comments were made on the public record by the Prime Minister. The question is out of order.

Mr Pyne: Mr Speaker, just to clarify, because this is a very important ruling— I am not trying to be arch about it—what you have essentially ruled is that the Prime Minister is not responsible for her own actions in what she or her office have done.

The SPEAKER: No, what I am saying is that the Prime Minister is not responsible for matters involving backbench members of the parliament. In fact, you have not indicated in your question any basis for your question.

Mr Pyne: Mr Speaker, further on the point of order, I indicated in the question that the Prime Minister had not countenanced the member for Dobell’s resignation. She has expressed full confidence in him in this House on many occasions.

The SPEAKER: And what I am indicating—even under those questions and every time they were asked—is that you will remember that, whilst I allowed them, I considered it doubtful that that is the intent and purpose of question time. And, in reverting late last week to a stronger interpretation of the standing orders, I believe, having warned the House, that my ruling on this question is consistent.

Mrs Bronwyn Bishop: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would refer you to page 527 of the Practice. I refer to that part where it says that the use of question time is for ‘political impact’. It says:

... the opportunity given to Members to raise topical or urgent issues is invaluable. Ministers accept the fact that they must be informed through a check of press, television or other sources of possible questions that may be asked of them in order that they may provide satisfactory answers.

Mr Speaker, I put it to you that the question that was posed falls right within the parameters of that section of the Practice and that the question is in order and should be allowed to stand.

The SPEAKER: Good try! Page 527 also says:

It is also a time when the intensity of partisan politics can be clearly manifested.

It can be but I prefer it not to be. The member for Canberra.

Australian Public Service

Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (15:07): My question is to the Special Minister of State and Special Minister of State for Public Service and Integrity. Is the minister aware of recent statements made regarding the role played by the Public Service in delivering important services to the Australian community? Will the minister outline the government’s view of the competence and professionalism of the Australian Public Service?

Mr GRAY (Brand—Special Minister of State for the Public Service and Integrity and Special Minister of State) (15:07): I thank the member for Canberra for her question. The matter of the Australian Public Service is extremely important to the member for Canberra, and I understand that. The Australian Public Service really does not get the recognition that it deserves. Every hour of every day somewhere around the world there is an Australian public servant working in the interests of our people and of our nation.

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr GRAY: Those opposite might think that is funny, but for those who are in trouble
and who need the assistance of the Australian Public Service we all know that they are available. It often goes unnoticed that at the core of our Australian Public Service is a commitment to serve the Australian community, our families and our businesses. The Australian Public Service is world leading in its policy practice and methods.

Those opposite and we in the government may not always see eye to eye on all things but at least we should agree that the advice from the Australian Public Service is unbiased, evidence based and objective. The role of the Australian Public Service is to provide policy advice and implementation of it irrespective of which political party is on this side of the House. That is at the core of the professionalism of the Australian Public Service.

I am reminded, however, of the question that goes to the core of comments about the Australian Public Service. Yesterday, for 20 hours during the debate on the parliamentary budget officer bill we noticed a number of claims about the Australian Public Service from those opposite, those who questioned the impartiality and professionalism of the Australian Public Service simply because those opposite cannot do their own maths. In this place last night the member for Mackellar accused the Treasury of being politicised, that the opposition did not submit its costs to Treasury because it cannot trust Treasury. The member further accused Treasury of finding the $11 billion black hole because of its bias. I must assume that the member was referring to Treasury’s well-known bias for facts.

Last night the member for Cowan said: When we look back at what happened at the time of the 2010 election we see the way in which Treasury was used and directed to find every possible way to undermine and cast doubt on the figures of the opposition.

This was not an admission that the figures of the opposition were inaccurate and did not add up but an assumption that Treasury officers would behave in a biased and unprincipled way. The member for Goldstein accused secretaries of departments of aiming to 'mislead Independents in the House' in order to get them to support the current government.

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister will resume his seat.

Mr Pyne: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order on relevance. Previously in question time during answers from both the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship and the Minister for Defence, you have required ministers to go to the subject matter of the question they were asked, not deliver a diatribe directed at the opposition. I put it to you that the Special Minister of State is straying very far from those previous rulings and I ask you to bring him back to the answer.

The SPEAKER: It would appear that the minister has immediately reacted to the submission that was put to me by the member for Mackellar and has kept himself informed of what is in the press, on the television and in other sources. Having done that, I invite him to now conclude his answer on the substantive matters. I think that his incidental mention of people within the opposition is now well and truly sufficient to the extent that I am willing to allow. I will allow him to now conclude his answer.

Ms Julie Bishop: Mention Bob Brown this time!

The SPEAKER: Order! It strikes me as funny when people are asking me on a point of order not to mention other people and then inviting by interjection the mention of further people. The minister will ignore the interjections—it is a Western Australian
thing—and conclude his answer on the subject matter.

Mr GRAY: As I was saying, the Australian Public Service performs a vital function for all Australians in the work that they do to support not only the creation of good public policy but also the delivery of outstanding public administration. To have members of this place critical of the professionalism of our public sector is frankly akin to throwing truth and fact overboard—something that those opposite do from time to time with gay abandon.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister will now resume his place.

Budget

Mr HOCKEY (North Sydney) (15:13): My question is to the Treasurer. I refer the Treasurer to the promise he made in this year's budget speech that a surplus will be delivered in 2012-13, a commitment that has been described by others in the government as an objective, an expectation, a determination, a plan and a guiding principle. Then this morning the Treasurer said he would give it his best shot. Given that the Treasurer stated just two days ago, 'we are bringing our budget back to surplus in 2012-13', what has changed in the past 48 hours that makes a rock-solid commitment now just an aspiration?

Mr SWAN (Lilley—Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer) (15:13): I thank the shadow Treasurer for that question. 

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! Those on my right are not assisting.

Mr SWAN: The government is determined to bring the budget back to surplus in 2012-13. We have put in place the fastest fiscal consolidation ever seen in the history of this country. This has been supported very strongly by reputable international bodies such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. It has been observed upon by the Governor of the Reserve Bank. We do understand the importance of a clear, consistent and credible fiscal policy; and, when you look around the world and look at the sovereign debt problems we are seeing in Europe and other parts of the global economy, nothing could be more important than a clear, consistent fiscal policy. The government is determined to bring the budget back to surplus in 2012-13.

I have been making a commonsense observation: because we are seeing a slowing in the global economy, it will have an impact on growth in this country and it will have an impact on our budget. I have made the commonsense observation that that makes our task more difficult. That is a commonsense observation. I know those opposite do not understand the importance of all this— they have a $70 billion crater in their budget estimates, and this comes on top of an $11 billion black hole in their estimates for the last election.

So being lectured by those incompetents on fiscal policy is beyond the pale.

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer will not debate the question.

Mr Hockey: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order that goes to relevance. Simply tell us whether he is going to deliver a surplus or not.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for North Sydney will resume his seat. I remind members that the standing order is direct relevance. The Treasurer has the call but he will not overly debate the question.

Mr SWAN: Those opposite are simply disappointed that Australia has done well—
The SPEAKER: Order! The Treasurer will go back to the question.

Mr SWAN: that we have such a strong fiscal position. And we have such a strong fiscal position because this government put in place, when we moved to put stimulus in place, an exit strategy.

Mr Simpkins: Go to an election. That's a better exit strategy!

The SPEAKER: The member for Cowan is warned.

Mr SWAN: We put it in place before any other advanced economies in the world and well before the G20 adopted its guidelines for advanced economies. But those opposite would rather see our country fail than this government succeed. They go around the place talking the economy down. Our economy has a great number of strengths, and one of them is a very strong fiscal policy, very strict fiscal rules, strong employment growth, very low public debt, very high investment—all of these things are good for Australia, and we should have confidence and celebrate those strengths for Australia.

Economy

Mr Murphy (Reid) (15:17): My question is for the Minister for Trade. Dr Emerson, how do Australia's domestic economic policies affect our trade performance? What would be the impact on Australian jobs and prosperity of pursuing policies that undermine Australia's competitiveness and export performance?

Dr Emerson (Rankin—Minister for Trade) (15:17): I thank the member for Dunedoo for his question. The Hawke-Keating governments set about systematically to fashion an open, competitive economy to turn the Australian economy away from an inward-looking economy protected by high tariff barriers—

Mrs Mirabella interjecting—

Dr Emerson: and the sledging has already started from the member for Indi, of course, because she is absolutely and totally opposed to trade.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Indi will cease interjecting, but the Minister for Trade will ignore the interjections.

Dr Emerson: The result of the creation of the open, competitive economy through trade policy and broader economic policy has been that it has laid the foundations for two decades of recession-free economic growth, setting Australia apart from the rest of the developed world with such strong recession-free economic growth. These economic trade policies literally were designed to put Australia in the right place at the right time in the Asian region in the Asian century, a consequence of visionary leadership by Bob Hawke, Paul Keating and—I will give some credit—the coalition under John Howard.

I have, however, been asked about the impact on jobs and prosperity of policies that damage Australia's competitiveness and export performance. Of course, this parliament has had to confront a private members' bill that would have banned imports of apples from New Zealand, an antitrade policy that would have risked retaliation for our Australian farmers. We have had to contemplate a piece of legislation—a private members' bill on palm oil labelling—that similarly would have violated our international obligations. We have had to contemplate a policy that would prohibit international trading in carbon permits. The truth is that the Leader of the Opposition is not against international trade—just so long as it does not involve foreigners.

Mr Pyne: Mr Speaker, I rise on two points of order. Firstly, you have already
ruled in question time now on five occasions that ministers must address the subject matter about which they have been asked, not the opposition's policies, and I put it to you that, if the opposition is not allowed to ask the Prime Minister about her actions in relation to the member for Dobell, how can the minister be asked about the opposition's policies, for which he is not responsible?

The SPEAKER: Under the standing orders there is no point of order, but there is a point. I remind the Minister for Trade that he was asked in the latter part of the question words to the effect of 'certain actions would undermine outcomes'. What I have indicated is that I am happy for a discussion about those matters, but when it is used then to open up this discussion of opposition policies it should be done in a very careful way and not as has been done under previous interpretations of the standing orders. But the Minister for Trade has the call.

Dr EMERSON: Thank you. Talking about policies that are needed to maintain our competitiveness, of course, sound fiscal policy is needed, and I want to take the opportunity to congratulate the Treasurer of Australia for his award—for the accolade and the recognition that he so richly deserves.

But of course a large budget black hole totalling in round figures $70 billion would undermine Australia's competitiveness. To be fair, is there a $70 billion black hole in contemplation? I think that is a worthy question to ask. Well, not if you believe the Leader of the Opposition, who says it is absolutely fanciful and there is no $70 billion black hole in contemplation. But there is another view, and it says, no, it is not a furphy; we came out with that figure.

The SPEAKER: The minister will conclude his answer.

Dr EMERSON: Was that, as they are suggesting, the Labor Party? No; that was the shadow finance minister who admitted there was a $70 billion black hole.

The SPEAKER: The minister will conclude his answer.

Dr EMERSON: The last word goes to Professor John Hewson, who says this man is totally innumerate.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER: Before calling the member for North Sydney—by way of omission—earlier in the day we had the Lord Mayor of Brisbane in the gallery, Councillor Graham Quirk. He was here with a delegation of mayors from South-East Queensland. If he had been in the chamber I would have given him a warm welcome and I apologise to those who pointed out to me that he was in the gallery.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Carbon Pricing

Mr HOCKEY (North Sydney) (15:22): My question is to the Treasurer. I refer the Treasurer—

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for North Sydney has the call. The Leader of the House. The member for North Sydney will ignore the interjections and the interjections will cease.

Mr HOCKEY: I refer the Treasurer to the IMF's assessment of the current economic conditions. It says, 'The global economy is in a dangerous new phase. Commodity prices could decline abruptly in their downgrading of Australia's growth forecast.' I ask the Treasurer: is now the right time for Australia to be the only country in the world imposing an economy wide carbon tax?
Mr SWAN (Lilley—Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer) (15:23): Facts are very inconvenient for those opposite. The assertion that somehow there is not carbon pricing occurring elsewhere in the global economy, that we do not have emissions trading schemes in Europe, that we do not have the development of those schemes in China or the development of those schemes in the United States is just simply wrong and it is deliberately misleading to make that point. But I do want to make a couple of points about why we need to put fundamental reform in place for our economy.

When we look at where our economy is today, when we look at the fact that we did avoid recession—almost alone, amongst advanced economies—we should take a bit of time to analyse why that was the case. Yes, it was the very prompt response of the Australian people and the Australian government to deal with circumstances in the past four years but also what has been important, as the trade minister was saying before, has been fundamental long-term reforms, over the past 30 years, put in place by both sides of politics. There is no doubt that the Hawke-Keating government did put in place a whole raft of long-term reforms, which have stood this government in very good stead and stood this country in very good stead—and that side of the House when they were in government. But many of these reforms were opposed tooth and nail. I was just citing one example of national superannuation. There were many others.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Treasurer will ignore the interjections and the interjectors will cease.

Mr SWAN: I was making the point that our economy is strong and that our economy is resilient, because past governments have put in place fundamental long-term reforms which have strengthened the resilience of the Australian economy. But many of those reforms, when they were introduced, were opposed tooth and nail. I was just citing one example of national superannuation. There were many others.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! We seem to be interrupting something up the back of the room. As long as you are quiet, I am happy. The Treasurer understands his responsibility to be directly relevant and he can be directly relevant to the whole question, not necessarily that part that is highlighted by the Manager for Opposition Business, but I remind the Treasurer of the requirement.

Mr SWAN: I want to make the point that when those reforms were brought in, they were brought in in difficult economic circumstances. This government understands that if we are going to stay ahead of the curve what we have to do is continue to strengthen the resilience of our economy. And what we must do to strengthen the resilience of our economy in the 21st century is make sure that as an economy we have cleaner energy sources.

You cannot grow strongly in the 21st century unless you have cleaner energy sources and you have investment in renewable energy. That is why carbon pricing—although it is a difficult reform and is being opposed by those opposite, tooth and nail—must be introduced. If we want to continue to reinforce the resilience in our economy we have to keep up to the mark with the long-term reforms. That is why the
government is committed to carbon pricing. That is why the government is committed to the MRRT, a fundamental tax reform. What it does is recognise that we need a revenue stream to give a tax cut to business, to many of those businesses that are not in the fast lane of the resources boom. We are putting in place fundamental reforms to make sure that we strengthen the resilience of our economy for the long term.

We are in our 20th year of continuous economic growth. If we want to continue that record going forward, we have to face up to the big questions, to the big reforms for the future. Do what is right for the future of the country. That is what we are doing on this side of the House when it comes to the economy, as we are doing right across the board, while those opposite are just putting their own selfish political interests ahead of the national interest, every time.

**Fair Work Australia**

Mr ADAMS (Lyons) (15:28): My question is for the Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government and Minister for the Arts. How has the Fair Work Act restored the rights of Australian workers? How were the rights of workers affected by individual statutory contracts before Fair Work, and what is the future of statutory individual contracts in Australia?

Mr Pyne: I rise on a point of order. On the basis of the ruling you gave last Wednesday in this place, I put it to you that that question is simply an invitation to the minister to attack the opposition. You have ruled questions that I have put in the last week out of order and I put it to you that the question that has been put to the member for Hotham is not within his responsibilities and invites an argument and debate in the answer.

Mr Fitzgibbon: On the point of order, surely an admission of guilt is no defence.

The SPEAKER: The chief government whip is warned. I do not wish to add addenda to questions but I take it that the question on the issue of whether it is within the minister's responsibilities is that he is the minister acting for the minister in the other place with those responsibilities.

On the other matter, which was the first point that the Manager of Opposition Business has put to me, the question was in order. I simply indicate to the minister that he should decline the invitation.

Mr CREAN (Hotham—Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government and Minister for the Arts) (15:31): I am asked this question by the member for Lyons, and I thank him for the question because he, like all of those on this side of the House, came into this parliament determined to defeat WorkChoices. And we did that when we became a government and introduced Fair Work Australia. It was the Prime Minister today—the then Deputy Prime Minister—who led that charge and introduced Fair Work Australia. What that has done is to restore fairness to the workplace.
It has restored fairness because it has restored the right to collective bargaining—a universally recognised right that was denied under Work Choices. It has also restored the requirement to bargain in good faith. That is also something that was denied under Work Choices.

I am asked, also, what rights are affected when individual contracts were brought in. I remind the House of two pertinent examples. One was the Corowa meatworks, where they sacked all of their workforce and put a new workforce on individual contracts and did not pay any redundancy to the sacked workers. Then there was Spotlight, where the workers were taken off enterprise bargains, put onto individual contracts and had all of the penalty rates stripped away. They were two examples that happened under their watch that could never have happened under previous legisla
tion.

The SPEAKER: Order, the member will not refer to the opposition.

Mr CREAN: I am asked, generally, how this has affected what individual contracts have done. When individual contracts were brought in in this country it had the effect of two-thirds of individual contracts cutting annual leave loading and penalty rates. One half of them cut shift work, overtime, rest breaks and holiday pay. One third of them cut public holidays and one fifth of them had provisions in them for no pay increase for up to five years. That is what individual contracts did.

I also make the point that apart from restoring fairness and dignity to the workplace when we introduced Fair Work Australia, it has also had significant benefits for the Australian economy. We have had the record job growth which I spoke about yesterday. No four-year period in the history of this country has seen 750,000 jobs created. It has also been great for the economy because it has lowered industrial disputes.

So why would anyone want to return to individual contracts? I am asked by the member: what is the future of individual contracts in this country? I say to you, under us there is absolutely no future, because we are determined to keep the system that we have in place.

But the same cannot be said for the other side. We heard yesterday the former minister for Industrial Relations, Peter Reith, stirring on the other side of politics to go back to Work Choices. But fortunately we had a statement from the Leader of the Opposition saying, 'We don’t support individual contracts.'

Mr Pyne: I rise on a point of order. It is transparently obvious that the minister is not listening to the admonition that you made at the beginning of his answer. This will be the sixth minister who has strayed from the rulings that you have given, and I ask you to bring him back to the question, or he should sit down.

The SPEAKER: In the first 3½ minutes I think that members would have to admit that, in a fairly robust and feisty contest of ideas, the minister has shown what is still possible under a tightening of the interpretations of the standing orders. Before he gets too swollen a head, I remind him not to stray too much.

Mr CREAN: I am trying not to stray, Mr Speaker, but I am asked what the future of statutory individual contracts are. Whilst the Leader of the Opposition has ruled them out—

The SPEAKER: Order, you are in conclusion—

Mr CREAN: No, Mr Speaker, that is not what the member for Mayo said. The member for Mayo, when he was asked today,
said they wanted to return to them. There is no future for individual contracts under us. The only thing the other side cannot say no to—

The SPEAKER: The minister has lost the call.

Ms Gillard: I ask that further questions be placed on the Notice Paper.

STATEMENTS ON INDULGENCE
Rudd, Hon. Kevin

Ms JULIE BISHOP (Curtin—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (15:36): On a matter of indulgence, I think in the spirit of bipartisanship it would be nice if we wished Kevin Rudd a happy birthday today.

DOCUMENTS
Presentation

Mr ALBANESE: Documents are presented as listed in the schedule circulated to honourable members. Details of the documents will be recorded in the Votes and Proceedings and Hansard. I move:

That the House take note of the following documents:

Migration Act 1958—
Section 91Y—Protection visa processing taking more than 90 days—Report for the period 1 March to 30 June 2011.

Section 440A—Conduct of Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) reviews not completed within 90 days—Report for the period 1 March to 30 June 2011.

Debate adjourned.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

The SPEAKER (15:37): I have received a letter from the honourable member for North Sydney proposing that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely:

The failure of the Government to confront Australia's immediate economic challenges.

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 HOCKEY (North Sydney) (15:37): It is certainly a significant and interesting day today. Today the IMF released a report that was unexpectedly bearish about the Australian economy and about the global economy, and Euromoney magazine handed out a number of awards, including an award to the current Treasurer. I have been encouraged by the opposition and a few journalists to offer my generous congratulations to the Treasurer—a Treasurer who is more like Steven Bradbury than he is Peter Costello. I thought: 'Euromoney magazine. I should first check the previous recipients of the award.' Over the last few years we have had two Slovakian ministers, a Serbian, a Nigerian and a Bulgarian. In 2001 there was a Pakistani finance minister. That is quite an extraordinary one, that one. Then there was Poland, Russia, Denmark and the United States. I thought, 'Well, that's not any basis upon which I could give my endorsement to the Treasurer.' So I thought I would go to the Labor Party. I came across the ringing endorsement of the previous winner of the Euromoney finance minister of the year. I quote from Euromoney magazine, which says:

When Euromoney sought comment from the only other Australian ever to have received our award, the famously flinty Keating's instinctive reaction was to tell us "to just f*** off" and "I couldn't give a f***", while curtly offering what appeared to be travel advice, suggesting we visit some place called "buggery".

That was Paul Keating. I have censored this, because I note down the bottom it says:
If anyone wants that information, that is where you can go and get the approval to use Paul Keating's own words in relation to that matter: Mr Hunt at euromoney.com.

I wonder whether I should give congratulations to a Treasurer who inherited $45 billion of net assets in the bank and has now turned that into a net debt of $145 billion.

Opposition members: Shame!

Mr HOCKEY: Should I give him congratulations?

Opposition members: No!

Mr HOCKEY: Should I give the Treasurer congratulations—a man who inherited a $22 billion surplus and now has a $22 billion deficit? Should I?

Opposition members: No!

Mr HOCKEY: Should I praise a Treasurer who has presided over the fastest peacetime accumulation of government debt in Australia's history? Should I?

Opposition members: No!

Mr HOCKEY: Should I praise a Treasurer who introduced or has announced 19 new or increased taxes?

An opposition member: How many?

Mr HOCKEY: Nineteen.

Opposition members: No!

Mr HOCKEY: Should I praise a Treasurer who has presided over the most wasteful spending spree in Australia's history—the man who handed out $900 cheques to people who were dead, asking them to stimulate the Australian economy? Should I praise a Treasurer who oversaw a blow-out in the Pink Batts program and a blow-out of billion dollar proportions in the school halls program? Should I praise a Treasurer for his great work in doubling the cost of computers in schools?

Opposition members: No!

Mr HOCKEY: No. Should I praise a Treasurer who has turned a $4 billion broadband network into a $39 billion broadband network? Should I praise a Treasurer who wants to introduce a carbon tax?

Opposition members: No!

Mr HOCKEY: Should I praise a Treasurer who wants to introduce a mining tax?

Opposition members: No!

Mr HOCKEY: Should I praise the most incompetent Treasurer Australia has ever had?

Opposition members: No!

Mr HOCKEY: This is a Treasurer who is the Steven Bradbury of finance ministers. The difference is he is skating on Peter Costello's skates. That is what he is doing. He is a man who has come through. He is a survivor. That is all he is. He is not a reformer. He is desperately clinging to the title of 'reformer'. He is not a reformer. It is not reform to have had five different positions on climate change and the pricing of carbon. He is not a reformer to have had four different versions of a mining tax. He is not a reformer. He is not a reformer to have had three different policies in 48 hours during the financial crisis on just how much of people's deposits should be guaranteed by the Commonwealth government. He is not a Treasurer that engenders confidence. He is not a Treasurer that has the AA, AAA—whatever it might be—standard that we
would expect of someone running a AAA economy. He is not someone who is ever countenanced in the list of potential Labor prime ministers. In fact there was a survey recently of the top 10 candidates to be the leader of the Labor Party and—you know what?—in that 10 they had Bob Brown and Malcolm Turnbull and they didn't even have Wayne Swan. Why? Because everyone knows that this is a Treasurer who is good at surfing—surfing the hard work of everyday Australians. He is a Treasurer that is committed to lots of spin and heroic statements. He is not a Treasurer that engenders confidence, that builds confidence, in the Australian economy. He is not someone that you would follow over the top in a great battle when the whistle is blown. He is not that man. I would say to you the challenges are significant. This Treasurer said in this House in his last budget speech that it was vitally important for Australian pensioners and Australian home owners to have a budget surplus in 2012-13. You can imagine how he has become a figure of ridicule, for in a few short months since then he has changed that iron-clad commitment to a budget surplus to variations of an objective, an expectation, a determination, a plan and a guiding principle, and then this morning, speaking to an audience around Australia, he said he was going to give it his best shot. This is not a Treasurer that is going to inspire confidence. He is not a Treasurer that will bring the budget back to surplus. He might promise a surplus in 2012-13, but the test will be whether he will deliver.

This is a Treasurer who said when it came to the carbon tax that it would be budget neutral—$4.5 billion more in costs than the revenue raised over the next three years. Oops, that's an Ian Thorpe moment. Even now it is emerging that his much lauded mining tax, which the Treasurer had the hide in this place to claim as great reformist policy, is turning into a dog's breakfast, because he and the now Prime Minister, together with the member for Batman, formed a partnership—a trio partnership—to negotiate with just three miners, BHP, Rio and Xstrata, immediately before the last election. Is that what a commendable Treasurer would do—form a partnership to enter into a secret negotiation with BHP, Rio and Xstrata that left all the mid-tier miners behind, that left hundreds of miners behind? Is that the work of a competent Treasurer? He has had numerous versions of the mining tax. Now he has got a problem, because he has got Western Australia and New South Wales syphoning the royalties out of his own mining tax revenue.

That is not the work of a good Treasurer. How could a good Treasurer, under any circumstances, agree to put set-top boxes in pensioners' homes at a cost that is greater than a new television set? How could a Treasurer agree to that? How could a Treasurer sit idly by with waste and mismanagement across the entire government, with blow-outs in deficit, with blow-outs in taxes and with changes in policy that have left Australians bewildered, confused and in economic terms cocooning. They are cocooning because they are increasingly nervous about the future. This is not a Treasurer whom we are proud of that would strut the world stage, talking up all of our great initiatives here in Australia. This is not a Treasurer who has laid down a plan for our economic destiny which gives business confidence to go out and employ more people. This is not a Treasurer who has found himself surfing the challenge of the financial crisis with tens of billions of dollars in the bank—the best banking system in the world. He has been fortunate, as have we all, to have a Reserve Bank that has been
able to move monetary policy quicker than others because the transmission factor into Australian home loans is greater than most other Western countries.

Australians expect more of their government than is being delivered by this government. They expect an economic plan. They expect a government that when it says something it means it, that when it means something it does it. The government should be trusted by the Australian people. This government is not trusted by the Australian people. Reading the Euromoney magazine endorsement of the Treasurer, I thought to myself: why aren't there any ringing third-party endorsements? There are none. Not even Saul Eslake has given a ringing endorsement of the performance of this Treasurer. Why not? Because everyone knows it has been the combined effort of the Australian people, like the people in the gallery here, everyday Australians who work hard and make sacrifices to try to improve the lot of their families. They are the people who have done the heavy lifting. They are the people who deserve the award. From our perspective, Australia deserves a government it can trust, a government that is not confused and a government that does not make promises it cannot deliver.

Now the Treasurer is about to give a ministerial statement on the tax summit—a tax summit that has been forced upon him by the three Independents, a tax summit that he has now so constrained in its deliverance that everyone knows that nothing is going to come out of it. He is now going to do that on top of the Henry tax review, the great review, the landmark review, that made 138 recommendations. This Treasurer had the deep courage to accept 2½ recommendations.

Australians deserve better. They deserve a government that does not come up with a new thought-bubble policy every 24 hours. They deserve a government that is consistent, a government that has a Treasurer who understands what he is saying. On numerous occasions my colleagues and I have asked this Treasurer simple questions such as: how many companies will be affected by the carbon tax? On Wednesday he said 1,000 and on Thursday he said 500. We went looking for the 500 missing Australian companies. We looked in the dispatch box—they were not there. We looked under the table—they were not there. We looked in the TV sets. We looked everywhere for 500 companies that within 24 hours went missing—the 500 biggest polluters, as they call them. Do you know what we discovered? It is now 400, because the Treasurer revised his own figure about those people impacted by his own tax.

Let us be very clear: Australia does face some significant economic challenges on the road ahead. Europe is looking anaemic; the United States is struggling to inflate its economy. It still has a high level of unemployment. Perhaps commodity prices will come down, as the IMF has suggested. In that case, as I identified in the government's own budget papers, a four per cent variation in the terms of trade will completely wipe out any chance of a budget surplus. That will be the symbolic moment when it is proven that this government does not keep its word, that this is a Labor Party that does not live within its means. It is a Labor Party that is more concerned about its own jobs than about the jobs of everyday Australians. It is a Labor Party that is more concerned about protecting unionists than protecting our country. I say to you: the reason why we do not offer our heartfelt congratulations to this Treasurer is because the Treasurer is the member for Lilley.

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the House and Minister for Infrastructure and
Transport) (15:53): That was the least graceful performance in the history of this parliament. It began by insulting a number of nations with whom we have relationships. It moved on to tell the same sordid year-7 joke about female genitalia that goes on in a boys school. It went on to that and it did not get better. You do not lift yourself up by dragging other people down. The fact is: when Paul Keating won the award as the world's best Treasurer, the then opposition showed grace and congratulated him—in an act of decency, in an act of maturity and in the national interest. What those opposite have shown yet again today is that they are incapable of that. Whilst the Treasurer was showing leadership in protecting Australians from the impact of the global financial crisis, the shadow Treasurer's main concern was the noise of the leaf blower outside his office in Parliament House. He was not engaged in the big issues, he was not concerned about jobs. When the economic stimulus plan was put before this parliament, the Leader of the Opposition was literally asleep. He could not drag himself down to vote on those bills.

Let us have a look at what our record is and why it is that the Treasurer has been recognised—not just on his own behalf but on behalf of all Australians, Australian business and Australian working families. He has been recognised because of all Australians' resilience and for Australians' determination to say: 'No, we won't give in to pessimism and negativity. We will ensure that we work issues through in the interests of our national economy and in order to secure the future for ourselves, our kids and our grandkids.' This is what Euromoney magazine had to say today:

... his work as treasurer is acknowledged as much for what didn't happen to Australia on his careful four-year watch, economic Armageddon in the trail of the 2007-08 sub-prime meltdown, which he confronted in his first year of office, as for what he positively did: positioning Australia to power through the new crisis looming from abroad.

This is the position which the Australian economy is in. We avoided recession—unlike seven out of our top 10 trading partners, who fell into recession. While the world was shedding millions of jobs, we created 750,000 jobs, including 200,000 jobs because of our economic stimulus plan. The Australian economy has grown by over five per cent since the GFC, while many other advanced economies are yet to return to their pre-GFC output levels. Australia's financial systems have remained secure and stable amid the worst effects of the crisis because we introduced bank guarantees. Remember how quickly we acted? We did not wait, we acted—criticised by those opposite at each and every stage along the way. Australia's net debt will peak at 7.2 per cent of GDP compared with 80 per cent of GDP for other G7 economies. We have put in place $100 billion in savings across all budgets. Unemployment in Australia is at 5.3 per cent—half of what it is in the United States. We are in an envied budget policy position. We have record terms of trade and hundreds of billions of dollars in our investment pipeline.

We believe in a strong economy not as an end in itself but for what it does for people—for our people, for jobs, for working families and for communities. That is why we did not step back and say, 'This is too hard.' That is why we acted, and that is why we are continuing to act. We are building on the three-quarters of a million jobs that have been created under this government while the rest of the world has shed 30 million...
jobs. Treasury modelling shows that 1.6 million jobs will be created under a carbon price over the period to 2020. Just as the Hawke and Keating governments took the big, tough decisions to position the Australian economy by opening it up to competition and opening it up to the global economy, we are taking the courageous decision to make sure that we build an economy which can be strengthened in the carbon-constrained world which we face. The earlier you act, the cheaper it is and the more effective it is. Every single economist says that that is the case.

What do those opposite say? Not only do they criticise the policy but they then go after the economists, whether they be from Treasury, the Reserve Bank or the private sector. We have created some 130,000 new training places. We are addressing skills and infrastructure. They were warned 20 times by the Reserve Bank—20 separate warnings—about the constraints to our economic growth because of a failure to invest in skills and infrastructure. We are doing it, with 130,000 new training places. In infrastructure, we have doubled the roads budget. We have increased the rail budget by more than 10 times. We have rebuilt one-third of the interstate rail freight network.

We have committed more to urban public transport since we were elected in 2007 than was committed by all governments between Federation and 2007. We have transformed the way that the national government engages in infrastructure development. We created Infrastructure Australia to engage across the levels of government and directly with the private sector. It is a model which has been copied. Imitation is the greatest form of flattery—there has been created Infrastructure UK and a similar body in New Zealand, and other similar bodies are being considered and constructed now in France and other parts of Europe. Indeed, our Tory friends in New South Wales have created Infrastructure New South Wales, an acknowledgement that we have got the model right.

Through that, we have developed the first ever National Ports Strategy. We are developing the National Land Freight Strategy. The Friday before last, I announced the most significant reform to revitalise Australia’s shipping industry in Australia’s history—not by going back to a protectionist model but by going forward. We are making our shipping industry competitive with the world—making sure that we are a shipping nation, not just a 'shipper nation', as those opposite said. We are making sure we are participants, not just customers. That is the difference between this side of the House and the other side of the House; we believe in engaging. We believe that with government working hand-in-hand in partnership with our people, Australia can continue to be a strong economy that is up there with the best in the world with whatever we do. That is why those opposite continue to talk down the economy.

The dismissal of Australia receiving the award that was given today is quite extraordinary. Of course, they are a bit sensitive over there; Peter Costello never got the award. But maybe that was just because he did not have good staff and advice. It is significant that Peter Costello did have some things to say about Mr Abbott. This is what Peter Costello said about the current Leader of the Opposition and his economic policy:

At one point when we were in government, he asked for funding to pay for telephone and electricity wires to be put underground throughout the whole of his northern Sydney electorate to improve the amenity of the area. He also wanted the Commonwealth to take over the building of local roads and bridges in his electorate.
We know that he also was a staffer. He worked for John Hewson. John Hewson said:

Tony is genuinely innumerate. He has no interest in economics and no feeling for it.

Indeed, that is the case.

We had in this House a considerable debate—12 hours and 20 minutes—over the Parliamentary Budget Office bill, because those opposite are determined to hide the fact that they have a $70 billion black hole, after they were found out with their $11 billion after the election. They do not want to be accountable. They run around the country making all sorts of promises—for roads, bridges, railways and paid parental leave schemes—but the starting point, they acknowledge, is $70 billion. It is much more. I will give them a tip: we are keeping the file of every commitment made by every one of their members. Their commitments to roads alone is in the order of $30 billion, on top of what they have said already. These are local one-off commitments trying to con the Australian people.

Even today when they had an opportunity to show a bit of grace, a bit of concern for the national interest, we have seen completely the opposite; they only have one thing to say: no. They say no to everything—except for Work Choices of course. I have said that the Leader of the Opposition, Tony Abbott, is the vuvuzela of Australian politics. He walks around and he just says 'No, no, no,' to everything. Over a period of time that becomes simply annoying. True, it gets your attention, but people find it frustrating when they realise that there is only one note.

If Joe Hockey did not play kettle drums at school, I would be amazed—big, loud, full of air and empty. The emptier it is the louder it gets. We saw Mr Hockey last night standing up for five minute contribution after five minute contribution. It was him and the shadow finance minister arguing purely amongst themselves, trying to see who could be louder and who could throw more abuse across the chamber. For five hours they talked to each other. They have never actually picked up the little green book the Standing Orders, or the big green book the House of Representatives Practice—so they were not quite sure what had happened when we negated the adjournment. When we said to them, 'We are determined to get the Parliamentary Budget Office through', they eventually folded. Eventually, reality hit, except for the member for Mackellar, whom they forgot to tell—to widespread amusement from all. It was like that Japanese soldier on the island who did not know the war was over and was still waiting to have the fight. That is our member for Mackellar. They are a bit sensitive, of course. I would be sensitive too if the member for Mackellar was on the front bench and I had been put up the back.

The fact is that we have provided leadership for a strong economy that is the envy of the world. I had the privilege to attend the G20 meeting which was held in London. There, Australia is regarded as the envy of the world. One of the things that has been said by various organisations, including the IMF and the OECD, is that our economic stimulus plan was perfectly designed. They have also said that we are in a position of fiscal consolidation to return us to surplus. We on this side of the House have a serious economic policy and a serious plan for the nation; those on the other side only have relentless negativity.

Mr TRUSS (Wide Bay—Leader of The Nationals) (16:08): What a pathetic performance that was from the Leader of the House. He has no record to defend and no government performance to speak about, so he resorted to personal insults and then stormed out of the parliament. I am going to
be more gracious: I am going to recognise
the superhero efforts of Australia's Treasurer.
He managed to spend the nation's savings
faster than a speeding bullet—the Treasurer's
'wreckonomics' are truly something to
behold. He inherited a surplus, and he turned
it into a deficit. We used to earn interest;
now we pay interest. The man who effected
these changes is the man we are honouring
today. He achieved so little for our country
that he is leaving behind a legacy of debt that
generations will be required to repay.

Who has awarded the Treasurer the title of
Finance Minister of the Year? It was given to
him by Euromoney magazine. One would
wonder, with the state of the European
economy, how the Europeans could presume
to give advice to anyone in the rest of the
world. With the European economy at the
point of collapse—it is teetering on the
edge—and with models of economic virtue
such as Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal to
use as examples, Euromoney magazine has
decided that it is going to give out awards
elsewhere around the world. You have heard
from previous speakers the list of some of
the Treasurers who have received this award
in the past.

I will note some of the other awards that
that Euromoney has handed out. For
instance, in 2005, the award for the best
investment house went to—wait for it—
Lehman Brothers. In 2006, the awards for
best investment house and best risk
management in North America—that is, the
US and Canada—went to Bear Stearns. So
what kind of judge is Euromoney magazine?
What does it know about these sorts of
things? What is the record of the kinds of
people it has recognised in the past? The
reality is that our Treasurer, Wayne Swan,
has got the gong, but the people are going to
have to pay the bill.

Today, I will suggest a few other awards
that I could give to our Treasurer for his
performance over recent times. The first is
'the world's greatest spender'. The Treasurer
managed to take a surplus budget and turn it
into a deficit. The 'world's greatest Treasurer'
has not produced a single surplus budget the
whole time he has been in office. He
inherited a surplus, but he soon threw it
away—he squandered this legacy. What has
he spent it on? The pink batts, the overpriced
school halls and the millions of press
releases—all talk and no action. We have
just listened to the Minister for Infrastructure
and Transport talking about all he has
achieved in the area of transport. But,
although there have been a million press
releases and he has announced the same
project a dozen times, when you look around
there are no new roads and no new ports.
They are not there; they are just figments of
his imagination. There is no Melbourne-to-
Brisbane railway line and there are no
nation-building projects—they just have not
happened. In this area. This government has
been all talk and no action—a spin
machine—just as they have been in every
other area. They are world-record holders at
the spin machine, but they do not actually
achieve anything.

I have a second award for our Treasurer:
'the world's greatest taxer'. There have been
at least 19 new or increased taxes since he
has been in office. It is an appalling list, and
it covers almost everything in our lives. The
list includes the alcopops tax, the changes to
the employee share schemes, the new mining
tax and an excise on LPG, which is an
extraordinary new tax from a government
that tries to parade its green credentials. It
also includes the flood tax, the phasing out of
the dependent spouse tax rebate, the deferral
of the tax breaks for green buildings and the
increases that have been announced just
recently for the lowest tax rates, which will
increase from 15 per cent to 19 per cent and from 30 per cent to 33 per cent. The government is selling those as tax cuts, if you please; yet they have raised these two tax rates, one or the other of which the majority of Australians pay. On top of all that, there is the horror of the big new carbon tax. The Treasurer has been the greatest taxer of all times, and he deserves the award of 'the world's greatest taxer'.

There is a third award that we might give to our Treasurer: 'the world's greatest wrecker'. Through his 'wreckonomics', he has closed many shops and caused many bankruptcies. There is also less manufacturing than there was. The Treasurer's economic policy has distributed despair across the country. Just recently I read in the Australian of a local businessman from Central Queensland, Kym Mobbs, who is closing his family hardware-manufacturing business after two generations. He is one of the small people. There are also the big people, such as OneSteel, who are deserting this country because they have been driven overseas by the economic policies of this government and 'the world's greatest wrecker'. There is less optimism and hope in this country than there was when this Treasurer came to office—fewer people believe they can make a success of their lives, and, of course, unemployment is on the way up. If I may refer to a local example, in my own electorate of Wide Bay, when the previous government left office the unemployment rate was 3.4 per cent, below the national average. We had worked hard over a long period of time to build the economy in areas where incomes and the participation rate are traditionally lower than in other parts of Australia. But we had the unemployment rate down to 3.4 per cent. Today, under this 'world's greatest wrecker', our unemployment rate is 12.7 per cent.

That is a disgrace, and the Treasurer does not even care. He is not prepared to do anything about it.

*Mr Fitzgibbon interjecting—*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. Peter Slipper):** Order! The Chief Government Whip is not in his seat.

*Mr TRUSS:* When the minister for regional development was handing out assistance to areas that needed support, there was not one cent for the area in Australia that has the highest rate of unemployment—not one cent.

*Mr O'Dowd interjecting—*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Nor is the member for Flynn.

*Mr TRUSS:* It has all been spent on Labor electorates as part of their slush funds and their rorts. This is the world's greatest wrecker.

This Treasurer does not deserve a knighthood. He deserves the 'dirty shovel on the doorstep award' because of what he has done to the Australian economy and the Australian people. He inherited the Howard-Costello era of a strong, resilient economy that was once the envy of the world. Despite being the heir to $45 billion in net assets, the Rudd-Swan and Gillard-Swan governments have managed to plunge this nation into $145 billion of debt. It is quite a feat for a Treasurer worthy of an award to build that kind of debt. A negative turnaround has put this country into the red. You may seek to blame the rotating door of prime ministers; the reality is that Treasurer Swan has been a pivotal character—the goose who broke the golden egg. He was handed the opportunities and he destroyed them.

But that is not all. It is getting worse; it is getting deeper. Every day we are out borrowing $135 million to pay for the excess of expenditure over income. That is not the
way that we build a better future for our country. We are handing to the next generation debt and an interest bill big enough to be building new hospitals every year, building the roads that the Leader of the House just talks about and taking real action to make our country work again—not just paying for the waste, the mismanagement and the appalling lack of economic control of this government. This economic ineptitude has certainly been a disgrace. A $20 billion surplus has become a $55 billion deficit, and there is a lot more deficit yet to come. When will the 'world's greatest Treasurer' deliver his first balanced budget?

Mr Ewen Jones interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Herbert!

Mr TRUSS: We have been promised a balanced budget for 2012-13. Something magic is going to happen in that year to sweep away all of the incompetence of the past! But lately there have been a few ifs and buts, ums and ahs. Now they are only going to give it their best shot. Their best shot will miss by miles, and we all know that. If you keep lowering the bar further and further, eventually you reach absolute bottom. That is where this government's hypocrisy is at its peak.

The United States was in trouble because of arguments about its credit limit. This government has had to raise its credit limit three times since it has been in office—and there has been an award to this Treasurer!—a failure for this country and an embarrassment to this country. Awards are totally inappropriate. (Time expired)

Mr STEPHEN JONES (Throsby) (16:18): We are called in here today to engage in a debate about the immediate economic challenges confronting Australia. We have sat through 20 minutes of diatribe from those opposite and not one policy proposition.

Mr Ewen Jones: From Albo? What did Albo say?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. Peter Slipper): The honourable member for Herbert is warned!

Mr STEPHEN JONES: Instead we have been invited to listen to a diatribe—a mean, undignified, foul-mouthed contribution—

Mr Haase interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: As is the honourable member for Durack!

Mr STEPHEN JONES: from the shadow Treasurer—but not one policy contribution. This is at a time when the rest of the nation and many around the world are celebrating not only the great contribution that the Treasurer has made but the fact that Australia stands almost alone throughout the world as an economy that is in good shape. It is not an accident that the economy is in good shape; it is in good shape because of the contribution of the Treasurer and of the Australian Labor Party over the last four years.

It is beyond the capacity of the member for North Sydney or the humour-challenged Leader of the Nationals to say anything nice, but they are not the only people who have had something to contribute to this debate. I have in front of me some contributions from eminent economists and people around Australia and around the world who wish to put on record their congratulations to the Treasurer. The World Bank president, Robert Zoellick, had something nice to say. He said that to be named as Euromoney Finance Minister of the Year is a 'significant and deserved' honour and that under these tough economic conditions it is a 'tremendous achievement'. He said:
Australia's economic fundamentals are strong, strengthening Wayne Swan's global influence.

He continued:

This is the second time in the history of the awards that Euromoney's finance minister of the year has gone to an Australian treasurer—the first time it went to another Labor Party Treasurer—a demonstration that Australia has benefited from the continuity of effective, influential treasurers.

But there is more. The managing director of Wesfarmers said that it was a 'great recognition' for the Treasurer and a 'vote of confidence' in the Australian economy, which has remained strong and resilient through tumultuous economic times. These eminent Australians and economists found it within themselves to say something nice about the phenomenal contribution of the Treasurer, but not those foul-mouthed, mean-spirited, say-no-to-everything people across the chamber.

Internationally, the Treasurer's achievements have also been recognised. Jim Flaherty, the Canadian Minister of Finance, had this to say:

I want to congratulate my colleague Wayne Swan on his selection as Euromoney's Finance Minister of the Year. He was a key ally as we weathered the global recession and worked with our international colleagues to strengthen the global economy moving forward. Treasurer Swan has been a strong supporter of our work in support of strong, sustainable and balanced growth in the context of the G20 framework for growth.

Those opposite could not find it within themselves to say anything nice because it is not within their DNA. It is the Australian way that when an Australian is recognised—for example, when Cadel Evans or Sam Stosur make a contribution on behalf of Australia and they are recognised internationally—we put partisanship behind us and we have something nice to say. We congratulate those people, but those opposite do not. I rather suspect that if those opposite had information in their possession that Santa Claus believed in climate change they would be moving in this place to outlaw Christmas. That is how mean spirited they are. They have nothing positive to say. In 20 minutes worth of contribution on the challenges of the Australian economy there was not one policy proposition.

Let me inform the House that Australia stands almost alone amongst developing nations when you look at the state of our economy. We have unemployment levels below five per cent.

A government member: It is 20 per cent in Spain.

Mr STEPHEN JONES: I am reminded by my colleague that there is 20 per cent unemployment in Spain. The unemployment level amongst European countries is around eight per cent. In the US it is north of 10 per cent. And we have an unemployment level of five per cent. It is the view of all on this side of the chamber that at five per cent it is still too high, and we are doing everything within our power to bring that down.

While we are on the subject of the state of our economy, let me talk about interest rates. Interest rates are one of the key factors which drive business confidence and one of the key things that affect every household in this country. The interest rates are still lower than they were when we took office. Investment is at record levels. With over $450 billion lined up—a pipeline of investment of over $450 billion over the next 4½ years—our economic outlook is good.

Whilst I am on the subject of the economic outlook let me say that we do not manage an economy soundly as an end in and of itself; we do it in the interests of ordinary working people—a factor sometimes lost on those opposite. They did not have it within themselves, when making
their contributions in this chamber this week, to remark once that this is the week when pensioners will receive a $20 per fortnight increase in their pensions. We were able to do that because we have the interests of ordinary working people and pensioners at the forefront of our minds as we manage the economy. We have introduced a fully-funded paid parental leave scheme. We have introduced revolutionary reforms to ensure that families with kids at schools are able to get some assistance with their education expenses. We have introduced improvements to the research and development tax expenses. And we have doubled the rate of returns for those people struggling to put their kids in child care so that those people can attend work.

When we manage the economy we do it in the interests of ordinary working people, and these are things that we are able to deliver to them. We are alone in the world not because of an accident but because of the decisions the government took throughout the global financial crisis. So it is right and proper that we recognise the contribution of the Treasurer in that good economic performance.

When we contrast our policies, and the way we are managing our economy through some of the most difficult and challenging times, with those of the opposition we see that there is a stark contrast. We see on the other side of the chamber a group of people who are anti everything. We saw one of the most despicable displays in this chamber this week when the member for Mackellar got up in here and personally defamed a great Australian, the former head of Treasury, Ken Henry, and virtually accused him and other Treasury officials of corruption and dereliction of their duty—in the comfort of coward's castle. They would not step outside the chamber and say that; they used parliamentary privilege to do that. The only reason that they did that was that they bag everyone who gives them advice that they do not like.

Mr Melham: She's a repeat offender.

Mr STEPHEN JONES: Yes, that is right. I am reminded that she is a repeat offender. They are against Treasury because they do not like economists. They are out there bagging the CSIRO and the Bureau of Meteorology because they do not like scientists. They are threatening to close down the Department of Climate Change because they do not like scientists or economists—and those are the people who work at the Department of Climate Change. And they did everything within their power to ensure that the Parliamentary Budget Office never got off the ground, because they do not want scrutiny. They do not want scrutiny because they know that if they have scrutiny it will expose a $70 billion black hole in their proposed budget. I have to say that, given the size of that black hole, the public servants at Geoscience Australia should be a bit scared! If they start exposing that black hole, they will probably want to close down Geoscience Australia as well—because anyone who disagrees with them is in peril.

While I am at it, we have seen this ridiculous display over the last fortnight where one of the duelling sections of the Liberal Party were going out to one section of the manufacturing industry and saying, 'We've got your interests at heart,' while in this chamber and in the editorial pages of the Australian we saw the member for Mayo saying that everything that we on this side of the House are trying to do to assist manufacturing is 'back to the future'. We are managing the economy in the interests of working people, and we are very proud of the contribution that we have been able to make. (Time expired)
Mr TONY SMITH (Casey) (16:28): Over the course of the last hour or so we have seen a chorus of congratulations from those opposite for the award given to the Treasurer by Euromoney magazine overnight—a chorus of congratulations that not even they believe; a chorus of congratulations that former Treasurer and former Prime Minister, Paul Keating, certainly does not believe. Those over there know in their heart of hearts that this award is a joke. The reason that they are protesting so loudly is that they know that—and that is confirmed in their actions.

The Leader of the House is known for his overstatement in this House, but I did not think it would be matched by the previous speaker, who said that this award was entirely due to the Treasurer's actions and the Australian Labor Party. The Australian economy is performing better than economies in Europe and North America because of the strength of our economy when we entered the global financial crisis. We entered that global financial crisis in the best possible shape. We entered it with our fiscal house more than in order. We entered it with our fiscal house in the best shape it had been in a generation.

The member who just spoke compared the Treasurer to Cadel Evans. I would like to compare him to Cadel Evans too. There was the Tour de France—and, I have to say, I am not a cycling freak, like some on this side of the House; my mode of travel is the car, I regret to say—and Cadel Evans rode for three weeks. He did the hard yards. Of course, as we know, at the end of the second last day, because he was in front, by convention he had won the race. All he had to do was roll down the Champs Elysees the next day. He just had to stay upright. Are you getting the picture? Wayne Swan is the kind of person who would hop on the bike for the last day and claim credit for winning the race. That is the story of the Australian economy over the last 12 years.

If it were just that Euromoney magazine had looked at the Australian economy, saw a strong economy and made the mistake of assuming that the current Treasurer had something to do with it, that would be bad enough, but it is actually much worse than that, because the Treasurer of this country did everything with his colleagues opposite to prevent Australia getting into the strongest possible fiscal shape. Let's make no mistake about it.

Back in 1996, the Howard government inherited $96 billion of debt, a $10 billion budget black hole and an interest servicing cost on that debt of $8 billion every year. It set about paying off that debt by returning the budget to surplus. It took hard and difficult decisions. Every single measure in every budget was opposed by those opposite and opposed vigorously by the member for Lilley. The member for Lilley, if he had had his way with those opposite in this parliament, would have continued on the road of debt and deficit. They would have had the new government continue with annual budget deficits and they would have had that $96 billion net government debt continue to mushroom. That was their policy when they had been in government and it was their policy in opposition.

They opposed the Treasurer, Peter Costello, and the Prime Minister, John Howard, and all of the ministers every single step of the way. They opposed fiscal consolidation every step of the way. They opposed the sale of Telstra, the provisions of which were used to pay down a huge portion of that net government debt. So, by the time the member for Lilley became Treasurer, because everything that he had stood for and everything that he believed in had been successfully opposed by the government in
spite of him, he inherited the best fiscal position possible—not only a budget in healthy surplus, where he was looking at $20 billion surpluses rolling down the line at him as far as the eye could see, and not only no net government debt but, as previous speakers have pointed out, $45 billion in the bank. To give the Treasurer an award for the state of the Australian economy, which he had nothing to do with—in fact, if he had had his way, we would not be in this position—is like giving the prodigal son an award for fiscal restraint because he has only burned half the family's finances. That is the situation we find ourselves in today.

Some of those opposite mentioned Paul Keating and the fact that he won the same award. I will give Paul Keating this: he had done something in 1984 and 1985—he floated the dollar. He actually did something, whereas this Treasurer, as the shadow Treasurer pointed out, has never had a budget surplus. Even on the day this award is announced, he is wobbling on his promise of a budget surplus. He always has a promise of a budget surplus; it is just that he is always moving it further out into the future. As the shadow Treasurer pointed out in question time, this rock-solid promise has moved from an objective to an expectation to a determination to a plan to a guiding principle, and then this morning the Treasurer said he would give it his best shot. That is very worrying news because the Australian public know and those opposite in their heart of hearts know that the Treasurer's best shot is not good enough. This small projected surplus that he is now moving away from really sums up the Treasurer's complete economic and fiscal failure.

Today we had the IMF report released that the shadow Treasurer went through in some detail. Confronted with forecasts of a more difficult situation, the Treasurer's response is to compound that difficulty with the introduction of a carbon tax and a mining tax. If you just take the mining tax, which he plucked from the Henry review, announced in the days before last year's budget, he handcuffed pieces of expenditure to it. You look at the fiscal responsibility of that when we have record commodity prices, which everyone knows will not last forever—in fact, the real warning today is about such a small decline in the terms of trade; indeed, as the shadow Treasurer pointed out at the Press Club earlier this year, it is a decline of just four per cent—the small reduction in the terms of trade would plunge next year's budget into deficit. But he uses those record high terms of trade to fund, through his mining tax, ongoing expenditure year after year. So, when the revenue falls off, that expenditure will open up a hole in his budget. The Treasurer knows this. He knows that it is fiscally irresponsible. He knows that a mining tax, in the way he has put it forward, in any way, shape or form will harm not only the budget but our great economic strength. He knows that the carbon tax is going to make life economically difficult for Australia, acting ahead of the rest of the world. This Treasurer was not worthy of that award. Those opposite know it in their heart of hearts. The Australian public knows it because it lives with the consequences of his economic mismanagement. (Time expired)

Mr HUSIC (Chifley—Government Whip) (16:37): I rise on this matter of public importance on the economy. I am not the only one to reflect this but the days in this place tend to speed past. I had the sense that, even though we sped past yesterday, the events of last night will come back in two years time to haunt those opposite. Effectively, last night was about the opposition putting a line in the sand that they will return to. Through the 12 amendments that the opposition put forward and all their
filibustering over the Parliamentary Budget Office, the line in the sand is that, in two years time when it comes to stepping up and delivering their election promises and having them costed, they will turn back to last night and say they refused from that point onwards to believe in the value of the Parliamentary Budget Office, therefore escaping scrutiny on their promises yet again.

It was an absolutely shameful performance by those opposite, clearly designed to set them up for two years time when they will yet again dodge scrutiny and repeat what they did last year in the election when they turned their backs on the Costello legacy of the Charter of Budget Honesty. They turned their backs on the scrutiny and the mechanisms set up by then Treasurer Costello. They went to an election knowing, deep within their promises, that there was an $11 billion shortfall between what they planned to do and how they could deliver it. It was an $11 billion black hole called by the Treasury and in their full knowledge, as the member for Throsby rightly points out. When it was pointed out to them, what did they do? They attacked Treasury. They attacked the messenger for discovering what they knew they had and they refused to be upfront about it.

In this debate we had the amazing situation where the shadow Treasurer lectured us all on the need to be able to deliver on our promises when he had an $11 billion black hole and would not be able to deliver any promises that he put in if he were in government.

Mr Melham: They couldn't deliver a pizza!

Mr HUSIC: Indeed, they could not deliver a pizza. I thank the member for Banks for that interjection. They want to lecture us on economics. They picked up some unknown Liberal aligned accounting firm at the back of WA and relied upon them to cost their election figures. When that firm was tested as to how far they should go to back these promises, even that firm said, 'This is not an audit of their figures.' Even the shadow Treasurer stuffed up when he was confronted on that. He had not even read the fine print of their own costings. They used a firm that was not even known, instead of going through Treasury, instead of being able to hand over their costings and instead of being able to follow the Charter of Budget Honesty, and now they come in here and tell us that they are in a position to lecture us about economic challenges. The Leader of the Opposition was lecturing us on economic challenges when he was either snoozing or boozing while we voted on the stimulus package.

We often get these guys saying, 'You made the wrong call; we would have made it better.' Let us turn to what they had to say when they were challenged back last year. When greatness was thrust upon him the Leader of the Opposition needed to be able to come up with a response to the greatest economic challenge confronting advanced economies in 75 years. He was asked on the 7:30 Report what he would do. Chris Uhlmann said:

But you would have spent money as well. This is the stimulus package. He continued:

The coalition actually backed the first stimulus package, didn't it?

The Leader of the Opposition said:

Yes, which was about a quarter the size of the second stimulus package, which we opposed.

Chris Uhlmann said:

But certainly that money was necessary, and it appears to have done the trick.

And here we go—this is what the Leader of the Opposition said in response to the greatest economic challenge in 75 years:
But at a high price. And if you look across the Tasman, New Zealand has done just as well, it seems, as Australia without going into anything like the same level of debt and deficit that we have.

New Zealand: lower growth, higher joblessness, higher inflation. The opposition's response to the GFC was to spend less and condemn us to lower growth and higher unemployment. They made that call. The man that occupies the Leader of the Opposition's chair made that call and was backed up by the shadow Treasurer and the shadow finance minister. They made that call. They then say they are in a position to tell us about economic challenge.

Thankfully, we ignored their advice. What did we get for it? Through the work that we did, we are now in a position where we have higher growth and more people in work. It is believed 44 million jobs were lost in advanced economies. We managed to create over 750,000, close to 1,000,000. Defying what happened elsewhere, we did it. So we were able to have higher growth, more jobs, greater security and the world's greatest treasurer, who is walking in right now. And they cannot stand it.

And what else? Whenever they are tested further about what they should do, they beat their chests. In the aftermath of the natural disasters that affected Queensland we knew we had to act. We had to help Queenslanders out and we needed to find a way to fund that recovery. They said they would find $6 billion without having to put in a levy. They chastised us because we were there to stand up for Queenslanders, providing the money to help reconstruction and making the hard choice on a levy. And they said, 'We shouldn't help out Queensland that way; we shouldn't put in a levy.' They said, 'We'll find the money and we'll find the savings to be able to do this without a levy.' They said back in January: 'We'll get back to you. We'll let you know when it's coming.'

The end of January came and they still had no ability to find savings. Back to the parliamentary sittings, they still were unable to find any savings. They then outsourced their policy to some One Nation hacks sitting in some garage somewhere, and they worked out that the smart way to do that is to turn our backs on something our predecessors did. They picked up the simplest One Nation policy, which was to cut back the education support provided to Indonesia. That was their response. They could not find the savings.

They beat their chests, unable to do it, and again they come in here and talk about economic challenges. This is in a climate, mind you—the member for Throsby was right—where they had an opportunity to point out what economic challenges they deal with and were unable to. The shadow Treasurer not once added anything to identify the challenges. There is one global economic challenge right now, and it was called out by Richard Koo from the Nomura Research Institute, who reflected on the fact that the private sector, by addressing debt and cutting back spending the way it is, is putting big pressure on the global economy, and monetary policy simply will not cut it in the way that it did.

So monetary policy will not cut it in the way it once did and the economy is unstable. Their reaction? 'We're going to cut $70 billion out of the economy—puncture a huge hole in the economy.' On top of what we have been able to do to cut back spending, they would go even further. They would have three times the amount of consolidation that we have done, and they reckon they would do it. After, mind you, they could not find $6 billion, these geniuses reckon they will find $70 billion. When you cannot meet
the first challenge, set the next one extraordinarily high.

At the end of the day, what gets me the most is this: they are only happy with bad news. They are only happy when people are suffering. They are only happy when jobless rates go up. They are only happy when growth goes down. They are only happy when the bad times come in. Those are the only times they cheer, the only times they have a smile on the face. They are a disgrace to economic policy. They should go away and actually work out what they think they should do and be able to do instead of coming here and lecturing us otherwise.

Congratulations to the Treasurer, by the way.

Mr FITZGIBBON (Hunter—Chief Government Whip) (16:48): I seek the call for only a very short time—probably about a minute—to make three important points. First of all, this debate gives me an opportunity to acknowledge the Treasurer, while he is in the chamber, for the very significant recognition he has received today. Others have made that point already. In addition, I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of Hunter Valley Grammar School in my electorate. I ask members to make them feel welcome.

Secondly and very importantly, I pick up on something the Leader of the Nationals said in the course of this matter of public importance that did not quite gel in my mind. He said that when they—those on the other side—were in government and the predecessor of the member for Higgins was the Treasurer the unemployment rate in Wide Bay was 3½ per cent but under this government it was now through 12 per cent. I am sure my colleagues will agree something is not quite right with that statement, so in the limited time available to me I did a little bit of research. I thank my staff for their assistance.

In 2006, which is a reasonable year to choose given that he said it was during their time in government, the unemployment rate in Wide Bay was in the high sevens. By June 2010, it was at seven. In July 2011, it was 6.8 per cent. So one wonders why this mob on the other side have increasingly low economic credibility in the broader electorate! Thank goodness, given what we have seen from the Leader of the Nationals today, the Labor Party is in government running the economy and we have the world's best treasurer doing it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the member for Higgins seeking the call on the MPI?

Ms O'Dwyer: I am.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Higgins has the call.

Ms O'DWYER (Higgins) (16:51): Since we indulged the member for Hunter, I simply—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, I did not indulge him. The MPI does not conclude until eight minutes past five. It will conclude otherwise earlier if there is no-one seeking the call. So I am calling the member for Higgins but remind her I did not give indulgence. I called the member because he stood.

Ms O'DWYER: I stand corrected. I would like simply to respond to one of the points that was raised by the member for Hunter. He spoke about the record and the legacy of the coalition government when we were in government. I remind the member for Hunter that we inherited from your side of the chamber $96 billion of debt. We inherited as well a $10 billion black hole. We had to pay back that $96 billion, and it was a very long, hard road to do that. We did it.
And by the time you came into power in 2007 not only had we repaid the $96 billion of debt but we had also left for you a $20 billion surplus and we had invested in the future of all Australians by putting together the Future Fund, in which we had invested $45 billion.

This government, by contrast, has a very poor record. This government, by contrast, has delivered four deficits in its time in government. Every single budget that has been brought down by the so-called 'world's best Treasurer' has been a deficit—every single one of them. For the very first time ever we have had to increase our gross debt ceiling to $250 billion. Most Australians when they hear that figure are absolutely astounded. So we now have not only four deficits but also a deficit of around $50 billion. Net debt is up around $107 billion. The Treasurer, who keeps coming into this place and promising to deliver a surplus, is slowly working his way away from that promise. He is now coming up with every excuse in the book to walk away from that promise and is coming up with excuses as to why he will deliver a fifth deficit. The facts are very clear, the record is very clear and I would rather be on our side of the chamber than on theirs.

Mr CHESTER (Gippsland) (16:54): In briefly joining the debate on this matter of public importance, I endorse the comments of the member for Higgins. I particularly endorse her reference to the fact that this Treasurer has presided over four budget deficits. We continue to hear this promise, this plan, this 'give it my best shot' to return to surplus in 2012-13. Like the rest of Australia, I simply do not believe this Treasurer will be able to deliver a surplus.

Mr Husic: You should have faith!

Mr CHESTER: The member opposite says I should have faith. People in Australia who are struggling with their costs of living are not interested in comments like 'You need to have faith.' They simply have lost faith in this Treasurer. I do not believe he has the capacity to ever deliver a surplus. I am prepared to put my money where my mouth is. I am prepared to bet the Treasurer that he will not deliver a surplus at that time. I am not much of a gambler but I am prepared to take a wager.

If the Treasurer will take me up on my bet I am prepared to donate $1,000 to his favourite charity if he delivers a surplus in 2012-13—only if he is prepared to deliver $1,000 to my favourite charity if he does not get that surplus. I am happy to do that. That is the wager I put to the Treasurer, and I welcome him to take me up on that. The surf-lifesaving clubs in my community would love to receive $1,000, and I reckon it is a pretty safe bet. So I would encourage the Treasurer to take me on. If you cannot deliver a surplus in 2012-13 as promised, how about $1,000 to the surf-lifesaving clubs in my electorate and, if you can do it, I will give $1,000 to your favourite charity?

It is interesting that in these extraordinarily uncertain economic times the greatest idea, the great mark of genius from those opposite, is to hit the Australian economy with a carbon tax. We had the member for Hunter, who used to represent the workers of his electorate, and we had other regional MPs in this place talking about the carbon tax. We had the member for Hunter refer to the unemployment rate. If the member for Hunter and other regional MPs really want to see what will happen to the unemployment rate in Australia they should vote with this government on its carbon tax. Vote to hit the Australian economy with a carbon tax at an extraordinary period in global economic circumstances.
Only the Labor Party could come in here and lecture this side of the parliament about its economic credentials when it is about to vote to hit the Australian economy with a carbon tax. It will have a massive impact on the manufacturing sector, on the agricultural sector and on the power-generating sector. We keep hearing from those opposite that there are only 500 of the so-called big polluters who will pay this carbon tax. When will a single member of the Labor Party start showing some respect for those 500 big Australian companies that create enormous wealth and employment in our community and when will they desist from calling these companies Australia’s 500 biggest polluters?

Every time a member opposite uses that phrase they are vilifying and offending the people who work in those companies. I know that from personal experience. In my electorate of Gippsland we have workers involved with the brown coal-fired power stations and with Australian Paper. I meet with the workers and I talk to them—members of the CFMEU, members of the ETU. They are so angry when they hear the Labor Party calling the companies they work for ‘big polluters’ because, by association, you are vilifying these honest hard-working people who are doing nothing more than going out and doing an honest day’s work.

This party used to claim it represented workers. This party used to claim it was the champion of working families—we do not hear about working families any more. This party is out there vilifying them, saying they work for big polluters. Here is a bit of free advice to members opposite. If you are wondering why you are down to 26 per cent of your primary vote, at least some of it starts with the way you are treating these people with complete contempt. The way you are vilifying them, the way you are describing them as working for big polluters, is at least part of your problem. I challenge you to show them some respect.

I repeat my offer to the Treasurer. He is obviously not that keen on the bet, but I think he should give it some serious consideration. Treasurer, if you can deliver a surplus in 2012-13 my offer is to give $1,000 to your favourite charity. If you cannot deliver that surplus I encourage you to take me up on that wager by giving $1,000 to surf-lifesaving clubs in my electorate.

The SPEAKER: The discussion has concluded as no one is seeking the call.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Tax Reform and our Patchwork Economy

Mr SWAN (Lilley—Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer) (16:59): by leave—In just two weeks time the government will provide an important opportunity for a broad group of Australians to help chart the next steps forward in Australia’s tax reform journey.

I am personally looking forward to meeting with almost 200 representatives of community groups, business, super funds and other investors, academics and professional economists, and more who are drawn from right around the country. I want to hear everybody’s ideas, whether I agree with them or not. The nation will be better for the debate.

It will be the most important gathering of tax experts and advocates in the country since at least the mid-1980s. Each participant understands, as the government understands, the critical role our tax system plays in our modern economy—the role it plays in generating the revenue to fund the quality public services that the community needs, whether they be health, education, national security or the social safety net, and how it affects the millions of choices that
Australians make every day about working, saving, investing and spending. That is why our tax system is at the heart of public policy in Australia, and at the heart of our reform agenda. It is why we have gone to such lengths to lead and encourage a national conversation; and why I am pleased to update the House today on planning and thinking ahead of the forum.

The Tax System Today

Our tax system is already undergoing serious reform, at the same time as we honour our commitment to keep tax as a share of the economy below the level we inherited from those opposite.

Unfortunately the partisan and political debate obscures the fact that this year, tax is estimated to account for 21.8 per cent of GDP: easily below the 23.5 per cent we inherited from our predecessors in 2007-08. And much less than the 24.1 per cent all-time record set by those opposite in 2004-05 and 2005-06. We have kept the overall level of tax low at the same time as implementing great swathes of the tax review. We have announced 32 reforms that deliver on ideas in the tax review—a quiet revolution across all parts of our tax and payments systems.

In personal tax, we are rewarding work by trebling the tax-free threshold from $6,000 to $18,200, also making tax time simpler. We are phasing out the dependent spouse tax offset, which reduced work incentives for low-income secondary earners. And all this builds on $47 billion of personal tax cuts already delivered.

In superannuation, we are boosting retirement savings by taking the super guarantee to 12 per cent, and introducing fairer concessions for 3.5 million low-income earners and larger contributions caps for over-50s. In business tax, we are cutting company tax, delivering around $1 billion worth of new small business tax breaks, improving research and development tax incentives, and putting in place better resource tax arrangements. We are spurring investment in infrastructure by protecting the real value of tax deductions during the costly start-up phase for infrastructure. Business investment means higher productivity, more jobs and higher wages—working smarter, not harder.

In transfer payments, we have already delivered a historic increase in the age pension, a new pension work bonus, the 50 per cent childcare rebate and paid parental leave. And we are going to increase family tax benefit for families with teenagers, and cut effective marginal tax rates for single parents and youth allowees.

For the environment, we are improving the fringe benefits tax treatment of cars, making fuel tax more consistent, and putting a price on carbon pollution—described by the tax review as 'a cost-effective way to reduce Australia’s carbon emissions'. The list goes on and on. I could equally talk about disability support pension reforms, better reporting of superannuation payments, or establishing a new national not-for-profit regulator. All of these reforms are crucial steps to a better system and a stronger, more modern economy.

Patchwork Pressures

The job of tax reform is never complete. There is no final destination, only one building block after another. When I released the tax review, I said it would be a conversation for the next decade. The Tax Forum is the next part of that conversation.

Our next steps in tax reform need to recognise that our fundamentally strong economy is also a patchwork economy. We need to agree where we can build on the substantial reform agenda, geared towards helping businesses and workers who are not in the fast lane of the mining boom. We will...
meet at a time of immense change in the global economy, as economic weight shifts from West to East. Our natural advantages and geographic location mean Australia is uniquely placed to benefit from the strength of Asian economies—not just in terms of demand for Australia’s natural resources, though demand is at a record high.

Average prices for our resources exports have increased by around 200 per cent since the end of 2003, and on average mining employment grew 11 per cent per year over the same period. But beyond the mining boom, we stand to benefit from the immense opportunities for Australia in the growth of Asia’s middle class. Remember, for all the growth in mining, it only contributed around six per cent of the 1.8 million new jobs created between 2003 and 2010.

The mining boom is an overwhelming positive for Australia, but it represents a mixed blessing for specific sectors of our economy. We know that the high Australian dollar means cheaper imports for consumers, but it also makes life tough for industries competing with those imports. We know that when industries and regions grow strongly, skills shortages and capacity constraints can emerge. But we also know that over the longer term, the rise of the Asian middle class will improve prospects for many sectors, including many of those struggling with today’s pressures. This includes things like high-tech manufacturers, cultural and recreational services and advanced education.

Take tourism, a sector close to my heart. The strong dollar and global economic conditions are having an impact. But at the same time, tourist arrivals from China have more than trebled over the last decade, and continued growth in these emerging markets stands to deliver long-term benefits.

I do not believe any industry is destined for permanent decline or permanent growth. Rather, all are subject to ongoing change. That is why, like forward-thinking governments before us, our task is to sniff the winds of change and adjust our sails in a way that best secures the jobs and prosperity of Australians now and into the future.

**Tax Reform in a Patchwork Economy**

Last year this side of Australian politics picked up on these economic changes. Unfortunately those opposite put the politics of the day before the challenges of our time. Our tax reform package announced last year delivered on the core thrust of the tax review: getting a fairer return for Australia's non-renewable resources, and using it to help businesses across the economy by cutting business tax—an approach that is now broadly supported right across the community. We have singled out small business as a special priority. This side of the House is proud to stand for over a billion dollars of tax relief for Australian small businesses. The first thing every small business tells me is: get rid of needless complexity. We will deliver some simplicity with instant write-off of any asset worth up to $6,500 and the first $5,000 of cars, vans and utes. We are proud to stand for a research-and-development rebate that directs more support to genuine R&D, including a 45 per cent offset payable in cash for small and medium businesses: cashflow, when small businesses need it.

Many things drive productivity—our education, our skills, getting the incentives right so that resources go where they are best used. But world-class workers need world-class equipment, and business investment provides the tools. New investment is often the way that struggling businesses pay for their new lease on life. So I am also proud to stand for cutting company tax, to reward
investment right across the economy. We are investing a fairer return for Australia's non-renewable resources in the best possible way—in economic growth across our whole economy.

**Business tax and the tax forum**

These measures are a start, and in two weeks time the threads of a patchwork economy and tax reform will be picked up again, at the tax forum. The Prime Minister and I want the tax forum to talk about how the tax system could work better for firms already under pressure to adapt to a changing economy. Ahead of the forum, participants have already begun to raise ideas for business tax reform, often drawing on ideas in the tax review. The forum needs to take a good look at some of these ideas, especially if they can help with patchwork pressures.

One thing people have raised is the tax treatment of losses. Tax losses are simply expenses that a business has not been able to use as a deduction, because they are not profitable enough. Or not big enough to transfer the deductions to other businesses in the same corporate group. Or there has been a change of ownership or business focus that means they fall foul of rules limiting how tax losses can be used. Not being able to use tax losses can hit the very types of businesses that we often see struggling in today's patchwork economy. Uncertainty about being unable to use legitimate tax deductions can discourage investment and sensible risk taking.

The government has already taken steps on losses. For example, in the budget we announced we will maintain the value of the initial losses incurred by infrastructure projects of national significance. People have raised different ideas for how to go further in this area. Some advocate uplifting losses more broadly than just infrastructure. Some advocate allowing businesses to deduct losses from previous taxes paid, allowing a cash refund like some other OECD countries do. Some focus on the rules that govern when losses can be used following a change in a firm's ownership or operational focus would be appropriate at the forum. I will be interested to hear this discussion taken further there.

Another thing that people have raised is deductions for corporate equity. This is simply a notional deduction for equity finance, similar to the interest deduction that already exists for debt finance. The tax review discussed this as a potential long-term reform direction. Advocates of this idea point out that it can target tax cuts towards less profitable businesses—that those that may be under pressure or in emerging sectors. It might also improve macro-economic stability by reducing tax incentives to finance business investment through debt rather than equity. The tax review noted that this idea needs more investigation before it can be fully assessed. There are questions about its revenue cost, how it fits into the wider tax system, and how you would transition to it.

None of these things are easy, and the answers are not obvious. And any change needs to be funded. We will not jeopardise our strict fiscal strategy which has our budget position amongst the strongest in the developed world. I hope business comes to the forum in this spirit—recognising we cannot talk tax cuts without also talking about harder things like loopholes or unnecessary tax expenditures. I challenge the business community to nominate the business tax savings that could allow us to afford reforms like those I have just mentioned, because I have made it very clear that sending households the bill for the business tax cuts is not the answer.
State taxes

Every one of the 32 reforms we have announced in the last 18 months demonstrates our commitment to tax reform at the federal level. This has been delivered despite our revenue base being hit by global economic conditions, and while we keep tax as a share of the economy below what it was under the Liberal Party. But another message has come through loud and clear from the Australian community: some state taxes are the most inefficient in the federation. We are doing our bit and the states should as well. Indeed, nothing makes the need to talk about state tax reform more clear than when some states announce increases in stamp duties and the like.

All levels of government benefit from a more efficient economy, and all governments have responsibility for the impacts their policies have. State tax reform cannot wait for the Commonwealth simply to stump up the cash. In the last couple of years, the Commonwealth has announced $16.4 billion in extra health reform funding over six years from 2014-15, plus $3.4 billion to improve waiting times. This all builds on the health funding increase we announced in 2008 that delivered an extra $22.4 billion for the states. Total schools funding has almost doubled, at $65 billion over four years compared to $33 billion provided by the previous government. And we have doubled National Disability Agreement funding to around $7.6 billion over six and a half years. And this year, state GST revenue is expected to be double what it was when it was introduced—from $24 billion in 2001-02 to $48 billion in 2011-12.

The tax forum provides the perfect opportunity for state governments to take responsibility for the taxes they impose, engage with ideas for reform, and build momentum for their reform efforts.

Conclusion

I have raised some big issues today, and many of them cannot be delivered overnight. As the tax review said, 'it is neither possible nor desirable to make all of these changes too quickly.' I have always said that tax reform is a long-term project. Reform is hard. The adjustment is now, but the results take time. It is easy to support the spends, but a lot harder to fund them. Too many people talk reform without solutions, or they rely on simplistic solutions like jacking up the GST, shifting the burden from business to people on low and fixed incomes. We cannot build prosperity if everyone has their hand out. We cannot all give ourselves a tax cut and expect somebody else to pay it for us.

For our nation to get the most from the forum, everybody needs to put the national economic interest before self-interest—to think what is good for the country, not just what is good for their organisation’s bottom line. If we can do that, we will find some common ground on the next steps for tax reform, and we can develop these proposals further. In doing so we will lay the foundation of a better tax system for all Australians, as part of a stronger, broader, more modern economy.

I present a copy of my ministerial statement. I ask leave of the House to move a motion to enable the member for North Sydney to speak for 15½ minutes.

Leave granted.

Mr SWAN: I move:

That so much of the standing and sessional orders be suspended as would prevent the member for North Sydney (Mr Hocke) speaking in reply to the minister's statement for a period not exceeding 15 and a half minutes.

Question agreed to.

Mr HOCKEY (North Sydney) (17:16): I have a strong sense of deja vu. I have just
heard the Treasurer talk about a coming tax summit—in the Treasurer's opinion, 'the most important gathering of tax experts and advocates since at least the mid 1980s'. I recall we had a big tax review not that long ago—in fact, just two years ago: $10 million, 1,500 submissions and a panel consisting of five experts. The report was 1,332 pages, with 138 recommendations. Does this sound familiar? It is. It was the Henry tax review. At the time, the Treasurer said:

It is the most comprehensive inquiry into our tax system in over 50 years.

The more things change, the more they stay the same.

This new tax summit was originally to be held before 30 June this year to satisfy a written agreement with the Independents. It is now being held four months late. The Independents should be perturbed by the failure of the government to deliver its commitments on time. The Treasurer says he is personally looking forward to meeting with almost 200 representatives. No-one from the opposition has received an invitation. Perhaps the invite is still in the mail! However, the government does know how to look after its own kind. Thirteen official places have been set aside for the trade union movement. How can the Treasurer stand before the parliament and say that he wants to hear everybody's ideas? Truth be told, he does not want anyone to really notice that the summit is even going on.

The Treasurer has run through what he sees as his important reforms in tax. Let us look at some of these. The Treasurer claims that he is rewarding work by trebling the tax-free threshold for personal income from $6,000 to $18,200. The Treasurer should check his facts before making such bold claims. The Treasurer is not trebling the tax-free threshold at all. The current effective tax-free threshold is $16,000 due to the impact of the low-income tax offset. So, when you combine this with the other changes being made as part of the compensation package for the carbon tax, the government claws back much of this benefit. There are changes to the marginal tax brackets and marginal tax rates, along with a reduction in the low-income tax offset from $1,500 to $445 in 2012-13 and then $300 in 2015-16. The real reason the Treasurer is distorting this particular issue is because, by the government's own admission, they have left themselves a tiny 20c per week margin of error for the price impact of their carbon tax on average households. The carbon tax will cost households $9.90 a week and compensation will be barely enough at $10.10 a week. They know it sounds better to tell voters that they have tripled the tax-free threshold rather than to answer questions on the real impact on their standard of living as a result of the carbon tax. Today the Treasurer has also claimed credit for $47 billion of personal tax cuts. These tax cuts were previously announced by the coalition—they were funded by us and handed out by them. The coalition delivered these income tax cuts to the Australian people as a result of rigorous fiscal discipline and budget restraint, not through introducing new taxes.

The Treasurer also claimed today to be boosting retirement savings by taking the superannuation guarantee levy to 12 per cent. Can I say that the coalition strongly supports superannuation. It is a key pillar of a system which, along with the aged pension and incentives for voluntary saving, is helping all Australians prepare for a more comfortable life after work. In fact, we were the ones that implemented an increase in the compulsory superannuation contribution from six per cent to nine per cent in our earliest years of government. However, we do not support the
proposed increase in compulsory super from nine per cent to 12 per cent. There are several reasons. First, this increase in the superannuation guarantee will be funded by the mining tax. The coalition is opposed to the mining tax. We cannot make promises that cannot be paid for. We will rescind this tax in government and we will unwind the expenditure linked to it. This is fiscally prudent. It would be irresponsible to keep the expenditure without the supporting revenue. Second, I note that the then Secretary of Treasury, Dr Ken Henry, concluded in his review of taxation that the current compulsory super contribution rate should remain at nine per cent. He made the point that increasing the superannuation guarantee beyond nine per cent would most heavily impact on low- and middle-income earners. The additional burden of the payment would not be borne by business but rather would be funded by reducing the growth in take-home pay. More of a worker's income would be put aside rather than paid today. The result of Labor's policy would be to cut take-home pay by three per cent. This is an awfully big ask at a time when families are struggling under higher costs of living, what could be higher interest rates, and new and increased Labor taxes. The Treasurer has emphasised that he has implemented 32 reforms that deliver on ideas in the tax review. It is odd that he has ignored the recommendations—indeed, he has explicitly gone against them—in relation to superannuation. And finally, today the Treasurer has also claimed credit for a policy that belonged to his alliance partners, the Greens—that is, changes to the fringe benefits tax treatment of cars. There is a telling slip of the tongue, or slip of the pen, in the Treasurer's statement. He admits:

Average prices for our resources exports have increased by around 200 per cent since the end of 2003—and—

The mining boom is an overwhelming positive for Australia.

Well, it is the truth; but what is strange is that, to this point, the Treasurer has argued that the current mining boom is not a patch on that experienced under the coalition. In his speech on a tale of two booms the Treasury said:

During mining boom mark I, revenues were boosted by a sharply rising terms of trade—and—

Mining boom mark II will have all the pressures of the first boom, without the surge in revenues.

I think it is time for the Treasurer to end the excuses. Mining boom mark II is alive and well and is the biggest for several generations. It does not get any bigger than this, perhaps. If the Treasurer cannot deliver a budget surplus in this environment he never will.

The government's idea of tax reform is to introduce new taxes. To date, Labor has introduced or increased 19 taxes, including the prospect of significant new taxes on mining and carbon. Not one tax has been abolished. The government has used these taxes to give the appearance that it is being generous with tax cuts and other assistance for households. The carbon tax is a classic case of the government's sleight of hand. The new carbon tax will raise $7.7 billion in the first year at $23 per tonne, escalating to $9.2 billion by 2014-15. This burden will fall on all households, as Professor Garnaut has said in his report, as will the additional burden of cost increases above and beyond the amount of tax raised—that is from shifting to higher cost forms of power generation and transport. To quote the final Garnaut report:

Australian households will ultimately bear the full cost of the carbon price.

Only part of the tax will be paid back to households in compensation and the rest will
be paid in industry assistance and to meet our international obligations. So households in aggregate will be substantially worse off, and this heat will rise and year after year as the tax goes up. And yet the government wants households to believe they will be generously compensated through tax cuts and direct assistance. The carbon tax is a Labor con.

The Treasurer identifies some areas for attention at the tax summit. One is state taxes—he is always happy to have a review of someone else's taxes. He has a bit of a crack at the states, suggesting they are not doing their bit, and that the summit provides a forum for the states to take responsibility for their taxes. I would expect that they would do that every day. I think a history lesson for the Treasurer on state-federal relations might be in order.

State governments do not raise sufficient revenue to fund their expenditure. Even after the introduction of the GST, the states have not been fully self-sufficient in funding. This imbalance is addressed through revenue transfers from the Commonwealth to the states. This imbalance goes back to Federation, when the six colonies handed over their powers to collect customs and excise to the Commonwealth. As these taxes had been the states' major source of revenue, this transfer of powers created an immediate need for the states to be adequately resourced by the Commonwealth to meet their spending commitments. The introduction of the GST in July 2000 was intended to provide the states with greater self-sufficiency in revenue.

The issue of self-sufficiency has boiled up again recently, with the Commonwealth government reaping much of the benefit of the mining boom through increased company taxes, and perhaps soon a new mining tax, but with the states left with the spending and infrastructure demands associated with the boom. This poses the rather obvious question, which is: why would the state governments take the political pain of negotiating environmental and other political issues associated with new mines when they won't receive the revenue?

Two of the states, Western Australia and New South Wales, have recently attempted to become more self-sufficient by raising their mining royalties. Unfortunately, all they have received from the Treasurer in response is threats to dock their federal transfers. So he has in fact penalised the states for increasing their royalty from the mining boom in the same way that he wants to do with his own mining tax. So much for him encouraging the states to get their affairs in order!

When it comes to tax reform, the coalition does have runs on the board. Our experience with the introduction of the GST provides a useful lesson in implementing tax reform. The coalition campaigned long and hard for the introduction of the GST before the October 1998 election—and, boy, I remember that! It was a tough campaign and the coalition lost some bark, but we believed the introduction of a broad based consumption tax was a necessary reform, and we took it to the people. The coalition had the courage to take the GST to an election. Labor is refusing to do the same with the carbon tax.

The GST reforms provided the basis for a more efficient taxation system by eliminating a whole host of small and inefficient state taxes, such as financial institutions duty, bank account debits tax, stamp duty on marketable securities, conveysancing duties on business property, bed taxes and so on. Many of these were taxes paid by individuals, so removing them simplified the overall tax burden on everyday Australians.
Most importantly, the GST was introduced at a time when a half decade of fiscal prudence by the coalition had provided sufficient room for reductions in personal income taxes and generous compensation to low-income groups. The overall financial standing of households was improved. After these changes were completed, 80 per cent of Australian taxpayers paid a top marginal tax rate of no more than 30c in the dollar.

Some key lessons emerged from this experience. The first was that reform is meaningless unless it leads to a simplification of the system. The number of taxes should be reduced. The second is that taxpayers have to be better off from the reforms. It is not enough for the changes to be fiscally neutral. The revenue raised from a new tax has to be fully offset, and more, by cutting other taxes, and there needs to be additional compensation from the budget so that the financial standing of taxpayers is clearly improved—that is, that they are properly compensated for the pain of significant change.

As the Leader of the Opposition has already announced, the coalition remains committed to real tax reform while restoring the integrity of our nation's finances. The first step in achieving this is to do everything we can to stop the carbon tax and the mining tax. The second step is to continue to press for cuts in government spending, which is why we continue to highlight the waste and mismanagement of this government. In government the coalition will pursue lower taxes for households and businesses which will be funded through targeted reductions in government spending. This will reduce cost of living pressures and the cost burden of business. It will help ease upward pressure on interest rates because we will not be stimulating the economy with deficit fuelled expenditure. These measures together will help to restore growth in productivity, which has stalled under the dead hand of Labor.

There are, however, two comments by the Treasurer with which I heartily agree: any change to the tax system needs to be funded and we cannot all give ourselves a tax cut and expect somebody else to pay for it. It is a shame his actions in funding personal and business tax cuts from the carbon and mining tax revenues do not match his rhetoric. There is only one sustainable way of delivering real tax reform and that is to cut spending and return the budget to surplus. There is one more thing on which I agree with the Treasurer, and that is that there is much to be discussed at the forthcoming tax summit. I urge the government not to let the opportunity go to waste. I fear that it will be just a taxpayer funded talkfest seeking third-party endorsement of Labor's carbon and mining tax proposals and their big-taxing, big-spending ways.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

Mr HOCKEY (North Sydney) (17:30): Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to make a personal explanation.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): Does the honourable member claim to have been misrepresented?

Mr HOCKEY: Yes.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please proceed.

Mr HOCKEY: Just after the matter of public importance discussion, the Leader of the House, who is here, suggested that I made an offensive comment. I reject that totally, absolutely and without qualification. Any assertion that I used inappropriate words or directed inappropriate words at another person is false. It is certainly not in my character. I was in fact referring to the contact point at Euromoney magazine for people to go to if they wished to republish Mr Keating's graphic comments in relation to the Treasurer, Wayne Swan.
Mr Albanese: You are in a hole, mate. Stop digging.

Mr HOCKEY: No, mate.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for North Sydney has made his point.

BUSINESS

Rearrangement

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the House and Minister for Infrastructure and Transport) (17:31): I move:

That business intervening before notice No. 6, government business, be postponed until a later hour this day.

Question agreed to.

Rearrangement

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the House and Minister for Infrastructure and Transport) (17:32): I move:

That so much of the standing and sessional orders be suspended as would prevent:

(1) the time and order of business for Tuesday, 11 October 2011 being as follows:
   (a) the House shall meet at 9 a.m.;
   (b) Government business shall have priority from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m.; and
   (c) during the period from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. any division on a question called for in the House, other than on a motion moved by a Minister during this period, shall stand deferred until the conclusion of the discussion of a matter of public importance; and

(2) any variation to this arrangement to be made only by a motion moved by a Minister.

I have done this at the earliest opportunity so that members can plan their day on 11 October 2011. It is open to the government on the first day of sitting to simply have the Prime Minister write to the Speaker to alter the time of sitting, but I think that would not be as convenient as notifying the House now and the House making the decision for itself. This will simply replicate the process that occurred so effectively yesterday morning in order to facilitate members' opportunity to participate in the clean energy legislation debate.

The motion I have moved would mean that the House, upon rising tomorrow, would commence at 9 am, that government business would have priority from 9 am until 2 pm and that during the period from 9 am to 2 pm any division would be deferred until after the MPI. It also provides for any variation to this arrangement to be made only on a motion moved by a minister, as is normal practice.

I note that the opposition spoke against this proposition yesterday and the Manager of Opposition Business indicates he will again today. Even when they know it is the right thing to do they cannot resist saying no. No matter what, they cannot resist saying no, even when they participate in the debate, as they did yesterday morning, and even though this is far preferable to sitting later at night, which is the other possibility. Once again, we could negate the adjournment, as we did last night. I note that the opposition's enthusiasm for debating the Parliamentary Budget Office waned after 10.30 pm. The member for Mackellar perhaps set a record for being interjected upon from her own side. The fact is this is a far preferable motion to go forward.

It is important to note that we have already had 28 hours of debate on the clean energy legislation. The member for Rankin asked me how that compares to previous debates. I indicate to the member for Rankin that the Work Choices debate went for 22 hours in total—from go to whoa—and took eight days. This legislation will have a month of discussion, proper consideration and a proper joint parliamentary committee that will report on 7 October. There have been 28 hours of debate so far and 99 speakers. The next speaker will be the hundredth, the ton, speaker on this
legislation. Of those 99 speeches, 54 of them have been from the opposition because the government has been determined to ensure that every member has an opportunity to speak. We are particularly looking forward to the contribution from the member for Wentworth, who has indicated how consistent this plan is with the CPRS and other positions that have been put forward.

The fact is that we already had on 13 September one hour and 51 minutes of debate and then two hours and 40 minutes. On 14 September there were four hours and 45 minutes and then two hours. On 15 September we had one hour and 43 minutes and then one hour and 14 minutes. On 19 September we had one hour and 39 minutes and then one hour and 48 minutes. On 20 September there were four hours and 55 minutes and then two hours and 14 minutes, and so far today we have had three hours and 23 minutes. After this, we will have further contributions from both sides of the House. Certainly it is the case that there are more members wishing to speak on this debate than there is time available today or tomorrow in terms of the ability of all members to make a contribution. We look forward to people being able to participate in this debate. We know what those opposite will say.

Dr Emerson: No!

Mr ALBANESE: They will say no, as they say no to all the big reforms, as they have said no to common decency today in the way that they behaved, as they said no to each other during the debate last night when they were trying to jump between the shadow Treasurer and the shadow finance minister, competing against each other. Really, it was quite an extraordinary performance on the floor of the House last night.

What we are doing here is showing once again the commitment of this government to transparency. We are showing once again the commitment of this government to ensuring full democratic participation in the processes of the House. We have indicated our commitment—unlike any example that can be pointed to by any of those opposite—by giving one month's notice of when the vote will be held on the second reading, on 11 October, and when the vote will be held for the final determination in the House of Representatives on this clean energy legislation, on 12 October.

This is vital legislation for Australia. It is vital that we are able to have full scrutiny of what this package means not just for the transition to a carbon constrained economy in a way that is efficient and market based, one that produces the best outcomes in terms of productivity and jobs, but also for the package of legislation that will provide support for pensioners and low- and middle-income earners, assistance for industry, and support for renewable energy and for the Steel Transformation Plan. This is a comprehensive package. We want to ensure that everyone can participate in the debate and, hence, I commend the motion to the House. I am sure that the Manager of Opposition Business does nothing but oppose, but the fact is that we on this side of the House have a positive vision not just for ourselves but for generations to come. Those opposite just say no.

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Manager of Opposition Business) (17:41): We are in the ludicrous position of debating a motion in this House this afternoon to extend sitting hours in order to give enough time to debate the carbon tax package of bills at the same time as we are operating under a debate management motion which gags the debate. The Leader of the House has created a complete mess all of his own making. At
first, all hairy-chested, he came into the chamber and added a gag motion to the Notice Paper, which we debated and the government passed after some time; a gag motion to cut off debate on the carbon tax legislation on 11 October and then have three hours of consideration in detail to debate 19 bills. The only opportunity that the parliament will have to question the Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency will be the consideration in detail stage, and the government has reduced that to three hours of debate. Then on 12 October the third reading on these 19 bills will be held, gagging the most important change to our economy since Federation.

The government did that and then discovered something. They felt the heat from the opposition, from the press gallery and from the public. They were denying members the opportunity to properly debate the most significant change to our economy in 111 years. They were giving members one minute per bill per member. There are over 1,000 pages of legislation—19 bills—not counting the explanatory memoranda, and they had reduced members of parliament to one minute of debate per bill. Having felt the heat over that very foolish decision in the first place—and, I might add the crossbenches supported that very bad, antidemocratic, jackbooted democracy—they came in here and added hours to yesterday's sitting schedule, from 9 am to 2 pm, in order to give members more time to debate the legislation. Then they discovered that that was still not enough time. So while we are still operating under a gag motion, the Leader of the House has come in here this afternoon and moved another motion to add more time on 11 October from 9 am until 2 pm in order to give members more time to debate this legislation.

The opposition does not oppose the prospect of more time to debate the carbon tax legislation. This is legislation that needs to be debated up hill and down dale. It needed to go to a committee. It needed to have a specialist House inquiry into the package of legislation. The government has decided not to do that, and I will get to that point in a moment.

The primary objection that the opposition have to this motion to extend sitting hours to allow more debate on the carbon tax bills is that we should not be in this House in the first place debating this carbon tax legislation. The government has no mandate to introduce a carbon tax in Australia. The government has no mandate to introduce 19 bills, of over 1,000 pages, to make the most significant economic change in our country's history. It has no mandate to do it and we should not be here debating this legislation.

While we will acquiesce to more time on the sitting schedule because oppositions always prefer to have more time rather than less time, and we on this side of the House particularly take our responsibilities very seriously, the member for Higgins will outline some Victorian members of parliament who have refused to debate this carbon tax legislation, and other members might also choose to do so. The Leader of the House mentioned one member of the opposition. Yesterday the government, out of the shame and embarrassment of having no mandate to introduce carbon tax legislation, were pulling their speakers off the speakers list. They were taking their speakers off the speakers list because their members could not even shamefacedly come into the House and defend this legislation.

The government like to stand up here and say that they are doing the same thing with the carbon tax that John Howard did with the goods and services tax. That is another one of the government's great mistruths, another one of their great falsehoods. The Prime
Minister did not get away with it when she first announced that she was not going to keep her promise that there would be no carbon tax under any government she led—the promise she made six days before the election. First of all she said, 'I'm doing exactly the same as John Howard did over the goods and services tax.' That line did not last from lunchtime until Lateline. That is what she tried to get up.

Let us look at what happened under the Howard government on the goods and services tax. John Howard did change his mind about the goods and services tax and he changed it in very good time before the election that was coming in 1998. He announced he had changed his mind. He held an election in 1998 on the issue of a goods and services tax. He won that election and he received a mandate for a goods and services tax. He introduced legislation into this House. That legislation sat on the table for a week, as it should, to give members time to digest the extraordinary number of pieces and pages of legislation.

It then went through the committee process, as it should. There were three months of committee inquiries into the goods and services tax legislation package. The member for Higgins was a central part of the government at the time, as she was working for the Treasurer, Peter Costello. Three months of committee inquiries were held into the goods and services tax and then the legislation came into this parliament and was properly debated after the inquiries were completed. The consideration in detail stage was not truncated. The legislation was voted on and passed by this House.

That is the process that any government that wants to be honest and straight with the Australian people would have adopted. This government, on the other hand, came into the parliament, truncated the Selection Committee process and refused to allow this package of 19 bills to be split and sent to the five specialist House committees that were specifically established as part of the so-called new paradigm between the crossbenchers, the opposition and the government. It refused to allow those committees to inquire into this package of legislation. Having truncated the Selection Committee process, it established a kangaroo joint select committee. The vast majority of members on that committee believe in a carbon tax. It is completely out of sync with the representation that exists in this parliament. The opposition has a greater number of members in both houses than the Labor Party, yet the government established a committee of 14 members with five members of the opposition and nine members from the crossbenches, the Greens and the Labor Party. Nine of those members believe in a carbon tax and five do not. So it established a kangaroo joint select committee to inquire into these bills. It started the debate in this House before that joint select committee had even begun to meet. It started the debate before the inquiry had reported. It also started the debate even before the first meeting of the Joint Select Committee on Australia’s Clean Energy Future Legislation.

We should not be here debating this legislation at all. The experience under the Howard government was very different. The member for New England, who is a personal friend of mine while being a political foe at this time, laughs. I believe the member for New England, along with 148 other members of this House, went to the last election campaigning against a carbon tax—149 out of the 150 members in this place did not go to the last election promising a carbon tax. The coalition said we would not have a carbon tax. The Prime Minister said there would not be a carbon tax under any government she led. The Treasurer said that
suggestions that there would be a carbon tax in a Labor administration were ludicrous, hysterical and fanciful. The only member of this place who can stand here with any integrity and say that they campaigned to have a carbon tax is the member for Melbourne. That is why, out of the 150 members, 149 know in their heart of hearts that we should not be extending sitting hours for debate on the carbon tax bills, because we should not be having this carbon tax written into our legislation at all.

The Leader of the Opposition has quite rightly described this as the longest political suicide note in history. It will fall on the government's head on election day when the people cast their vote about whether they want to be represented by a government that promises them six days before an election that there will be no carbon tax and which reaffirmed that the day before, when the current Prime Minister said, 'I rule it out,' on Sky television with David Speers. The public will consider whether they want to be governed by a political party that could tell such a bald faced falsehood to the Australian people before an election in order to get elected and then change their mind 180 degrees after the election because it suited their purposes. In fact, the only mandate this government has is not to introduce a carbon tax. That is the only mandate this government has and their alliance partners should hang their heads in shame.

Mr PYNE: You have been very generous but let me say, getting back to the motion that is before the House, the motion before the House intends to extend sitting hours on 11 October to allow the House to sit from 9 am till 2 pm. We will support such an amendment but in doing so it is perfectly reasonable for us to make the political points that need to be made: No. 1, we should not be in this House even debating this legislation and No. 2, the government could have kept to the regular process for dealing with legislation in this House. They should not have needed to add sitting hours because they should not have gagged the debate in the first place. If there were no gag attached to this legislation, we would be able to deal with it in the normal course of events.

There is so much time on the schedule that the government placed before the parliament at the beginning of this year because the government has virtually no agenda. The government puts very little legislation into this parliament of any consequence and this is some of the most important legislation that they have ever put into the parliament. It is fair to say that this is a package of legislation that does have consequences. For that very reason it is the one package of legislation for which no gag motion should ever have been moved. There are many other pieces of legislation that this government have introduced which they trumpet as indicating that they are able to manage the House and pass legislation. But the one package of legislation that matters, the broken promise on the carbon tax, they chose to guillotine, to gag, to apply the order where the debate will finish at a specific time. That is why we should not need to have extra sitting hours because, if there had not been a gag, we would have been able to sit through the next sitting week and potentially the week after that and debate the carbon tax.
In fact, it is the opposition's contention that, if the government were worth its salt, it would have put this legislation on the table. It would have allowed it to go to the specialist committees of the House. They would have reported and then the debate could have begun. Let us not forget, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I am sure you have not, that the carbon tax is not due to begin until 1 July 2012. It is not due to begin until the middle of next year. There is only one reason that the government wants this legislation passed by applying the gag motion on 11 and 12 October and that is because it wants it off the agenda by the end of this year. Some people—I am not one of them—think it is because it wants to get the carbon tax through before it changes the Prime Minister, before it changes the leader of the Labor Party back to the member for Griffith. Now I would not say that but some people have said that—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: And you would not say it in this debate because it has no relevance.

Mr PYNE: It simply occurred to me that that might be one of the reasons that the government wants to gag this debate and why it now needs to add extra hours. It has made such a mess of the management of this parliament for the last four years and this motion only confirms what we all know, which is that this government never gets anything right.

Ms O'DWYER (Higgins) (17:56): As the Manager of Opposition Business has so eloquently put it, it is very clear that this motion that is before us today is nothing more than window-dressing; it is nothing more than a stunt because we know that the fact is this: this government has in practice gagged the debate. It has gagged the consideration that we can provide for the carbon tax bills and there are many bills—19 of them. Proper consideration would mean that every member of this House had an opportunity to fully explore those bills not only in the speeches that they present to the House, which should be more than one minute per bill, but also in the consideration in detail.

As the Manager of Opposition Business has said, this debate will finish on 11 October. Despite the motion that has been brought forward, there is going to be a gag on when these bills can be considered and 11 October is that drop-dead date. Only three hours have been set aside for consideration in detail. I was reflecting on the fact that there are many people in this place who should want to contribute to this debate. Certainly everyone on this side is very keen to contribute to this debate because they understand how important it is.

The Treasurer has said that this is one of the greatest economic reforms and that it will be absolutely transforming for our economy. We certainly agree with the latter part: it will be transforming for our economy. It will be so transforming that it will send our jobs offshore and it will harm our economy irretrievably. But there are other members on the opposite side who should be interested in representing their communities, in standing up for the people that they claim to represent and in presenting speeches to this place as to why it is that they have joined the Prime Minister in breaking their election commitment not to bring in a carbon tax in this term of government. The fact that they have not taken these carbon tax bills to an election is a disgrace. I want to get on the record the members in Victoria who have not put their names down to speak on this motion. There are 12 of them I am sad to say. There is Michael Danby—who was in the chamber just before—the member for Melbourne Ports; Martin Ferguson, the member for Batman; Richard Marles, the
member for Corio; Nicola Roxon, the member for Gellibrand—

**Dr Emerson:** Madam Deputy Speaker, on a perfectly predictable point of order I ask that the member refer to members by their seats rather than by their names. It is just a normal courtesy. If she is not prepared to do that then she should sit down.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Higgins should also be referring to the motion before the chair and, as we have had discussions about people's names being on or off lists, she should be perhaps a bit careful about whom she will identify.

**Ms O'Dwyer:** I certainly would not wish to embarrass you, Deputy Speaker.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Higgins, I was giving her a pretty wide berth, but you were not listening to what I said about lists and how they do and do not appear. You might not want to completely embarrass yourself.

**Ms O'Dwyer:** I will refer only, then, to one notable name that is missing from the list. It is pretty understandable why, for instance, the member for Maribyrnong may not wish to speak on this bill. Bill Shorten, the member for Maribyrnong, is someone who has leadership aspirations.

**Dr Emerson:** Deputy Speaker, I raise a point of order. The member for Higgins has completely ignored your advice—that is, she is still referring to the names of members of parliament, not referring to them by their seats—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The minister will resume his seat. The member for Higgins did refer to the member's title as well. I understand the minister's point. The member for Higgins will refer to the motion before the chair.

**Ms O'Dwyer:** We know the assistant Treasurer, the member for Maribyrnong, has leadership aspirations. We know that he covets the top job in this place. As the Prime Minister said in her speech when she tabled the carbon tax bills, 'We will be judged by history; we will be judged by what we say on this bill.' Of course, the member for Maribyrnong will also be judged. I think he is taking a long view of history; he is quite conscious of the fact that when he potentially decides to challenge the Prime Minister for her job—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Higgins needs to be relevant. I have given her a great deal of latitude, but this is beyond the pale. The member for Higgins has the call, and it would be terrific if we could wrap up a debate that we are all agreeing to.

**Ms O'Dwyer:** I simply wanted to make the point that there are some in this place who are not keen to make their contribution known or to put their contribution on the record because they are concerned about being judged by history. We know that the motion before us is, as I have said before, a sleight of hand. It is window-dressing for the fact that this place is not being given due consideration of these bills before us. If we were able to properly consider these bills, we would in fact have a time that was not limited by gag, as it currently is. We know that the government is not very keen to have scrutiny of these bills. In fact, it has only just released economic modelling today, economic modelling that had to correct the previous figures: $20 a tonne was the initial modelling when it should have been $23 a tonne.

We understand that the government needed to correct its own figures with the modelling, but the problem here is that there are a number of other elements that we are very concerned about on our side. There has not been a proper opportunity to ask the
government questions. That opportunity would come about through consideration in detail, and to limit consideration in detail to three hours is not acceptable. As the Leader of the House quite rightly said, this is a debate we should not be having, because the Prime Minister made a promise before the last election that there would be no carbon tax under the government she led. She has broken that promise. So the government does not want the scrutiny in this place; it wants to be able to ram through this legislation, faults and all, and the impact will be on the businesses and the people of Australia, who have had absolutely no say.

We here on this side of the House think that is a disgrace, and that is why we believe there should be a greater opportunity for debate. We believe this should have been taken to an election; it should still be taken to an election. I notice the member for New England has left the chamber—if there was true integrity about this debate then he too would support our calls for an election so the Australian people can decide.

Mr CHESTER (Gippsland) (18:05): I join with the Leader of the House and the member for Higgins in making a couple of points on this motion before the chair. The people of Australia have been denied that democratic opportunity to have a vote in relation to the carbon tax, because this Prime Minister, in a fundamental breach of trust, told the Australian people just days before the last election, 'There will be no carbon tax under the government I lead.' We can have the debate here about whether the Prime Minister is actually leading any government at all or whether it is Bob Brown, the Leader of the Greens.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Gippsland cannot have that debate because he is actually referring to the motion before the chair.

Mr CHESTER: My concern is that the government is not giving the Australian people the chance to have their say in the way that we are having our say through this motion to extend sitting hours. I would encourage members opposite, particularly regional members, whose electorates are at the absolute pointy end of the carbon tax debate to support this. It is their workers in the manufacturing sector and the dairy industry, and the average farm faces a $5,000 increase in its power bill. It is their workers in small business who are at the absolute pointy end of this carbon tax as it cascades through the entire economy.

I invite members opposite, particularly those regional members of parliament, to use this opportunity of extended sitting hours to stand up on behalf of the workers of Australia or whether they are just going to be the lapdogs of the Australian Greens. They can use these extended sitting hours to debate the merits of this tax on behalf of the people they were sent here to represent. Don't take orders from the Greens, don't take orders from a Prime Minister who is desperately trying to cobbled together her leadership for the future: stand up on behalf of your constituents who are going to be at the pointy end of this carbon tax if it is introduced.

Make no mistake: the greatest threat to jobs in our traditional industries in regional Australia is the policies of the Australian...
Greens and this carbon tax. When you combine those two things you have an absolute recipe for disaster in our traditional industries right throughout regional Australia. In days gone by, there were members opposite in the Australian Labor Party who would use an opportunity like these extended sitting hours to actually stand up for the workers. I believe that the Labor Party of old was better than this. It was always better than this. This is the opportunity that is being presented to the Labor Party by the House with these additional sitting hours to discuss and debate the carbon tax. We can cut your ties with the Greens and you can start to become the party that actually believes in something. I remember that in the lead-up to the last election the Australian Labor Party believed in working families. We do not seem to hear much discussion about working families anymore. I do encourage those opposite to use these extended sitting hours to do something courageous and, as the Prime Minister invited you to, be on the right side of history and oppose this tax.

For my final point I would like to take up a comment the Leader of the House made in his contribution to this debate. He said, 'Those opposite just say no'—

**Dr Emerson:** That's true.

**Mr CHESTER:** And so do the vast majority of Australians. The vast majority of Australians are saying no to your carbon tax, so the Leader of the House is right. You do not have to believe me. The Minister for Trade is interjecting; you do not have to believe me. I have here a sample. These are postcards that I sent out to my electorate to invite people to send Julia Gillard a message. I said, 'Here's your chance to tell Julia Gillard what you think about her carbon tax.' It is easy for us as members, because we can stand up here and make a speech and say what we want to say. The Australian people have been denied that right.

**Dr Emerson:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This is a procedural motion. It is pretty obvious that the member is now going to go into some substance in representing his electorate, which he is entitled to do, but maybe he should avail himself of the increase in the number of hours that has been provided through this motion, rather than rehearsing a speech—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms AE Burke):** The minister will resume his seat. The member for Gippsland needs to be relevant to the motion before the chair, and he is straying.
Mr CHESTER: In conclusion, Madam Deputy Speaker, I am not surprised that the Minister for Trade would be sensitive about issues such as these, because he would have a pile—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Gippsland should not impugn motives. There is a procedural motion.

Mr CHESTER: I apologise, Madam Deputy Speaker. In conclusion, I simply make this point: those of us on this side of the House will support this extension of the sitting hours because it is an opportunity for members opposite to show some courage, to stand up for their electorates, to stand up for the workers in their electorates and actually start listening to the Australian people—people like the ones who have sent me 900 postcards opposing the carbon tax. Incidentally, there are 30 in favour of the carbon tax; I must be fair. This is an opportunity for those opposite to do what I have done and to canvass the views of their electorates and give them the opportunity to have their say, as I have done. It is an overwhelming mandate that I have received from the people of my community, where they have asked me to say no for a very good reason: their jobs are at stake. I encourage those opposite to use these extended sitting hours to show a bit of fortitude, to stand up for the workers they claim to represent, and to consider the impact that this tax will have on the working families who have been, to be blunt, treated appallingly by a government which has shown them no respect. In fact, the Leader of the House had the absolute temerity to describe people who complained about the carbon tax as being of no consequence. So I urge those opposite to redeem themselves with these extended sitting hours and actually start standing up for the people of Australia who expect them to give them a voice in this place.

Mr RUDDOCK (Berowra) (18:13): The motion that I understand we are discussing is:

That so much of the standing and sessional orders be suspended as would prevent:

(1) the time and order of business for Tuesday, 11 October 2011 being as follows:

(a) the House shall meet at 9 a.m.;

(b) Government business shall have priority from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m.; and

(c) during the period from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. any division on a question called for in the House, other than on a motion moved by a Minister during this period, shall stand deferred until the conclusion of the discussion of a matter of public importance; and

(2) any variation to this arrangement to be made only by a motion moved by a Minister

The purpose of this is clear. It is to have the parliament sitting at a time when it would not ordinarily be doing so. For the purposes of enabling proper discussion of legislation and the consideration of the approach that might be taken to the administration of the proceedings of this chamber, all of our parties are known to have time reserved for meetings when a position can be determined. In the context of our two-party system, it is pretty fundamental that parties need time to deliberate on important matters that require consideration and to determine a position. Otherwise, we would come in here like headless chooks voting on a whole lot of issues in different ways. It might be interesting to some to have our parliament less certain than it is already with a hung parliament, but it seems to me that an essential part of the way we have evolved with our robust parliamentary system of democracy is to function within a two-party system, and it can only work if the parties are able to properly deliberate and consider matters that are coming before it. Traditionally that has always been done on Tuesday mornings; time is kept available for
that purpose. This means that there is now
the prospect that the chamber will be sitting
at the same time that the party meetings are
deliberating. That means you have to start to
make choices. You may not, if you are here
and wanting to contribute to this substantial
question—and I am told it is a substantial
question—of the various clean energy bills,
be able to contribute. You will have to make
a choice: do you go to the party room and
participate? Is something considered there
without their knowledge or contribution?
There is the distinct possibility that you may
be disenfranchised, prevented from
participating fully in discussions that are of
absolute importance.

It also says something about what we are
discussing. While it is not referred to directly
in the motion, the Leader of the House has
made it clear that this is to deal with items 11
to 19 on the Notice Paper: Clean Energy
(Unit Shortfall Charge—General) Bill 2011,
Clean Energy (Unit Issue Charge—
Auctions) Bill 2011, Clean Energy (Unit Issue Charge—
Fixed Charge) Bill 2011, Clean Energy (International Unit Surrender
Charge) Bill 2011, Clean Energy (Charges—
Customs) Bill 2011, Clean Energy (Charges—Excise) Bill 2011, Clean Energy Regulator Bill 2011, Climate Change
Authority Bill 2011 and Steel Transformation Plan Bill 2011. This is on
top of items 1 to 10: Clean Energy Bill 2011,
Clean Energy (Consequential Amendments)
Bill 2011, Clean Energy (Income Tax Rates
Amendments) Bill 2011, Clean Energy (Household Assistance Amendments) Bill
2011, Clean Energy (Tax Laws Amendments) Bill 2011, Clean Energy (Fuel
Tax Legislation Amendment) Bill 2011,
Clean Energy (Customs Tariff Amendment)
Bill 2011, Clean Energy (Excise Tariff
Legislation Amendment) Bill 2011 and Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse
Gas (Import Levy) Amendment Bill 2011. I
am reasonably satisfied that I have not
missed any of the bills.

This tells you that this is an
extraordinarily complex set of bills to
implement a legislative proposal for a carbon
tax. I have been in the parliament when we
have considered substantial legislation that
fundamentally changes our tax system. I was
here in parliament when we considered
legislation of this character, in terms of
complexity and difficulty, and the likely
impact that it is going to have on the
Australian community—the broadly based
consumption tax. That legislation, which was
the subject of very considerable
parliamentary debate and discussion, was not
truncated by a guillotine that was going to
fix when you were going to vote on the
matter. It was given full and complete
parliamentary scrutiny through the
parliamentary committee system. This was
legislation that had been clearly
foreshadowed by a Prime Minister before an
election and that the government re-elected
would seek a mandate for and then enact.
Even though there was a clear mandate from
the Australian people after an election, this
new set of legislative measures were the
subject of very thorough parliamentary
scrutiny. I think the legislation very much
improved as a result. There were some
changes. Those who were around at the time
may remember that there were changes that
related to the way food would be taxed. That
was the subject of debate and dialogue and
discussion; something that is being denied in
the very way this legislation is proposed to
be dealt with.

This is very substantial and significant
legislation that is going to impact very
significantly on the wellbeing of the broad
Australian community and many people are
going to be significantly prejudiced as a
result of increased costs of living,
particularly in relation to energy bills. These
are matters about which they ought to be able to express their opinions and be heard. Members should not be denied the opportunity to express the views of their constituents on these substantial pieces of legislation.

While some of these measures might have been appropriate for grouping together, in my view there should have been separate debates in relation to the packages of legislation that is before us, rather than it being a cognate debate for something like 19 separate pieces of legislation. We have a situation in which we now know the parliamentary program that had been set aside was insufficient to allow every member to be able to participate in this debate. I find it most regrettable that very significant legislation which it is going to impact upon people's lives—their cost of living and the very way in which they conduct their businesses—is apparently not considered a matter that people ought to be able to bring to notice. Even in the last few days, I have come to know of people from my constituency, who are aware that there is to be a committee hearing and who know that it will not be long, making submissions to the parliamentary committee, and I am encouraging them to do so because I think their views ought to be heard. I would look for an opportunity to speak on this legislation again—I have already spoken on it—if I could, because I have heard from other constituents. For example, there is a gentleman who runs a dry-cleaning business, and the cost of power for his business has been increasing so significantly—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms AE Burke): The member for Berowra has been very relevant up to now, but this is a motion about—

Mrs Bronwyn Bishop: He's explaining why we need more time.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: If he—

Mr Ruddock: Madam Deputy Speaker, what I am trying to put to you and to my colleagues is that there are important issues that our constituents are raising with the climate change legislation, but the way it is being dealt with means that the opportunity to raise those issues is going to be severely constrained. That is the substantial concern than I have. If I wanted to raise the issue of my dry-cleaner friend who is now having to work through the night so that he can get his electricity at a cut rate and not put at risk the viability of his business—and I do not know what it is doing for his family life; I think his family life must be like that of a federal member of parliament who is still sitting here at 12 o'clock at night trying to consider legislation—

Dr Emerson: That was your fault.

Mr Ruddock: I think it is due to the way in which the government is organising the program. I have never seen a parliamentary program arranged in such an extraordinarily fractious way. The idea seems to be that you can set yourself a program and then, believing that you have to hold to the timetable, try to pretend by way of a fiction that people are going to have sufficient time to discuss legislation. I think that that is what this motion is about. We have now essentially put the parliament sittings at the very time when parliamentary parties would normally be having their party meetings. I have been here for a number of years—as of tomorrow, it will be 38 years—and I am struggling to recall a time when the government of the day has put on sittings when party meetings were held. I cannot say that it has never happened; only that I do not recall that having happened in the time that I have been here.
I hope that you, Madam Deputy Speaker, might be able to help protect all of us who are concerned that there ought to be proper time for deliberation on matters that are likely to come before this parliament and that we not be denied the opportunity here the debate on climate change legislation or have to make a choice about the consideration of all the other bills that might be considered by our parliamentary party meetings when we return. I notice that we are going to have to deal with the National Health Reform Amendment (Independent Hospital Pricing Authority) Bill, the Work Health and Safety (Transitional and Consequential Provisions) Bill and the Corporations (Fees) Amendment Bill—and I am sure that there is a migration bill that we may need to have a look at again!

There is a range of matters which come before our parliamentary parties and which demand all of our attendance, and to put us into a situation where we have to make choices as to how we are going to carry out our functions diminishes our role as effective federal members of parliament. I do not like what is being proposed. I understand that we are not going to vote against it, but even so I think the principle is one that we ought not to give succour to. I hope that the Leader of the House will come and say, 'We realise now that we haven't really set aside sufficient time for the consideration of this very important legislation.' You could, in fact, if you wished to indicate that there should be proper discussion and that time should be available, extend the time for debate, and we could have the vote. It is not so imperative that it be done as proposed. You could extend the time of the committees—in fact, you could have a number of the committees that want to work at it dealing with the climate change legislation. I am sure that if parliamentary committees had the time to do that, members could help the government very considerably in improving the legislation—though I have some fundamental doubts about whether now is the time for us to be implementing legislation of this character.

Mrs BRONWYN BISHOP (Mackellar) (18:27): In moving this motion to extend the amount of time available for debating the carbon tax legislation, the Leader of the House has shown once again hypocrisy of the government in that it has a built-in guillotine for the vote on these 19 bills while at the same time it pretends that it thinks there ought to be more time for debating the bills. The point made by the previous speaker was very sound. The point is that, when you get legislation which will have such a huge impact on people's lives, there ought to be proper time for scrutiny of those bills, which means that they should normally have been referred to the five specialist committees of the House and not the stitched-up kangaroo-court committee we have—which is dominated by Labor and the Greens—and that we should have been able to then reflect on the proper analysis that had been done by those five committees.

In the course of contemplating this motion I took the time to look at the agreement between the Australian Greens and the Australian Labor Party. Set out in this agreement between the Prime Minister and the Treasurer and Bob Brown, Christine Milne and Adam Brandt it says:

2. Principles
The Parties agree to work together to pursue the following principles:
(a) transparent and accountable government;
(b) improved process and integrity of parliament …

And yet these same Greens, who hold themselves up to be some sort of paragon, have agreed to a guillotine and are not allowing proper scrutiny of the bills that
would be achieved, as I said, by them going to the appropriate specialty committees for proper analysis and report back to the parliament. In fact, what is happening is that the debate is being truncated and the bills will be sent off to a heavily biased committee which, no doubt, because of a lack of time that has been allowed for people to make submissions, will be very limited in truthfulness in its reporting of the way the Australian people feel.

On that point, it is quite interesting that only yesterday I met with a group of children from a school in my electorate. When we got to the question-and-answer time, the first question they asked was my opinion on the carbon tax. I explained to them why it was a bad tax, why it should not be introduced and how Australians would suffer at the hands of what is a cascading and compounding tax. I went on to explain how there were no exemptions from the tax because everybody uses electricity. At the end of my answer to that question, there was a huge round of applause from kids who are aged eight. In other words, there was a huge awareness of just how bad this tax is. Added to that is the fact that the timetable for allowing submissions to be made to the truncated committee, which will have at least the facade of conducting an inquiry, is structured such that people will not have time to prepare those submissions and make their point of view heard.

The point has been made by many speakers on this side, and very truthfully, that there is no mandate for this tax. On the contrary, there is a mandate for no tax. Everybody in this chamber except the member for Melbourne, the sole Greens member in this place, said there would be no carbon tax. We said we would not have a carbon tax and have said that all the way along. The Prime Minister, of course, said, ‘There will be no carbon tax by any government I lead,’ and the Treasurer said that it was all a beat-up by the opposition and there was no way there was going to be a carbon tax. This was deliberately said so that people would think, ‘I guess we can vote for them because they are not going to introduce a carbon tax.’ Had the Labor Party in fact said, ‘Yes, we will have a carbon tax,’ right down the barrel of the camera, as the Prime Minister chose to make her statement, I have no doubt there would be a different situation in this House today. We would be sitting on opposite sides and the Greens would not have all the influence that they have in demanding what policies go through.

In that same agreement between the Greens and the Australian Labor Party, there is a paragraph relating to the fact that the Greens will have their way and that a carbon tax will be put in place. The agreement also provides that the Greens will have access every week to the Prime Minister, the Treasurer and other ministers. It says that the Greens Treasury spokesperson and Mr Bandt will receive:

… economic and financial briefings from the Treasurer and the Minister for Finance and the Secretaries of the Departments of Treasury and Finance and Deregulation at regularly agreed times.

It is also interesting that this agreement—and it was pertinent to last night’s debate, I suppose—says:

Should Senator Brown, Mr Bandt and other Greens … with portfolios, wish to propose new policies, these proposals may be formally submitted to the Office of the Prime Minister and forwarded to the appropriate Department and Minister for analysis. Where the proposal is likely to involve costs, it may also be sent to the Department of Treasury, and the Treasurer, and the Department of Finance … for costing.

This would obviously remain confidential, unlike what would happen should the opposition request that service. No wonder
the Greens were prepared to go along with the government last night. They were in a secret agreement whereby they could have an advantage not available to the rest of the parliament, except, of course, for the government.

So, while we say that the Greens and the government agreed to 'transparent and accountable government' and 'improved process and integrity of parliament', what is happening with the debate on these bills is the exact opposite. It is a farce that these 19 bills are part of a cognate debate.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. Peter Slipper): Order! The matter before that House is the motion moved by the Leader of the House. The honourable member should confine her remarks to the motion before the House, which relates to whether standing and sessional orders should be suspended.

Mrs BRONWYN BISHOP: We are not suspending standing orders, Mr Deputy President; we are simply addressing the debate on the requirement that the House will sit for additional hours, and I am speaking directly to that motion.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I understand that we are debating notice No. 6, moved by the Leader of the House, which provides 'that so much of standing and sessional orders be suspended as would prevent' two points relating to 'the variation of time and order of business for Tuesday, 11 October' being dealt with. Consequently, the honourable member from Mackellar should be discussing whether or not the motion moved by the Leader of the House should be adopted.

Mrs BRONWYN BISHOP: With respect, Mr Deputy Speaker, unlike the situation where we ask leave to move a suspension and the government never grants leave or agrees to the suspension, we have agreed to the suspension and we are debating the motion itself. That is why I am addressing my remarks to the fact that additional time is being sought by the government, despite the fact there is a built-in guillotine, and that that is a contradictory position.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The motion is the motion moved by the Leader of the House. As I understand it, and as I am advised by the Clerk, it is notice No. 6 and the debate should relate to whether or not the motion moved by the Leader of the House should be adopted or rejected. This is not a general cognate debate on whether the bills should be carried or not; we are talking about whether the order of business should be varied.

Mrs BRONWYN BISHOP: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am addressing very much the question of the increase in time allotted to the discussion of 19 bills which will have the greatest impact on the economy that we have seen in many decades. The fact that we need additional time is something I thoroughly agree with. I am very much prepared to point out that there is a built-in guillotine which would in fact lessen the amount of time that we will have to discuss the bills. On the proposal that we have this additional time, the member for Berowra pointed out very forcefully in his remarks that it is during a time when the political parties meet and when normally things are discussed—like other legislation that is coming before the House. Whilst I am very much in accord with the idea of having more time to discuss these bills, I am making the point that it is not the appropriate way for that to be done. But I am wholeheartedly in agreement with the need for more time—and that is the essence of this motion.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Well, the member should continue to focus on the motion moved by the Leader of the House.
Mrs BRONWYN BISHOP: That is exactly what I am doing.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I now call, once again, the honourable member for Mackellar.

Mrs BRONWYN BISHOP: That is exceedingly kind of you, Mr Deputy Speaker. As I return to my remarks concerning the need for more time to discuss these bills—as the motion in front of us is to provide more time—I would point out that there is not sufficient time for the general public to have their point of view considered by way of consideration by the committees that are being established and run concurrently with the debate of these bills; that there is a built-in guillotine, which is lessening the time available; and that at the same time the government comes back and argues that we need more time. That is a conflicting statement, and I think we are perfectly entitled to point that out.

I think I also pointed out earlier that there is no mandate for this tax to be introduced and that people had said, 'We will not have a tax,' and yet it is to be brought in. In the face of that situation we can only compare the way in which, shall we say, change-of-heart legislation was dealt with by previous governments. You can draw the analogy with the GST, where Mr Howard, the then Leader of the Opposition, said there would be no GST but then had a change of heart and went to the people and asked and got a mandate.

We have said again and again in this place that the proper course of action should be for Ms Gillard, the Prime Minister, to go to the people and seek a mandate. But she had chosen not to do that and she has chosen that we will have a certain set time for debate and then the guillotine will apply. And now the Leader of the House has said that he would like some extra hours on Tuesday, when political parties normally meet to discuss business, and he is indicating that there is a need for more time to discuss the bills.

In pointing those things out, it is important for the general public to know that this side of the House is prepared to stand up for them; that this side of the House is prepared to say, 'Your voice is entitled to be heard.' We have also given the people a commitment that, should this guillotine succeed and a vote is taken and the legislation is passed, we will repeal it just as the government repealed Work Choices. We will give that confidence to the Australian people and to Australian business—and, when we see investment increasing, it will because we have given them that guarantee and they can see light at the end of the tunnel.

As I said, when you walk through a shopping centre you see that it is devoid of customers because people are so uncertain and concerned about their disposable income. We definitely need two more hours, and more every day, through to such a time that there has been sufficient debate on the bills for everybody to have had their views heard. If we could see a change of heart in the government to move away from this kangaroo court type committee they have established, and refer these bills to the proper specialist committees, we might get some real reporting back and hear the voices of the people through their proper submissions and the ability of members to ask questions of them and to present their reports for consideration by the government.

When the GST was introduced there was a six-month period where people were able to discuss the actual legislation. We have only just seen this legislation. I go back to the motion moved by the Leader of the House. He is admitting that there is a need for more time and yet will not remove the guillotine. And, of course, their partners in crime, the
Greens—who have always been ones to scream loud and clear that they would never have a guillotine; that they would want to see things properly argued through—are in it up to their necks, backing the guillotine so that it can take place not only in this place but in the Senate as well.

When we consider that this cascading and compounding tax will get into the nook and cranny of every aspect of everybody's life, that disposable income will shrink for those on fixed incomes and that the cost of electricity, which impinges on every aspect of civilised life is going to be forced up because of a deal between the Labor Party and the Greens, I can only say that, should this motion be carried, I hope to see many more motions come in extending the length of time that we may debate these matters, because this is of utmost importance to the Australian people.

Mr FLETCHER (Bradfield) (18:42): I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak on this very important motion before the House this afternoon, under which the Leader of the House has proposed that so much of standing and sessional orders be suspended as would prevent, in essence, the House conducting business between 9 am and 2 pm on Tuesday, 11 October 2011.

For us to understand the import of this motion, it is important first to understand the broader context in which this motion is being put. The broader context is that the House has before it a package of legislation in relation to the Clean Energy Bill, forming in total a package of some 19 pieces of legislation—very detailed pieces of legislation; very complex pieces of legislation. The Clean Energy Bill itself is very lengthy. I think it is some 380 pages long. It contains, on my review of it, as I recollect, either 23 or 24 parts and each of those deals with matters of considerable substance. The question before the House, as we consider this particular procedural motion, is: what is the most effective way for this House, the people's House, to consider this package of very complex legislation?

Mr Deputy Speaker Slipper, you would be aware that the government has put to the House a particular scheme, a particular process, a particular procedure, under which this package of bills should be considered. Of course, it is against the backdrop of that particular scheme that we consider the merits of the motion before the House this afternoon. In elucidating and informing my comments on the motion before the House this afternoon, it is important that I direct the House to that scheme which was established by the government and which, in fact, was adopted by this parliament in the form of a
motion that was passed some time previously. You would recollect that there is a date very shortly after Tuesday, 11 October upon which debate on the substantive bills is guillotined. In other words, debate on the substantive bills can only occur until that point and no longer. You would appreciate that I am working through the elements of this scheme, in part to make sure that I have it straight in my own mind, as a relatively recently arrived member of this House.

The consequence of those arrangements is this: there is necessarily a finite period of time for consideration of this very complex and very substantive package of measures. It is interesting to compare the period of time which is allowed for the House of Representatives, the people's House, to debate this package of legislation with an end-to-end analysis of the earlier steps in the process by which the policy was developed and fleshed out. As we assess this procedural motion in front of us, I think it is appropriate to understand the overall end-to-end context in which this package was developed. There were several stages, going back to the 2007 election, and the phase in which we were told that the emissions trading scheme was addressing the greatest moral challenge of our time. That was what might be called step No. 1 in the lengthy and convoluted process of policy development, all of which is coming to a very sharp point with the scheme the government has put before us and under which debate must be concluded by, I believe, 12 October—certainly very shortly after Tuesday, 11 October. It is against the backdrop of that scheme that we are considering the motion that is before the House this afternoon.

Mr Deputy Speaker Slipper, you would recollect—following me closely, as I am sure you are—that the first step in this end-to-end process was the emissions trading scheme, which was going to address the greatest moral challenge of our time. You would recollect that there was a crucial second step in the process by which the policy was developed. It is a step which is an essential element of the modern Labor Party's policy development process, and that step is called the backflip. That step is where you take the policy you were previously committed to and you dump it—you abandon it. I just make this observation empirically: it is an important element, it would seem, of the iterative and lengthy process by which policy is developed on an end-to-end basis. You would appreciate that the point I am making is that a series of steps occur in the policy development process as we come to the process by which the policy is crystallised into draft legislation and then brought before this House, the people's House, to determine whether it will support the legislation. Of course, it is against that backdrop that we then have to consider whether, first of all, adequate time has been allowed and, secondly, the precise question before the House, which is whether there is merit in the proposal to allow some additional five hours of debate on the clean energy package.

You would appreciate that we had the backflip, but we actually need to appreciate that that was backflip No. 1. This has been a complex end-to-end policy development process. We also had the people's assembly—another important step in the process—we had the commitment 'There will be no carbon tax under a government I lead', and then of course we had the announcement of the carbon tax. You would appreciate that this is a lengthy and iterative policy development process in which the Labor Party moves from extreme to extreme and back again, rather like a windscreen wiper. It is that lengthy and iterative policy development process which provides the vital context and backdrop against which we must consider the procedural merits of what
is being put to the House this afternoon. I would not like it to be thought that I am revisiting this territory for any political purpose. What I am seeking to do is bring to bear this very important context and backdrop in order to understand the significance of the process which this government has put before the House to consider this legislation. We should then ask ourselves, in particular, about the motion we are considering this afternoon for the provision of an extra five hours at what might be called the pointy end of this long process.

From an initial grand Ruddist vision—if I take us back to the early stages—we move through to the essential backflip elements of the policy development process, to the introduction of the lengthy and extensive package of legislation and then to the sharp end, on 12 October, when the bills will, in fact, be the subject of a guillotine at the point beyond which there can be no additional debate in the parliament. It is a consideration of this end-to-end process which is so critical to assessing the merits of this particular motion which proposes that there ought to be an extra five hours available on Tuesday, 11 October. This, we understand, is to allow for further debate on the Clean Energy Bill. That is the backdrop. That is the essential context.

You will appreciate that I found it necessary to lay that out as the important context in which to then offer my own views as to the merits of this particular proposal. I hasten to add that I do that based upon my confidence that the Leader of the House is open to a disinterested assessment of the various virtues of the alternative schemes before the House. Clearly, such a scheme before the House is the one that the Leader of the House has proposed, which is to offer an additional five hours to allow for additional debate concerning the clean energy package.

Of course, an alternative scheme available to the House would be to say to the Leader of the House, with the greatest of respect, that we do not consider that the particular proposal he has put forward here is the best or the optimal proposal. All of us in this House are united with the Leader of the House in our clear desire to achieve optimality when it comes to the procedures to be followed by this House.

This may be setting the standard too high—I am a relatively recently arrived member—but I do not believe it is. I do not believe it is setting the standard too high to ask ourselves what is the optimal process which we ought apply when dealing with the fact that this is a large and complex package of legislation that this House has already decided, on the basis of a motion previously moved by the Leader of the House, to guillotine debate on 12 October—that is, very shortly after the relevant date for the purposes of the motion which is presently being considered by the House.

Some might say that this is a problem the Leader of the House has created for himself. Some might say that this is a difficulty which the Leader of the House has imposed. It is a roadblock he has put in front of himself on his very own road. There was no compulsion for the Leader of the House to come in here some days ago and move a motion which set 12 October as the date upon which the bills would be guillotined. The existence of that guillotine is the essential backdrop to understanding the merits of the motion presently before the House. It is so important that we all have a very clear appreciation of the essential logical nexus between the proposal currently before the House and the constraint which the House faces—you will recollect, Mr Deputy Speaker—as a consequence of a previous motion moved by the Leader of the House. The Leader of the House is himself the author of the difficulty.
with which all of us are now wrestling in a disinterested spirit as we seek to find the best possible solution to this very difficult challenge.

I do not say this with any pleasure. I do not say this with any lightness of heart. I do not say this with any sense of joy. There is no skip in my step or lilt in my tone as I say this, but I do say that I consider that on its merits this motion ought not be supported. I do not think this is the best scheme available to the House. I do not think it meets the test of optimality. I think we ought to reach for the best, and the best would be to abandon the guillotine completely and consider this package of bills taking all the time that is necessary. That is the approach I recommend to the House. (Time expired)

Mr FITZGIBBON (Hunter—Chief Government Whip) (18:57): It is obvious that the opposition have become the master of the filibuster. Isn't this an interesting debate? Should I call it a debate? It is a conversation they are having with themselves. Speaker after speaker after speaker on that side has risen to argue that we should be spending more time debating the Clean Energy Bills. Yet they have just wasted an hour in which we could have been debating the Clean Energy Bills.

(Quorum formed)

ADJOURNMENT

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. Peter Slipper): Order! It being past 7 pm, I propose the question:

That the House do now adjourn.

Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Campaign

Mr HAWKE (Mitchell) (19:01): I rise tonight to express my objection to the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign, which routinely organises protests and boycotts against Israeli owned businesses worldwide. In particular I want to draw the House's attention to the boycott activity of the Max Brenner chain of chocolate shops in Victoria, Sydney and other places and in which I have witnessed some scenes which we do not want to see in a country like Australia.

In Australia there have been a number of boycotts organised by BDS people against businesses mainly in Victoria but also, in the last few weeks, in Sydney. The Maritime Union of Australia, Geelong Trades Hall Council, Green Left Weekly, Australians for Palestine and the Palestine Solidarity Campaign are all involved in or support the BDS campaign against Max Brenner. Witnessing some of the activities of the protesters in Melbourne, we have seen horrific scenes of violence as well, with protesters arrested and people dragged away by police. I uphold the right of anybody to protest peacefully and support the right to a boycott campaign against anybody in this country; however, the violence and the removal of people's right to shop at stores is not a legitimate means of protest. In Melbourne we witnessed this firsthand, and I reject this whole concept.

However, I also have the right, as a member of this place—and other members of our society also have the right—to stand up and protest against what is rightly seen as an illegitimate boycott campaign. When we are witnessing scenes around the world this week of people talking about a Palestinian state potentially going to the United Nations and, of course, the Americans looking to veto that, this is not the kind of campaign that will assist in the peace process in the Middle East or assist anybody in achieving their ends. I note that the member for Melbourne Ports, who I think is here in the chamber, also has this view, and there is a bipartisan approach from many members here on this whole campaign of the BDS
worldwide. The member for Melbourne Ports said that these prejudiced fanatics should look into their soul. While people are being murdered in Syria, people are attacking a chocolate shop just because they have a chain in Israel.

I endorse those remarks and go further. In the Senate a motion was considered in relation to the matter of the campaign against Max Brenner in Australia. This involved a motion that was to condemn the intensification of the global Boycott, Divestment and Sanction campaign being conducted against Max Brenner chocolate cafes, rejecting the tactic as a way of promoting Palestinian rights and agreeing with the New South Wales Greens MP, who commented that the public perception of the Max Brenner protests may be counterproductive to the cause of peace and human rights in the Middle East. I record for the House's benefit that there were a number of people who voted against this sensible notion in the Senate that recorded our opposition to this whole approach of this campaign in Israel. They happened to be Senator Brown, Senator Di Natale, Senator Hanson-Young, Senator Siewert, Senator Milne, Senator Ludlam, Senator Rhiannon, Senator Wright, Senator Waters—in fact, all the Greens senators voted against this commonsense motion, exposing, in my view, the real agenda of the Australian Greens in relation to Israel.

I record for this House my support for Israel. It is a great ally of Australia. It is a functioning democracy in the Middle East, and we should be very proud of our support over many years. I also acknowledge the members of this place, including people such as Senator Abetz, Senator Boswell, Senator Fifield, Senator Kroger, Senator Ryan, the shadow minister for foreign affairs, the shadow Leader of the House, the member for Kooyong and the member for Melbourne Ports, who is here. All have expressed their outrage at the BDS campaign and the targeting of a peaceful and legitimate enterprise in Max Brenner in Australia.

I want to make this very clear: while I am a strong supporter of Israel and a strong supporter of Australia's approach to Israel over many years, people do have the right to legitimately express a view and protest in this country. But in Melbourne what we saw was the picket of a business—an illegitimate approach. To block customers and shoppers from legitimately going about their ordinary, day-to-day business and choosing to spend their capital in any store is illegitimate in my mind. This protest, which was violent and led to three people being dragged away by the police, 19 arrests for assaulting police and riotous behaviour really exposes in my view the undercurrent of anti-Israeli sentiment that is dominating this, and that is not legitimate. Tonight I simply want to record my opposition to the whole BDS campaign, my support for Max Brenner in Australia, my support for the state of Israel and the view of this House that we should allow all legitimate businesses to conduct their enterprises free of molestation.

Defence Procurement

Mr DANBY (Melbourne Ports) (19:06): I thank the member for Mitchell for his comments and his generous remarks about me and other people. I think we are all involved in a much wider group of people, including the member for Eden-Monaro, the Deputy Prime Minister and others, in an ethical campaign to see that businesses are not boycotted a la the 1930s. It sets up a very bad image in people's minds. It is a shame that I have to speak in a partisan way now because I have to speak on the defence policy of the opposition.

Mr Keenan: You don't have to. No-one is forcing you.
Mr DANBY: Unfortunately, your senator in the other place forced me to be partisan, because he attacked the bipartisan that we normally have on defence policy. As the *Australian*’s Defence Editor, Brendan Nicholson, stated, The opposition launched a surprise attack—a Pearl Harbor—from the flank of the previously bipartisan issue of the size and shape of the future of Australia’s Defence Forces. The Liberal opposition’s spokesman for defence, Senator David Johnston, announced yesterday that an Abbott government would tear up Australia’s 2009 defence white paper, halving our purchase of 100 Joint Strike Fighters, and review plans to build 12 conventional submarines. He described the Navy as a basket case. Mr Abbott was forced to backtrack last night, stating that he would ‘never make savings at the expense of the operational capabilities of our defence force … No one said we would tear up the defence white paper’. In fact, the member for Sturt was so alarmed that he had to get on the radio first thing this morning to say that these were simply the musings of their defence spokesman.

The proposal of those opposite to cut out defence white paper plans are very alarming. The proposed reassessment of defence spending could lead to thousands of defence jobs being cut. As Defence Teaming Centre Chief Executive, Chris Burns, said today in the Adelaide advertiser:

> Proposals to reassess defence spending could lead to paralysis and indecision for defence manufactures ... Effectively it would mean further delays in projects.

Senator Johnson has stated that Liberals would reassess the proposed new submarine replacement to be built in Adelaide and the 12 proposed by the defence white paper.

The senator and his party neglect to underline the fact that these 12 submarines are essential to the defence of Australia.

Indeed it was a former adviser to coalition defence ministers, Sean Costello, who wrote in the *Australian Financial Review* today that these submarines:

> … have the potency and range to deny an enemy the use of the sea. It can stay at sea for long periods of time, much further away from home and strike targets on land as well as sea. They can provide earlier warning of impending danger and are more habitable for the crew. The larger submarine—

which Senator Johnston is apparently opposed to—

> … can fight as part of a coalition force …. To call a spade a spade, it can contribute to US forces in the Asia-Pacific, where as the smaller submarine is limited.

If Australia ever faced the strategic circumstances of 1942, these submarines would help prevent a seaborne attack on Australia’s territory or on our maritime interests.

I suppose the defence minister, the member for Perth, was hinting at that in his remarks in question time today. I suppose the coalition has to find ways of finding the $70 billion black hole that their costings have got them into over the last few months. One of the ways they might do it is by cutting defence. I think it is a very bad idea. The Liberal alternative is to review these subs and consider off-the-shelf subs, abandoning 50 Joint Strike Fighters. It is not the way I would go. We need a considered defence policy in this country and off-the-top-of-the-head musings by the opposition’s defence spokesman are very dangerous.

Plans by Mr Abbott and Senator Johnston to get 24 new Super Hornets to complement the existing 24 are not in the league of the capabilities offered by the Joint Strike Fighter when it comes to defending Australia. The Joint Strike Fighter project would create jobs across the nation. The defence technology giant BAE Systems is a
partner in the fighter project and its Australian headquarters are based in Adelaide. By cutting the number of JSF fighters, the coalition would be putting thousands of jobs at risk.

The opposition's proposed solution is to spend $4 billion on new surveillance aircraft, Global Hawks. I am not against the Global Hawks as a defence instrument, but you cannot increase your expenditure in some areas just off the top of your head, while cancelling the Joint Strike Fighters and the submarines. Defence policy in this country needs to be taken seriously. We need to rely on the experts. Sudden announcements on the front page of the papers by your spokesman can have a terrible effect on the reliability of manufacturing. *(Time expired)*

**Unemployment**

Mr NEVILLE (Hinkler—The Nationals Deputy Whip) (19:11): It is high time the Gillard and Bligh governments got serious about unemployment. Last month Wide Bay Burnett's unemployment rate hit a seven-year high, climbing to 12.3 per cent. It is the worst regional unemployment rate in Australia. It also has the highest female unemployment rate in the country, sitting at 11.4 per cent. At the same time last year Wide Bay Burnett had a jobless rate of 6.7 per cent, so it has almost doubled in the past 12 months under the watch of federal and state Labor governments.

When the Coalition came to power in 1996, the Wide Bay region had an almost unbelievably high unemployment rate of 19.9 per cent. When we left government we had whittled it down to 3.5 per cent—a huge turnaround based on our real support for small business and industry. Now we are right back in the trenches again, to the great concern of civic and industry leaders as well as residents who are seeking jobs or working hard to hold jobs they already have.

Unemployment affects families, local communities and the regional economy. The high rate shows that there are many people doing it tough. It trickles down through small business into other avenues of the community, and I can assure the House that many operators are struggling in Bundaberg, Hervey Bay, Childers and the coastal strip. I have been collaborating with regional development organisations to find a solution to the problem, but the crux of the matter is we need an effective government response to reverse the jobless trend in Wide Bay Burnett.

A couple of projects are already in the pipeline, including the attraction of fly-in, fly-out mine workers, and I would like to see them come to fruition as soon as possible, though I concede this is not the best way of stimulating employment.

There have also been a few big-ticket projects approved in the Hervey Bay and Bundaberg areas, but we need to look at long-term solutions to our unemployment challenges. We need programs which focus on building up the region, not stripping away the wealth such as through Labor's mining and carbon taxes. The government must do more to ensure that those who want a job can get a job.

I am calling on the governments, state and federal, to offer immediate assistance by way of (1) targeted programs of investment to create jobs; (2) the provision of seed funding for new industries based on local resources or supply services to industries—for example, mine engineering; (3) the provision of assistance to small business; (4) the removal of red tape from the development and building industries—and in Queensland that has to be seen to be believed; (5) bringing forward works programs like the Bruce Highway and; (6) specific help for tourism. But it is not just my home region
which is suffering at the moment; Queensland recorded a half a percent increase in unemployment during August. You might not think that is much but last month the jobless rate, seasonally adjusted, climbed to 6.2 per cent, which is exactly half a per cent higher than in July. Only 1,800 new jobs were created in Queensland in August, but 14,900 were lost. Right now, there are 24,500 more Queenslanders unemployed than at the same time in August, 2009. That is a very worrying trend.

We are effectively experiencing an explosion in the number of people without jobs and I am asking: exactly what is the Bligh government doing about it? They seem to be very busy. They are concentrating on shifting the deckchairs to make way for Paul Lucas’s leaving and Andrew Fraser’s taking up of the position of Deputy Premier. Instead of working on creating jobs and wealth for Queenslanders, the Bligh government is looking inwards on itself and doing everything it can to shore up its chances at the next state election. The ALP always promotes itself as the party of the worker but evidently there are far fewer workers on Labor’s list of priorities at present. In times of economic uncertainty, people look to the government to provide strong leadership and security, but that is not happening.

**Dementia Awareness Week**

Ms GRIERSON (Newcastle) (19:16): I rise to inform the House that this week is Dementia Awareness Week, with today, 21 September, being World Alzheimer's Day. The theme of this year’s awareness week is, ‘Worried about your memory?’ As one of the founding members of the Parliamentary Friends of Dementia, which has now been operating for eight years, I have followed closely the issues faced by those with dementia in our Australian communities, in particular those with Alzheimer’s disease, as well as their families and their carers.

Dementia was, and continues to be, a critical health issue of national significance. Today, Alzheimer’s Australia and the Parliamentary Friends of Dementia hosted an event to raise awareness of the latest developments regarding dementia. The Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, Mark Butler, addressed the group, as did Ita Buttrose, the new president of Alzheimer’s Australia; Glenn Rees, CEO of Alzheimer’s Australia; and the keynote presenter, Professor John Breitner, one of the world’s leading authorities on Alzheimer's disease and dementia. I particularly say a big welcome to Ita Buttrose, and thank her for taking on the role of president and adding her talents to a very worthy cause.

Sue Pieters-Hawke was also in attendance today. She is a long-time champion of those living with dementia. Her generosity and that of her mother, Hazel Hawke, in sharing their experience with dementia over a long period of time continues to encourage and inspire so many people.

Today the minister referred to two emerging epidemics in our country—diabetes and dementia—observing that the stigma and mythology often associated with dementia continues to pervade our nation’s consciousness. Minister Butler raised the enormity of the challenge that dementia will present to the health and wellbeing of Australians in the future and expressed his willingness to work with Alzheimer’s Australia in formulating the government’s response to the recently released Productivity Commission report, *Caring for older Australians*.

With 52 per cent of residents in aged care diagnosed with dementia, the minister stated that any aged care policy must have dementia at its centre. Access Economics
estimates that over 269,000 Australians are currently living with dementia, with many facing longer than three years without diagnosis. Nationwide, this number continues to grow by 1,500 new cases each week. As the third leading cause of death in Australia, after heart disease and stroke, it is our duty to continue on our mission to raise the profile of dementia and increase awareness of its effects on individuals and communities, and to resource the research and interventions that will prevent dementia.

Introducing the keynote speaker, Ita Buttrose referred to recent reports, one of which showed that developed countries achieve only a 20 to 50 per cent diagnosis rate. She also referred to a study undertaken at the University of Newcastle showing an average time of three years after the first appointment with a GP before the disease was diagnosed. That is, of course, very discouraging. But this data does support the importance of early diagnosis and intervention.

Early diagnosis was the topic of Professor John Brietner’s presentation. Outlining the global challenge, he predicted that by 2050, there will be over 115 million cases of dementia worldwide, with a cost of $2.3 trillion. Professor Brietner presented interesting research that went to the core challenges of early detection—from biomarker evidence to prevention—and arresting dementia symptoms associated with Alzheimer’s disease.

Whilst acknowledging the importance of behaviour and lifestyle modifications, such as exercise and what he describes as a ‘Mediterranean diet instead of a McDonald’s diet’, as well as the better managing of risk factors, his trials with anti-inflammatory medication and nasal insulin showed positive impacts at this stage of his research. His efforts to be with us today are very much appreciated.

On a positive note, I draw the House’s attention to the work of Novocastrian friends Dr Maggie Haertsch and her husband, trained clown doctor Jean-Paul Bell, in what they call ‘the smile study’—a study which investigated impacts of humour therapy on people with dementia. A documentary of the study The Smile Within will be shown at the National Dementia Research Forum in Sydney this week. Their study found a 20 per cent reduction in agitation when they used humour therapy—results that are comparable to the results achieved through the use of common dementia drugs. I commend their ongoing work to improve the quality of life of others.

The CEO of Alzheimer’s Australia, Glenn Rees, emphasised that early diagnosis of dementia can be achieved to assist in treatment and prevention of Alzheimer’s disease and to reduce the impacts. But this has to be done by refocusing the research. That is something that we certainly welcome and encourage.

I close in expressing—with my co-convenor, the member for Brisbane—the support of the Parliamentary Friends of Dementia for all Australians impacted by dementia. I particularly note that Anne Kirchler and her partner Andrew Stenning from my region will have reached the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania today—a trek conducted in memory of loved ones who have passed away due to Alzheimer’s disease. I commend their efforts.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. Peter Slipper) (19:21): Before calling the honourable member for Wright, I would like to recognise a guest of the member for Grey, Commander Stacy Porter, who is in the chamber. She is part of that Australian
Defence Force Parliamentary exchange program.

**Wright Electorate: Young Liberal-National Party**

Mr BUCHHOLZ (Wright) (19:22): Today in the House we were joined by some very motivated young, professional Queenslanders who are proud members of the Queensland Young LNP—Callum Stewart, Mathew Jackson, David Bell, Ben Tobin, Casey Silman and Sarah Jones. All have undertaken a road trip out of Queensland to come to Canberra to catch up with their idols and to become a little more politically aware of the current debate. However, these young Queenslanders have a political position and opinion that they want to share with their colleagues back home. These outstanding young Queenslanders have a strong opposition to the carbon tax. There is a growing number of young people standing against the carbon tax. The Young Liberal-National Party are a part of this anti-carbon tax movement in Queensland. They understand the economic impost that this toxic tax poses to their livelihoods and to their fellow Australians. The opposition to this reckless tax has been on display in a series of demonstrations by young people, including Liberal-National Party members, throughout Queensland.

These Young Liberal-Nationalists are a group of like-minded people aged between 16 and 30 years. They are motivated to make a difference by protecting individual freedoms for all Australians. They do this by being an integral part of campaign teams across the state, even so far as by helping their interstate counterparts. They also develop policy in conjunction with senior party members of all levels of government. This was demonstrated recently at the Liberal-National Party convention in August when all the policies put forward by the Young Liberal-Nationalists were adopted by the party as a whole.

During the devastating Queensland floods, the Young Liberal-Nationalists were a driving force for the recovery of the affected areas. Many of the young people were students of the University of Queensland which was greatly affected. They assisted in the recovery efforts of the campus and the surrounding residential areas. In the proud tradition of conservative politics, the youth wing of the LNP supports small business. In the tradition of youth politics, many of those small businesses are located in the entertainment districts of the towns in which they actively engage. Most of the small businesses that they support are the local clubs and pubs. With the upcoming state election in Queensland, they have what they call flying squads. These flying squads go out and help the likes of 'Can-do' Campbell Newman to try to ensure that they get him elected as the next Premier of Queensland.

I started as a member of the Young LNP in Queensland. I believe that I was tricked into joining that organisation. I heard an invitation to come to a party, so I rolled up with a carton of beer only to find out that I was the only one with a carton of beer. It happened to be the AGM of the local LNP branch meeting. Being the only one at the AGM with beer, I got elected as the next branch chairman. I thought if I were going to run the show, everyone would have to bring their own beer from then on.

I encourage these young, motivated professionals to keep going with their political pursuits. I thank my colleagues who warmly welcomed this group to this place. I trust that their relationships from their initial encounters today were beneficial not only to them but to the members they met. I believe, Mr Deputy Speaker Slipper, you may have started in the party as a member of the youth
wing as well. I encourage this fine group of young Australians to continue to pursue their political goals. Each of them should note that if there is anything I can do to assist them in their political endeavours, I am more than happy to do so. I take this opportunity to thank them for their commitment to the party and I wish them every success. I also compliment them on the professional way in which they have conducted themselves whilst in this House and whilst in my presence.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. Peter Slipper): I must confess to the House that I was a state president of the Young Nationals.

Chifley Electorate: Pricing Discrimination

Mr HUSIC (Chifley—Government Whip) (19:26): As the House is aware, I have been speaking regularly on the issue of price discrimination as it affects Australian businesses and consumers of IT hardware and software. This is the fourth time I have raised this matter, either here or in the Main Committee. I think Australian consumers, especially younger consumers, and businesses are shouldering an unfair pricing burden. And the tech company justification for this practice has either been non-existent or flaky. On top of this, with the huge investment we as a government are putting in to the National Broadband Network, I think IT pricing discrimination could act as a barrier to consumers, businesses and families wanting to access a new broadband platform.

There is good reason for maintaining a focus on this issue. Consumers and businesses tell me they are well and truly tired of paying artificially inflated prices for IT products—anywhere between 60 and 80 per cent for software, for example—and they feel their concerns are being well and truly ignored. There is another reason I am so interested in this issue. It is about the competitiveness of Australian businesses, especially small businesses. IT price discrimination is holding back businesses competing with counterparts in other countries as they are competing against rivals that get a massive head start because they get their hardware and software much cheaper than our businesses do.

I give a quick example. I was contacted by David Barrett from a Melbourne based business called Famous By Tuesday which is engaged in post-production audiovisual work. Bear in mind, many of these types of firms compete both here and overseas for work, and their opportunity to do this will expand phenomenally with the rollout of the NBN and its significant upload speeds. Mr Barrett tells me that he uses a high-end editing system called Smoke, sold by Autodesk Canada and distributed through Digistor Australia. Last year, Mr Barrett was told he could purchase an upgrade of this software to a higher specification. The advertising noted the upgrade could be purchased for $25,000 with the caveat that US pricing applies and that, 'International prices may apply.' When Mr Barrett got the bill he was stunned to see that the package did not cost $25,000; it cost $37,000. This was a $12,000 difference at a time when the Australian dollar was valued at US94c—simply breathtaking.

The big tech companies tend to blame retailers or distributors, but I actually got an email from an IT sales and repair business in Sydney, which said:

I agree with you about Australian companies charging more than the parent companies in overseas locations for the same goods.

This is a constant gripe ... We are constantly getting told by customers what their buy prices are for the same goods purchased overseas...

... ... ...

...we are constantly sending this information thru to the sales managers and product managers
at say Canon and HP here in Australia—Bugger All response—or some waffle about company confidential and trade practices act.

Worse still, this person told me that companies like his do not speak up on this because they believe they are placed in a disadvantage if they speak out because 'they'—major companies—start playing favourites amongst their distribution channel and giving priority to some and cut out others. If this is true, it is an exceptionally serious claim.

I have raised the pricing discrimination issue with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer and his office. I have had productive discussions with him and I am grateful that he has considered my previous request for a more detailed investigation into this matter. He advises that Treasury officials have met with the Productivity Commission to discuss issues related to price discrimination. The commission is now further examining this issue as it prepares to bring down the final draft of its review into the economic structure and performance of the Australian retail industry and, most importantly, the commission will welcome further submissions from the public on the impact of IT price discrimination on them, which can be emailed to retail@pc.gov.au

I am obviously delighted that the commission is prepared to take a really close look at this issue and, as much as this provides consumers and businesses with the chance to feed their issues directly to the Productivity Commission, I would also urge tech companies—who to date have been notoriously slow or reluctant to deal with this issue transparently and publicly—to also make a submission. These firms need to explain why they charge Australian consumers and businesses in a way that they would never dream of doing in their home markets.

According to Deloitte Access Economics the economic value of the internet to the Australian economy is currently worth about $50 billion or 3.6 per cent of GDP. It provides jobs to nearly 200,000 Australians, almost as much as mining. It generates $27 billion in productivity increases alone to business and government in the form of improvements in the way they work and provide services. The IT sector is absolutely critical to this nation and our future. Tackling pricing discrimination will help ensure we can boost the value of IT to the broader economy, businesses and households.

**Housing Affordability**

Mr ALEXANDER (Bennelong) (19:31): Lack of affordable housing is one of the biggest challenges facing our constituents nationally regardless of the geographic region, nature of urban development or underlying socio-economic circumstances. Household expenditure on housing increased 55 per cent in the six years to 2009-10 concurrent with massive price hikes for many other essentials, including power, water, food, transport and health. Today, an average earner cannot afford an average home anywhere in Australia.

An Australian household must earn 1.8 times average weekly earnings in order to afford a median-priced home. This is directly related to the modern challenges of less time for family, for community, for a healthy and balanced lifestyle, for mental health and for productivity. If you are not an average weekly earner living in partnership with another average weekly earner, where do you live? How do you afford the 68 per cent hike in rent since 2003-04? How do you tell your children that they will have to move house and change schools yet again? How do you come up with the cost of moving, the

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additional commuter fares or petrol money and extra time it will take to get to work?

What if you are in such a partnership, but one of you is a small business owner who cannot afford to make ends meet with the drop-off in sales that has arisen from the threat of the carbon tax? If you have been able to survive the GFC and dampened consumer sentiment arising from the carbon tax, how will you be able to afford the increased energy, transport and other imposts a carbon tax will bring? Are one of you employed in an industry that will be forced to contract under a carbon tax? Where will you live while you retrain for a promised green job?

There is so little subsidised housing available that crisis housing is now used as a substitute. So where do those in crisis go? They surf couches or live on the streets. What does that do to a child’s education, self-esteem and mental health? In many parts of Australia, crisis housing is no longer available unless you are living on the streets. This includes families. This includes single mothers, who hope it will lead to crisis accommodation before their children are taken away.

There has been much debate about the causes of homelessness. It is clearly a very complex issue. There has been much debate about mechanisms to improve housing affordability—tax breaks and incentives for various categories of home buyer. There has been much discussion as to whether tax breaks for residential property investors add to rental housing stock, supporting lower rents, or push up house prices.

At the end of the day, the only thing that will reduce housing costs is a rebalancing of housing supply with demand. Australia’s infrastructure deficit must be addressed. We must open up land for development in a manner that provides the essentials of modern living. Affordable housing means new communities—houses whose prices are in synchronicity with nearby employment opportunities. It means an economy that balances incomes with expenses such that our communities can afford to live.

In closing, I would like to pay special tribute to all those who struggle each day to provide the essentials of modern life for their families and to the tireless workers and organisations that endeavour to support them. In my electorate of Bennelong, I think of Eastwood Christian Community Aid, a largely volunteer organisation who, over the past six months, has worked with 243 clients suffering financial stress, 28 per cent of whom are in housing crisis. That is to say that they are spending more than 50 per cent of their income on housing accommodation.

Without affordable housing it is very difficult to pick up the pieces—to maintain one’s family structure and stability to support your children’s education. These stresses often impact on one’s mental health and so make the challenges of picking up the pieces that much greater. While we argue over a carbon tax and grapple with the infrastructure deficits, regional development and affordable housing, we may well spare a thought for those at the front line doing their best to make a difference. Organisations such as Eastwood Christian Community Aid—and there are many like them—fill a tremendous need in our community under ever-tightening funding models that often place their own job certainty in doubt.

Sapper Jacob Moerland Memorial Skate Park

Mr Griffin (Bruce) (19:35): Last year as a minister in the defence portfolio I had the solemn responsibility and duty to attend a number of funerals of servicemen who had been killed in Afghanistan. I will not pretend that it is something that I enjoyed doing or
that it was something that I approached with anything other than a sense of some great sadness and dread. Although I did not know the individuals, I felt keenly the sorrow and sadness of those who had lost and were mourning someone very close to them.

One such funeral that I attended was that of Sapper Jacob Moerland in the rural Queensland town of Gayndah. That was in June of last year. Sapper Moerland, along with Sapper Darren Smith, had the misfortune of being the victim of an IED explosion and Sapper Moerland died of his wounds. Sapper Smith and their explosives detection dog, Herbie, had also died at the scene. I attended that funeral, and there were some 1,500 family members, friends and local dignitaries in attendance. More than 1,000 mourners were seated outside the service. It was a big occasion for a small town and it was an occasion which was keenly felt by the local community, Jacob's loved ones and the broader Defence family.

Some weeks ago I was somewhat surprised, I must admit, to receive an invitation to return to Gayndah for the official opening of the Sapper Jacob Moerland Memorial Skate Park. This memorial skate park has become a focal point for the local community and an opportunity for that community and for Jacob's family and loved ones to commemorate and remember him and his contribution. Again I felt, 'Should I go?' Frankly, there is nothing more ex than an ex-minister. But I thought about it and decided that, in the circumstances, if I was able to go, having attended the man's funeral it was only appropriate to try to also pay respects at a time which would celebrate his life. So off I went to Gayndah and it was an occasion which I was very pleased that I did attend.

I attended with Lieutenant General Ash Power, representing the Chief of Army and the CDF. We flew up in a light plane out of Canberra in quite stormy weather. I will not pretend that it was a fun flight, but when we got there, somewhat late, it was a real old-fashioned country day. There was not the same size crowd as there was at the funeral, but there were a lot of people there from the local community who were friends and loved ones of Jacob. His mother, Sandy, gave a very touching speech in which she spoke about how much he meant to her and to the community and how pleased he would have been to have a park like this named after him—and about the sort of trouble he would have caused as a young man, ripping around that skate park.

The mayor, Councillor Joy Jensen, made a point of thanking the federal government for the support it provided to ensure that the park went ahead, some $389,000. I was joined by the member for Flynn, Ken O'Dowd, and it was an occasion to celebrate a young man's life. I was incredibly impressed by Jacob's family, by his mother and his sisters, and the padre who spoke in fond and glowing terms of a young man who obviously touched all those he met. To share that occasion with them was a very special thing to do. I know that the community of Gayndah will get a lot of fun out of that skate park in the years to come. It is a great place to go and to meet and have fun with family and friends. Over time, as the trees grow, it will become an even more special place. It will be a place where people will go to have fun and it will be a place where many people will remember a very fine young man who gave everything for his nation in a job that he loved and a job that he loved doing—there with his mates in a place a long way away. Lieutenant General Ash Power and Mrs Moerland unveiled a plaque which reads:

Dedicated to the memory of Sapper Jacob 'Snowy' Moerland, 2nd Combat Engineer
Regiment, who was killed in action while serving in Afghanistan on 7th June 2010. Never above you; never below you; always beside you. Lest we forget.

Grey Electorate: Mouse Plague

Mr RAMSEY (Grey) (19:40): For two years, parts of my electorate have been battling a mouse plague. Last year it was estimated there was $80 million of damage on Eyre Peninsula alone. There is a little bit of history in this. In the late 1990s, strychnine was removed as a preferred poison for mouse baiting. Since that time, the recommended poison has been zinc phosphide, which is an S7 poison.

Up until late August, two suppliers of this bait—which is actually poisoned wheat—existed in Australia. They produce a finished product. Because this wheat is brought into one point in Australia and then it must be exported back out to every farmer's property, it has to undergo a sterilisation process. This makes the end product very expensive. In fact, it costs $10 a kilogram. The recommended dose is a kilogram per hectare, thus it is $10 per hectare. Many farmers in my district are now planting 4,000 hectares, so it costs up to $40,000 to bait their paddocks and they may have to do this three or four times a year, depending on the intensity of the mice. The cost of this bait means farmers under-bait and consequently the problem gets out of hand.

Last year a Western Australian company, 4Farmers, applied to the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority for an on-farm mixing registration of zinc phosphide. That would mean farmers could purchase the concentrate, mix it on farms and apply it to their grain, and, because the grain comes off their farm, it would not need sterilisation. That method of grain treatment supplies the finished product to farmers for about $1.50 a kilogram. After six months, 4Farmers abandoned the attempt because the APVMA in its wisdom had concerns about farmers handling an S7 chemical. I might point out that farmers all undertake a chemical-handling course, a certification I hold myself, and are trained to handle S7 poisons. So I do have some concerns with the APVMA in that area, however they must make decisions on scientific grounds.

This season the whole of south-eastern Australia in the cropping region was being overrun by mice, and the two manufacturers in Australia could not keep up. With that in mind, 4Farmers applied to install some regional mixing stations which would allow the farmers to bring in their own grain, get it treated with zinc phosphide and then take it out and treat their paddocks. It took some weeks of negotiation, but eventually the APVMA approved the use in late June, and the temporary permit was to last through to the end of September. Part of the deal was that 4Farmers had to nominate how many tonnes they would produce at each site. They did not know how many mice were going to be around so they had a dash at 100 tonnes. Their advice on tonnages was accepted and the stations established. It took some weeks of negotiation, but eventually the APVMA approved the use in late June, and the temporary permit was to last through to the end of September. Part of the deal was that 4Farmers had to nominate how many tonnes they would produce at each site. They did not know how many mice were going to be around so they had a dash at 100 tonnes. Their advice on tonnages was accepted and the stations established. The farmers have rushed to the supply points, because it is a cheaper product, is readily available, and consequently the 100-tonne limits have been broached. Accordingly, 4Farmers went back to the APVMA and applied for a higher tonnage.

It was then that the excreta hit the fan and at this stage those permits have not been forthcoming. It is possible 4Farmers may not have been exemplary with their paperwork, and that seems to be the cause of some of the friction with the APVMA. But I ask the question: is there a genuine danger to public health or do we have people who are just hung up on process?
Mr Deputy Speaker, you should not take this as a direct criticism of the APVMA; I believe their riding rules are wrong. There are a number of chemicals they are reassessing across Australia at the moment and recommending to be removed from farmers' use. I do not know all the detail in this case, but I believe that the APVMA should have the ability to take industry concerns into their decisions.

Before the last election, the government said that they would institute a review of the APVMA. We are now 12 months on, and we have not seen this review. I believe the review should allow the APVMA to take industry concerns into account, and to take into account concerns of farmers needing to purchase this grain immediately because they are being eaten out of house and home with tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, of dollars per day and per week on many of these properties. So I call on the government to bring forward that review and I ask the APVMA to take a generous view of the relicensing of these baiting stations.

**National Dementia Awareness Week**

Ms BURKE (Chisholm) (19:45): I rise to draw the House's attention to National Dementia Awareness Week 2011, which is this week. The issues that National Dementia Awareness Week are seeking to promote are vitally important to our communities and also to the direction of health policy in this country. I have worked with the local Alzheimer's Victoria group—their headquarters are actually outside my electorate of Chisholm but, given the ageing demographic of my electorate, many people within my constituency seek the help and support of Alzheimer's Victoria. I really recommend that anybody going through that difficult stage seeks their support. Their website is fantastic. Their groups are an amazing support. I have had the pleasure of meeting and dealing with many of their support groups, their carers' groups, on a number of occasions.

I have been confronted with the reality of dementia and the impacts it has had not only on sufferers but also on their families, carers and loved ones. I was delighted to be asked by Alzheimer's Victoria to be a Victorian ambassador and to raise awareness of their fight against dementia. This is a terrific program, and today the House was honoured to have many members who are New South Wales ambassadors for Alzheimer's Australia speaking today on this vital issue of dementia.

Dementia is a term used to describe the progressive decline of a person's functioning. The term is applied to a person's loss of memory, intellect, rationality, social skills and physical functioning. An estimated 269,000 Australians currently live with dementia. It is the third leading cause of death in Australia after heart disease and stroke. Dementia is already the single greatest cause of disability in older Australians—and many would not consider these people old; they are aged 65 or older.

The unfortunate reality of dementia is that, whilst it is more common after the age of 65, it can happen to anyone at any time. I know of a constituent who had early onset dementia at 45; an individual who was quite brilliant, and his life and his family's life has been cut short by this crippling disease.

Each week, there are 1,500 new cases of dementia in Australia. That is expected to grow to 7,400 newly diagnosed cases each week by 2050. Very sadly, dementia is fatal and as yet there is no cure. It is a difficult condition to diagnose; there is an average of three years between the first consultation and when the diagnosis is made. This can often be quite detrimental, because there are now some drugs that are quite good but only if
you get dementia in the early phases. One of the issues is training GPs in dementia awareness, recognition and diagnosis.

Dementia places an enormous burden on the families and carers of the sufferer, who provide a phenomenal amount of support. The cost of replacing all family carers with paid carers is estimated to be around $5.5 billion per annum. In addition, the overall cost of responding effectively to dementia is enormous. Dementia will become the third-greatest source of health and residential aged-care spending within two decades. By 2060, spending on dementia is set to outstrip that of any other health condition.

Providing an effective response to dementia within our community starts with looking at how we can overcome barriers to diagnosis. The first level of our response is awareness and understanding. The second is research and prevention. The third is treatment and care.

One of our greatest challenges is for the community to develop a clearer understanding of what dementia is and what it is not. There is still an enormous level of mythology and stigma around this condition; this is not assisted by the fact that we essentially do not understand the causes of Alzheimer's in particular. Initiatives like Dementia Awareness Week, and the huge range of events taking place, are critical to helping shed the mythology and stigma.

One of the primary ways that we can achieve better outcomes for people with dementia and their carers is through research, both into an understanding of the underlying causes of dementia and into the development of innovative treatments. There is no question that a great deal of research is still needed to achieve both of these aims.

The federal government is committed to improving the health of all Australians, and dementia research remains a key priority, being supported by both the Department of Health and Ageing and the National Health and Medical Research Council. The NHMRC alone has provided $121 million for dementia research over the past 10 years, with the amount of funding increasing annually.

The final report of the Productivity Commission, Caring for older Australians, provides us with a great opportunity to do better for people suffering from dementia. I will certainly be using this phase where the minister is out talking to sufferers, their families and carers to remind him and the House and the Labor Party that we need to be doing more in this space.

Most people suffering from dementia want—and their families want that family member—to stay in their home for as long as possible. This is the cheapest alternative for all of us, but we need to find ways to ensure people can remain in their homes getting the support they need with this crippling illness. (Time expired)

**Asylum Seekers**

Mr KEENAN (Stirling) (19:51): It has been a pleasure to sit through all of this evening's adjournment debate waiting for your indulgence, Mr Speaker.

I rise to speak on something very serious. All members in this place would be well aware of the events of 15 December, when SIEV221 foundered off Christmas Island and up to 50 lives were lost as those people attempted to make what is a very treacherous journey to Australia.

The circumstances and the result of the journey of SIEV221 are a horrifying example that brought home to all Australians why we need to stop the people smugglers dead in their tracks. The graphic images brought home to many Australians the reason this parliament needs to do everything
possible to make sure that people smugglers do not have a product left to sell.

Whilst we had graphic images of SIEV221, there is a lot of anecdotal evidence that many other people have attempted to make that journey and have been lost at sea; although it is not brought home as graphically when you do not have the obvious evidence that we had from 15 December last year. Two vessels were reported to have left Indonesia, and they have not been seen or heard of since. I mention them because, when it has been asked about the boats in the media, the government has made statements about what it knows of their fate which contradict their reporting to this parliament during the estimates process. I will now highlight where the discrepancies are. I ask the government to do all that it can to come into this place and explain what they know in order to clear up these discrepancies. On 16 September, I wrote to the Minister for Home Affairs and asked him to do just that.

So two vessels are reported to have left Indonesia—one of them on or around 3 October 2009 and the other one on or around 13 or 14 November 2010. These vessels combined are alleged to have been carrying up to 247 people. Possible tragedies of this magnitude need to be taken as seriously as they can be. Indeed, I think the situation demands a full public account of what the government knew about these vessels and when it knew it.

The first vessel was reported to have left Indonesia on or around 13 or 14 November. On the subject of this vessel, a Customs and Border Protection spokesman was paraphrased in the Sunday Age of 26 December 2010 as having said:

… the authority was not aware of claims of a missing boat. No boat had been detected and no rescue mission carried out in the period in which the vessel may have been near or in Australian waters.

Further, in the Sydney Morning Herald of 8 May 2011, Customs and Border Protection Command are reported to have stated that they did not receive any calls about it. Yet, in answer to a question from Senator Cash in budget estimates in May this year about that exact vessel, the response was:

A number of enquiries were received by the Department relating to people who were believed by family members to have travelled from Indonesia to Australia on or around 13 November 2010 and had not been heard from since. These calls were received via the SIEV 221 hotline established following the Christmas Island boat crash disaster on 15 December 2010.

The second vessel is believed to have been carrying 105 people. The Minister for Home Affairs, when he was asked about the fate of this vessel in the Sydney Morning Herald of 25 May, said:

"subsequent credible information" showed its difficulties had been resolved.

He was also reported to have said:

… surveillance activities that day by border protection command did not detect a vessel in distress.

Yet in answer to a question from Senator Ronaldson in the same estimates period this year the following information, which contradicts that, was provided:

Following the publication of the report in The Age of 18 January 2010, Customs and Border Protection reviewed its information holdings to ascertain if the agency had any relevant information. This review concluded that information Customs and Border Protection received about a vessel in distress on 3 October 2009 may have referred to this incident.

The officer who gave that answer continues by saying that a brief stating just this was provided to the minister on 20 January 2010—that is, before he made his comments in the media.

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CHAMBER
I think that everyone in this parliament can agree that this parliament owes the fullest possible explanation of what the government knew about these vessels, and I urge the minister to come into this House and clarify the record.

I seek leave to table the letter that I wrote to the minister, the questions on notice that we received and the press reports that I have quoted from tonight.

Leave granted.

**Youth Allowance**

**Mr CROOK** (O'Connor) (19:56): The results of the federal government's recent review into youth allowance are a disappointment to say the least. The youth allowance review has offered no positive changes for students and families living in the electorate of O'Connor. In fact, the youth allowance review has offered nothing positive to any students who live outside of inner regional areas. While I acknowledge that students living in inner regional areas will now be able to qualify for youth allowance under fairer criteria, I believe that the federal government has missed a real opportunity to overhaul the youth allowance system and offer a better deal for regional students. By missing this opportunity, the federal government has let our regional communities down.

I point out to the House that in February this year I welcomed the announcement of the youth allowance review. In fact, I played a key role in negotiating with the government to bring this review forward with a view to assisting regional students who struggled to access youth allowance. I could not have been more disappointed when I saw the final copy of the review when it was tabled in the House last week. The review did not address any of the concerns that had been raised by the families of O'Connor. Regional families need to be afforded support to ensure that their children have the best possible chance to access higher education. Regional families should not be forced to fit a square peg into a round hole when seeking financial assistance for their children's futures. To put the issue of youth allowance for regional students into perspective, I highlight some statistics to the House.

According to the Australian Council for Educational Research, in the seven years since leaving secondary school, close to half of all metropolitan students gain a university or TAFE degree, while only a third of rural students gain a qualification in that time. Figures provided by Regional Development Australia on the Great Southern show that the number of students deferring tertiary studies is well above the state average. Seventy-three per cent of students in the Great Southern defer entering university by 12 months or more, compared to the overall state average of only 23 per cent. I point out that many of these students do not defer by choice; rather, they defer because they have no choice.

In order to access youth allowance, students are forced to take a mandatory gap year for 12 months, and they must wait at least 18 months after completing high school before they can even apply for youth allowance. There are very few courses that commence in the middle of the year, and this essentially leaves students with the option of deferring university for two years or beginning university early without access to financial assistance. I also point out that the option to defer for two years is rarely accepted, and many students wishing to accept this option must forego the tertiary entrance rank they obtained on completion of high school and apply to university as a mature entrant. These inflexible requirements serve as nothing more than a
deterrent to regional students who wish to access higher education.

I point out to the House some of the barriers that regional students face when relocating to the metropolitan area to further their studies. On this subject, Professor Kwong Lee Dow, the chair of the youth allowance review committee, said:

… rural students are handicapped, relative to their metropolitan counterparts, by more limited schooling opportunities, smaller cohorts of peers with whom to collaborate and to compete and less specialist teaching in the critical final years of secondary education. They must find accommodation, develop the resilience to manage their own living needs away from home, cope with potential isolation from their peers from school, and adapt to sitting in classes alongside better prepared students from larger friendship groups who return to home comforts each day.

These comments by Professor Dow highlight the struggles of regional students across my electorate of O'Connor. It is unfortunate that the youth allowance review does not address a single one of these issues in its recommendations to the government. As it currently stands, the youth allowance system does not create a fair and equitable situation for regional Australians, and this will have long-term impacts on regional communities in coming years. Many regional families will be very disappointed by this review.

House adjourned at 20:00

NOTICES

The following notices were given:

Mr ALBANESE: to present a Bill for an Act to amend the law relating to the marine environment and to ships, and for related purposes.

Mr GARRETT: to present a Bill for an Act relating to education services for overseas students, and for related purposes.

Mr SNOWDON: to present a Bill for an Act to amend the Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 and other legislation, and for related purposes.

Mr GRAY: to move:

That, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1969, the following proposed work be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for consideration and report: HMAS Albatross redevelopment, Nowra, NSW.

Mr GRAY: to move:

That, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1969, the following proposed work be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for consideration and report: RAAF Base East Sale redevelopment, Sale, Victoria.
CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Papua New Guinea: HIV-AIDS

Mr ALEXANDER (Bennelong) (09:30): I rise to applaud the significant impact being made in the treatment of HIV-AIDS in Papua New Guinea through a collaboration of six pharmaceutical companies, four of which are based in my electorate of Bennelong. It is estimated that one in every 50 adults in PNG is HIV positive, giving it the highest incidence of this disease in the Pacific region. In 2001, a group of like-minded pharmaceutical companies created an informal consortium to address this issue called the Collaboration for Health in Papua New Guinea or CHPNG. This consortium has had a huge impact on the lives of people across Papua New Guinea, supporting clinics in eight provinces and treating over 2,700 registered patients. Through the training of local healthcare professionals, they provide crucial support to improve the care given to patients living with HIV-AIDS and also work to reduce the stigma surrounding the disease through positive advocacy in the community. The companies that are behind this collaboration are Boehringer Ingelheim, Gilead, Janssen, Merck Sharp and Dohme, and Pfizer, together with ViiV Healthcare.

The CHPNG is a great example of the importance that many of our large pharmaceutical companies place on their roles as corporate citizens to help make a difference to the lives of patients in developing nations. Domestically, this industry has been under exceptional pressure with the Gillard government's decision to defer PBS listing of medicines that had already received approval by the expert body, the PBAC. This unprecedented step has led to great uncertainty and was taken despite the fact that the industry had made significant concessions in last year's memorandum of understanding with the government in return for a commitment to a stable regulatory environment. This stability is essential for a company that can spend over $1 billion in research, testing and clinical trials before getting a new medicine to market and which then has a limited time before generic companies can start mass-producing the same drug in foreign countries at a fraction of the price.

In order to promote discussion of these matters with policymakers, I am in the process of forming the parliamentary friends of medicines group, which all MPs are welcome to join. In the meantime, in celebration of the 10th anniversary of the CHPNG, a parliamentary breakfast is being held this Thursday from 7 am in the Reps alcove. I invite all MPs to drop in, have some breakfast and hear about the great work of the Collaboration for Health in Papua New Guinea in its fight against HIV-AIDS in Papua New Guinea.

Page Electorate: Awards

Ms SAFFIN (Page) (09:33): I wish to congratulate three local people on receiving significant national awards. The first is Sister Dr Berenice Kerr. Sister Berenice, as we call her, received a Fellowship of the Australian College of Educators award. After hearing of it—and this was in a local paper, the *Daily Examiner*, on 22 June—she was completely overcome and said:
I feel proud of the contributions I have made. It never occurred to me that the work I was doing was in any way extraordinary. I’m honoured to be receiving this award.

Sister Berenice is a member of the Catholic Education Commission, resides in Lismore and works throughout Australia as a consultant in education for the Sisters of Mercy. The second person I want to congratulate and recognise is Jim Hurley. Jim is the joint managing director of the Brown and Hurley Group based in Kyogle. The Brown and Hurley Group, a national organisation in trucking, has a wonderful history, and the Hurley family are really well known. Jim was recently inducted into the Queensland Road Transport Legends Hall of Fame in a ceremony at Gatton. The Brown and Hurley history is a wonderful story. It started with Jim’s dad, Jack, and Alan Brown. When they were 25 and 21, they met in the army and opened a bicycle business, which then became an agency deal with Land Rover. Then, in 2011, they delivered their 9,000th Kenworth truck. It is a great family company with a great history in Kyogle. Well done, Jim.

The third person I want to recognise for receiving an award is Dr Christine Ahern, Director of Training with North Coast General Practitioner Training—or NCGPT, as it is called. Dr Ahern has just been recognised as Medical Educator of the Year. She is one of hundreds of GP medical educators placed across Australia who train and mentor junior doctors and registrars during their general practice training. She is based in Ballina. The stories about Jim Hurley and Dr Ahern were run yesterday, Tuesday, 20 September, in our local newspaper, the Northern Star. It is great that local newspapers profile local people who are doing wonderful things locally but on a national scale.

Hasluck Electorate: Luke Adams Foundation

Mr WYATT (Hasluck) (09:36): I rise today to speak on an important organisation in my electorate and a tragic event that occurred recently. The Luke Adams Foundation was established as a result of an incident on 1 May 2011 in which 19-year-old Luke Adams, a Swan Districts footballer was enjoying a night in Northbridge in Perth, Western Australia. In what is a sequence of events, it is alleged that in a one-punch attack he fell to the ground and suffered major head injuries. Luke entered into a coma with very little hope of recovery, and the message to his parents, Gary and Kaylene, was that his recovery was questionable. Luke fought back and just weeks after the assault came out of the coma and is now in a long and arduous process of rehabilitation, but is showing encouraging signs. Recently he attended a game at the Swan Districts Football oval and spoke with the players pre the game about his recovery, his contribution and his aspirations.

He is a talented young footballer who is studying at university, and that event, that one hit, resulted in his circumstances changing and in the dilemma parents face when they have to make a decision as to whether to turn off life support or live with hope that a recovery will occur. There was lots of media attention in support of families and friends and, in particular, the Swan Districts Football Club. The Luke Adams Foundation, created by his family to raise awareness so that other families will avoid having to go through the same terrible experience, is now in existence.

As the local federal member and the No. 1 ticket holder for Swan Districts Football Club, I was invited to be on the board of the Luke Adams Foundation. We are driven by the slogan ‘Respect and responsibility’. I certainly look forward to working with the CEO, Brendan Parker, and other board members to develop and deliver antiviolence education programs to
young men, to WA schools, sporting associations and youth organisations in the broader community. It is important that the shenanigans that occur within functions, events or social occasions do not result in those one-punch injuries, because they are life threatening or at least, in a sense, a cowardly approach to attacking another human being.

I hope that the work the foundation does will deliver a change in the way young men, in particular, think so that taking responsibility for their behaviour, respecting the differences of opinion of others and respecting individuals will prevail and we will not see another incident like it.

**Australian Public Service**

Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (09:39): Today, I once again rise to defend the Public Service from irresponsible, unwarranted and ad hominem attacks. Some weeks ago I chastised the opposition for its continued attacks on the independence and integrity of the Public Service. Today I wish to speak about comments made by the Leader of the Australian Greens political party, Senator Bob Brown. Two weeks ago, on 8 September, the ABC reported comments from Senator Brown in which he stated that Immigration staff should be sacked for the content of their advice. Specifically, he was quoted as saying:

As far as the bureaucrats, these turkeys, out of the bureaucracy in Canberra who are prognosticating somehow or other about Australia becoming Paris or London burning—they should be out on their ears.

Senator Brown went on to say:

They should be removed from that position and put into something where they can twiddle their pencils without causing so much harm to the integrity and decency of Australia's projection in dealing with asylum seekers.

The role of the Public Service is to provide frank and fearless advice. In that context, these statements are, quite frankly, outrageous. They also show a completely lack of understanding about the nature of the Public Service and display a stereotypical ignorance of what public servants actually do. In my decade in the Public Service and my decade consulting to the Public Service, I met men and women who protect our borders, who provide assistance to the aged and disabled, who make sure our cities are lit and safe, who oversee justice. I did not, at any stage, meet pencil twiddlers. The staff of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship are dedicated and professional men and women who offer the best advice they can on the information available to them. They work hard to make a difference, and Senator Brown should not disparage them because he does not like the tenor of their advice.

It is not my intent today to canvass immigration policy. I know there are disagreements about that issue and I know there are no moral absolutes. My purpose is to once again put on the record my view that members of the Public Service should be lauded, not derided. They should not be targeted for political gain or because parliamentarians do not like the message. I am not asking Senator Brown to blindly agree to all the advice he is given. Indeed, it is our responsibility to have a healthy level of scepticism about what we are told. However, to so blatantly attack the messenger because you do not like the message is truly outrageous, and to do so for the purpose of a natty sound bite is completely unacceptable. We have been elected to this position of privilege to debate ideas and policy. We have not been elected to this position of privilege to throw insults at the dedicated men and women whose job is to serve the public. Senator Brown is entitled to disagree on the contents of the policy, but he should play the ball, not the public servant.
Regional Development Australia

Mr COULTON (Parkes—The Nationals Chief Whip) (09:42): This morning I rise to speak about an issue of grave concern to the people of regional Australia, in particular the people of my electorate—that is, the scandal that has been the Gillard government's approach to funding regional Australia. Mr Deputy Speaker, you might remember just over 12 months ago, during the period of negotiation that formed the Gillard government, there was much expectation, and much hype from by the government and the Independent members, that there was going to be an increased flow of funding to regional Australia. Indeed, there was a great deal of excitement across my electorate at the thought that funds would be flowing to regional Australia.

This has proved to be a farce. Of the $199 million allocated so far to the Regional Development Australia Fund, $135 million has been allocated to Labor and Independent electorates, making a mockery of Minister Crean's vow to stamp out pork barrelling. Such regional projects as the Newcastle Art Gallery have been funded, while projects in my electorate have missed out. Indeed, my electorate, which covers a third of the land mass of New South Wales, did not receive one cent from Regional Development Australia.

Aside from the disappointment of this round, I think the real issue is the underlying sense of disenchantment from the people of regional Australia. There was great expectation. A lot of work was going into these projects under the assumption that funds were available. There was community work. For instance in Coonamble, there was an engagement with the engineering department of a university in Sydney to design a covered arena for the Coonamble rodeo ground to give Coonamble a facility that would attract year-round equestrian events. A lot of work and time went into that and they were completely ignored. The Lightning Ridge Opal and Fossil Centre, which would have been not only a magnificent centre for Lightning Ridge, New South Wales and Australia but also the premier opal centre in the world, a place where opals could be purchased and a wonderful tourist attraction, was completely ignored.

The people of my electorate, the mayors and the members of the RDA board gathered in Dubbo some months ago to hear Minister Crean open the office of the RDA and, despite 20 minutes of speaking obscurely about joining the dots and patchwork economy and having no idea what he was speaking about, he moved on and left nothing but a trail of unhappy people. A lot of effort has gone into this on a voluntary basis to try to do the best for regional Australia but they are terribly disappointed that they have been treated so poorly by this government.

Gippsland Electorate: Gippsland Lakes and Catchments

Mr CHESTER (Gippsland) (09:46): I rise to report to the House on the Gippsland Lakes Natural Assets Report Card and also to highlight this federal government's lack of ongoing funding commitments which need to be directly targeted to improving and maintaining the extraordinary environmental asset that we have in Gippsland, being the Gippsland Lakes.

This is the inaugural report card which uses six key indicators to represent what is a very complex ecosystem and catchment area. These indicators include water quality, algal blooms, wetlands, birds, seagrass and fish; and I quote from Professor Barry Hart, the Independent Chair of the Gippsland Lakes and Catchment Taskforce, who says:
Overall the condition of the Lakes has been rated as *Moderate*. The condition of Wetlands and Water Quality was highest rating—*Good*. Birds, Algal Blooms and Seagrass were rated—*Moderate*. Fish were rated—*Poor*.

Overall it is a very worthwhile report card. It certainly gives the people of Gippsland an indication of where the environmental status of the Gippsland Lakes is at the moment, and it will provide opportunities for future condition reporting on the Gippsland Lakes, so it is a good initiative.

My community places a very high value on the Gippsland Lakes and its river systems. It is a mecca for boating, swimming and fishing, and it is also culturally very significant for our Aboriginal community. Obviously the area is a key asset of our tourism industry, and the biodiversity and environmental attributes of the Gippsland Lakes is well recognised. I urge the federal government to understand the importance of this extraordinary system and to recognise the national significance of the Gippsland Lakes and start working with the state agencies in partnership on projects to improve and enhance the environment of the Gippsland Lakes.

The federal government's lack of commitment to the lakes is of great concern to me personally as someone who has advocated on behalf of the Gippsland Lakes system for the best part of a decade. The federal government did provide $3 million in the lead-up to the 2007 election campaign for some significant environmental projects—and I congratulated the government at that time and the minister responsible—but my concern is that this government views the Gippsland Lakes purely as an election campaign opportunity, not as something which needs to be maintained and preserved over many, many years. There are some major initiatives that are required in the Gippsland Lakes and catchment—some practical environmental projects—and, as we have seen with the recent announcement by the state government, it is going to require a significant amount of money over many, many years.

In the lead-up to last year's state election campaign, I was able to work with the state candidate Tim Bull to secure $10 million over three years for the Gippsland Lakes and catchment areas—for practical environmental work, for monitoring activities, all focused on improving the environmental health of the Gippsland Lakes system. So I think there is a real opportunity here for the federal government to leverage off that state funding and do some enormously important work right throughout the Gippsland Lakes and its catchment areas.

I am disappointed that in June this year when I asked the minister whether he had any ongoing funding commitments for the Gippsland Lakes he simply said that, yes, that was an election commitment in 2007 but the only funding that is going to be available now is through Caring for our Country and a competitive grants process. I urge the federal government to start working with the state government and to achieve some really great environmental outcomes for the people of Gippsland. *(Time expired)*

**Agriculture**

**Mr KATTER** (Kennedy) *(09:49)*: I consider this session of parliament a very historic session of parliament because we will be introducing into this parliament a series of bills that will provide a new era for farming in this country. I want to read into the *Hansard* of the parliament of Australia for future generations, the group who have inspired and driven me, and I suppose have been my spiritual mentors. I asked one of them to become my campaign director. Another one of them is the person who eventually convinced me that I simply had to
get out of the party I was in and represent the people I was paid to represent—that is, Max Srhoj. I want to put on the record my personal thanks to Max for forcing me to do the right thing.

John Gambino has given us marvellous leadership. The very first activity held was a huge public meeting in Mareeba—and probably close to 1,000 people were there. We wanted to go after the throats of some of the ministers in the then LNP federal government. John said: 'No. We'll give them a fair chance. We will put to them what needs to be done and we'll give them a chance to deliver.' We had a very restrained meeting. John kept a very tight rein on all of us. Even the secretary of the organisation, Bernie O'Shea—the driving force and also my campaign director and guiding light—was not restrained. They gave the government and the minister who turned up—then Deputy Prime Minister, John Anderson—a very good hearing. They put their position very forthrightly that they were all being destroyed and would continue to be destroyed if the government continued on with their policies of marketism, which had been the policy of the Labor Party.

After probably 18 months it was quite clear that the LNP was never going to do anything for us, except to continue the destruction of agriculture in Australia. Apropos that meeting, we lost the entire tobacco industry—2½ thousand jobs lost in a small town like Mareeba—as a result of deregulation, nothing to do with tobacco smoking. Similarly, in Victoria— (Time expired)

Scoresby Football and Social Club

Mr TUDGE (Aston) (09:52): I take this opportunity to congratulate the Scoresby football club on their outstanding success this year. Last Saturday, I had the opportunity to see some of the Eastern Football League's, EFL, grand finals at the Bayswater oval. This is the biggest day in the EFL calendar for one of the biggest leagues in the country. Scoresby, which is one of two first-division clubs in the electorate, played in each of the three grand finals that day: the first division final, the reserves final and the Colts first division final. While they only won one of these finals and were narrowly defeated in another, the fact that they were in all three grand finals on the day makes Scoresby, in my view, the most successful club in the league in 2011. This is particularly impressive as they do not have the same access to resources that some of the other clubs with poker machines or very wealthy supporter bases might have.

On-field success is, of course, very important for a football club, but it is not the only thing. How a club conducts itself on and off the field is also important. I have been particularly impressed with Scoresby, as I have with the other clubs in Knox this year, in this domain. Large football clubs like Scoresby are a very important part of the social fabric of our society. Along with the schools and churches, the large sporting clubs, particularly football clubs, are the hubs of our local community. A club like Scoresby not only provides opportunities for dozens of people to play footy but also provides a place for the whole community to congregate, socialise and have a sense of belonging.

Scoresby football club brings whole families together—kids, young adults, parents and grandparents. There are very few other places today where this occurs on a weekly basis. I am proud to be associated with this club as a sponsor and, with my wife, as the Nos 3 and 4 ticket-holders. I congratulate the captain of the first division team, Matt Krawczyk, on his outstanding leadership and being a great role model for our community. I similarly
congratulate his team and the other teams for what they have achieved this year. Equally importantly, I congratulate the club president, Phil Llewellyn, and his committee, which consists of Melissa Kavanagh, Mike Grant, Paul Major, Brent Cadd, Sean Kavanagh and Jason Wolk.

On a more sombre note, yesterday Balwyn Football Club player Shaun Berigin passed away after suffering fatal injuries from an accident in a game played earlier this month. I offer my condolences, alongside those of the EFL and the other clubs to Shaun's family; his wife, Jess; his friends; and his club and team members.

Corio Electorate: Northern Futures

Mr MARLES (Corio—Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs) (09:55): Back in 2007, when Ford Australia said it was closing its engine plant at Geelong, the announcement sent shockwaves through our city. As it transpired, Ford did not close its engine plant in 2010, but that crisis of confidence in our economy did bring about something positive for our city. The Geelong community, together with industry and all three tiers of government, were determined to ensure a strong future for Geelong's northern suburbs—our 3214 suburbs—where traditionally many workers from Ford and other manufacturing industries have lived.

Out of this process, Northern Futures was born. Its focus is on driving jobs growth in a part of Geelong where employment has been on the decline. It is built on the belief that in Geelong our future is very much in our own hands. Its mission is to ensure that, where there is economic activity occurring within the 3214 region, that economic benefit ought to be shared with the people who live within 3214. Pathways to a Brighter Future, a program that is being run by Northern Futures, is a home-grown program using the strength of our community—our networks, our businesses and our people. It is people helping people with a working framework that is flexible and focused on achieving realistic goals.

Pathways to a Brighter Future is taking the most disadvantaged job seekers, who may have grown up in families where work was scarce and who missed the opportunities of a complete education. These people are supported through training programs and prepared for work in industry sectors where the skills are needed. The first 17 trainees are on their way and, when they are finished with certificate II or III qualifications in transport and logistics, they will be job ready and placed in employment. Participants in hospitality and aged care training will start later this month. The aim is to have long-term unemployed people in jobs by the end of the program—that is, people whose lives will be transformed and whose families will have a breadwinner in their home.

It is a fantastic outcome from an idea born of necessity. It is a tribute to the drive and commitment of the Geelong community. It also represents real hope for the northern suburbs of Geelong and for those people who will be supported through the training process into the workforce. The Northern Futures industry partners tell us a lot about our ability as a community to band together. I must acknowledge the City of Greater Geelong, St John of God Hospital, Barwon Health, Alcoa, Costa’s food group, Cotton On Clothing, Geelong Port, Shell, Godfrey Hirst, GrainCorp, Incitec Pivot, Kalari Transport, Linfox, McColls Transport, McHarry’s Buslines, Target and the Wharf Shed. During the fifties and sixties, Corio and Norlane were the vibrant hub of Geelong. I very much believe they will be again in our future.
Melbourne Ports Electorate: Caulfield Village

Mr DANBY (Melbourne Ports) (09:58): The Victorian Minister for Planning, Matthew Guy, and Caulfield MP David Southwick are embarrassed over their support for the proposed $1 billion development of Caulfield Village, in my electorate. This so-called village is a wind tunnel. It is a backflip for both the state Minister for Planning and the local conservative member, David Southwick, who vehemently opposed this project when it was announced in October. The development will attract over 2,000 residents and burden the area with 35,000 square metres of office and retail space. This represents a huge loss of open space in the area adjacent to the Caulfield Racecourse.

Mr Guy, as a member of the then opposition, supported Mr Southwick, the aspiring member for Caulfield, whose assessment condemned the development as 'a monstrosity that will destroy Caulfield's amenity and identity'. They pledged to stop this project from proceeding.

The Glen Eira City Council in my view was wrong to approve this unwanted $1 billion development. This development is half the size of Crown Casino. The casino cost $2 billion to complete. Do the quiet streets of residential Caulfield really need a virtual half-casino development, with all the traffic and associated behaviour that will be inevitably attendant to such a development? Caulfield residents are having the nature of their suburb fundamentally changed with the active support of the conservative state members and councillors aligned to them, despite promises before elections that they would actively oppose it. Cranbrook Road is already so busy that you cannot turn between 7 am and 9 am into the residential streets. The new development will further clog up traffic as people try to cut through and park. Some of the parking proposals are both insufficient and undesirable and will spill into residential streets. Smith Street is going to be partially closed and will remove the main connecting road between Station Street and Normanby Road, which will clog the roads. It will be next to impossible to park at the Caulfield station, which is one of the main commuter traffic stations into Melbourne and very important for lessening car traffic going into the city.

The Baillieu government has said that the area along the river in South Bank will be a growth corridor. But the state government has no plans to commit to new schools in the South Bank-South Melbourne area, despite the fact that the Minister for Planning said that this would be a growth zone. Martin Foley, my friend the state member for Albert Park, has written to the state Minister for Education requesting that the government fund a study to provide in the 2011 budget a search for a new campus for the students of the South Bank, Port Melbourne and South Melbourne areas. Already for the Port Melbourne Primary School there will be nearly 900 students in that area. The state government has announced that it intends to establish an inner growth corridor in Fishermans Bend. How can the Baillieu government justify investment in a new growth corridor when it does not sufficiently invest in schools in the area?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: In accordance with standing order 193, the time for members' constituency statements has concluded.

CONDOLENCES

Jull, Hon. David Francis

Debate resumed on the motion:
That the House express its deep regret at the death on 13 September 2011 of the Honourable David Francis Jull, a Member of this House for the Divisions of Bowman and Fadden from 1975 to 2007 and Minister for Administrative Services, and place on record its appreciation of his long and meritorious public service, and tender its profound sympathy to his family in their bereavement.

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Manager of Opposition Business) (10:02): David Francis Jull reminded me very much of the character from the movie *Chariots of Fire* called Aubrey Montague. Aubrey Montague was described in *Chariots of Fire* as being the complete man. To me, David Jull was very much the complete man. He was a scholar, he was a sportsman, he was a family man, he was an enthusiast, he was interested in music, he was a good colleague, he was religious, he was a good friend and he was uncomplicated. Jully very much followed the dictum that Plutarch had written about in his life of Pericles, which was that virtue and action immediately take such hold of a man that he no sooner admires the deed than he sets out to follow in the steps of the doer. That was David Jull to a tee.

David Jull was a person who admired, over history, many great political figures and many historical figures. He set out when he was a young man to follow in their footsteps and to make a contribution to public life in the way that in this country we are so fortunate to be able to do through being a member of the House of Representatives or another parliament. He did not just choose to do that briefly, to come in and out of parliament, to make his mark and leave; he chose to make it his career and his life. He was in parliament for 30 years or more, in two groups—from 1975 to 1983 and then again from 1984 to 2007.

He made a great contribution when he was in parliament. Certainly he served in most capacities that are available to us all as members. He was a great backbencher, he was interested in policy, he was chairman of committees and he took a particular interest in issues like ASIO and ASIS and security issues as a chairman of committees and as a backbencher. He was fascinated by national security. He was also an expert on particular policies. He chose to make aviation and tourism his expertise. He served as a minister, as Minister for Administrative Services, for an all too brief period in the Howard government. He was a senior shadow minister and helped us get back into government in 1996 after he served in opposition for a very long period of time, from 1984 to 1996. He took part in every aspect of being a parliamentarian. He enjoyed the cut and thrust of political debate. He was a great debater and nobody will ever forget his marvellous radio voice, which would boom out from the parliamentary seats across the chamber and hardly needed a microphone.

As a shadow minister, he ran for deputy leader and I was pleased to vote for him. It is my recollection he might have even run for deputy leader twice, but I only got to vote for him once. He also ran for Speaker and I voted for him then as well because I felt he had the presence, the capacity and the parliamentary experience to manage a sometimes unruly chamber. He was also the kind of colleague that would have made a great deputy leader because he was tremendous at bringing colleagues together.

David Jull had a wonderful appetite for fun. He could make fun out of every situation. Who could forget how he always had to have a tag for everything? When he organised a dinner it would not just be a dinner of colleagues; it would be a 'Jull-o-rama'. The invitation would go out headed 'The Jull-o-rama'. It would bring together colleagues at whatever cheap and cheerful restaurant members could afford to go to in Canberra and it would be a night of fun and collegiality. It was not enough for David Jull to be an expert on aviation and tourism.
When members were planning a family holiday or a work related trip, they would always talk to him about the best routes of travel, the best carriers to travel on and the best places to visit. It was not enough that he was an expert on those matters; he had to have a tag for it, which was 'Air Jull'.

David Jull was a figure who was larger than life in this place. He was a very good friend of mine. In 1993, when I was first elected, I defeated a sitting member in preselection, Ian Wilson. I was only 24 when I defeated him in preselection. Mr Deputy Speaker Slipper, you were here in that time and you would remember. Defeating a sitting member in your own party is never much fun and it leaves deep scars. In 1993 John Hewson, who was the Leader of the Opposition, would not come to my electorate to campaign because he had supported my predecessor, Ian Wilson. But David Jull came before the election and did fundraisers for me. He also came during the election and supported my election campaign, as did other senior shadow ministers, but David Jull was easily the most enthusiastic.

When I moved to Canberra after being elected, I moved into Kingston with David Jull and shared a house with him for 14 years from 1993 to 2007. Of course, we could not all just live together; Jully had to be the house captain because he always had to have a tag that was associated with whatever fun he was having. He was a great mentor to me. He tried to teach me to speak from my diaphragm because, as some people might remember, when I was first elected I was only 25 and I did not have quite as much timbre in my voice in those days as I hopefully do now that I am 44.

Mr Vasta: More robust now.

Mr Pyne: It is much more robust now. In 1993 I spoke more like a 25-year-old than a 44-year-old and David Jull taught me to speak from my diaphragm because he had that wonderful voice.

I sought a piece of advice from him once when I was first elected. In those days I was something of a firebrand and not known for necessarily smoothing over difficulties in the party. I was sometimes part of the roughness that occurred from 1993 to 1996 when we had three different leaders over that time. I once asked David Jull: 'Who gets ahead in this place? Do you get along by having the courage to stand up to the leader and have different views or do you get along by going along?'

He was such a man of letters that he referred me to *HMS Pinafore* and Sir Joseph Porter's song. For those of you who remember it, the first stanza is:

When I was a lad I served a term
As office boy to an attorney's firm.
I cleaned the windows and I swept the floor,
And I polished up the handle of the big front door.
I polished up that handle so carefully
That now I am the Ruler of the Queen's Navee!

And the chorus of course is:

He polished up that handle so carefully
That now he is the Ruler of the Queen's Navee!
I think it was his way of saying that perhaps those who get along do so by going along, and that people who stand up to the leader do not necessarily do as well. Of course, I did not take that advice and I spent many years languishing on the backbenches in the Howard government. I would have been better off to take that advice as I had taken his advice about my diaphragm.

David Jull also loved music. He was a man of so many parts that, even in the last few years of his life, he was still doing a radio show on Sunday nights in Brisbane about music. It was not just one kind of music. David Jull was an expert on almost every kind of music that you could possibly think of, but his particular favourites were Motown—and it was quite a sight seeing Jully boogying to a bit of Motown, given that he was not exactly a slim man, but he certainly could move—and jazz. He had a particular affection for church music, especially that by Vaughn Williams. He had a great voice and he loved to talk about music, the importance of it in our society and the importance it has had throughout human history.

He was, of course, also a member of the Traditional Anglican Communion, as is the Deputy Speaker. He always referred to me as a Roman Catholic and had quite a lot to say about the prevalence of popery in the Coalition over the years. He was not displeased that I was elected, but he certainly made a point about the fact that I was the first Catholic to be elected by the Liberal Party from South Australia to go to Canberra. I would not say that he did not like Catholics, but he might have had the same view of Catholics as he did of the National Party. He was pleased, however, to be able to become a member of the Traditional Anglican Communion and I am sure that, if he were still alive, he would be very pleased with their moves towards communion with Rome, which will come sooner rather than later.

He had some very interesting highlights in his political career. He was the shadow minister for aviation during the airline pilots dispute. While I do not wish to defame either the living or the dead, he did tell some quite hair-raising stories about many of his conversations with Peter Abeles at the time.

He always had a ready story and a ready joke, and he loved repeating the jokes of his very close friend Andrew Peacock, the member for Kooyong, who has a tremendous sense of humour. He and David Jull were the very best of friends. He was very pleased to be part of the campaign to bring Andrew Peacock to the leadership and then to return to the leadership. It was a measure in his favour that he was not one of the gang of four that went on The 7.30 Report to talk about that change of leadership in 1989 because he had very sound political judgement.

His interest in airline policy and his interest in being a fighter for tourism were not confined just to the airline pilots dispute. David Jull was one of the leading members of the campaign to stop the Fraser government making changes to aviation policy that he felt would be inimical to the airline industry in Australia. He led a revolt, along with many of the other newer members in those days in the mid to late 1970s, against changes that the Fraser government would make. Those were the days when party room revolts were not regarded as the critical issues that governments have to face today, or even that oppositions have to face today. In those days members of parliament used to cross the floor with some enthusiasm and repetition, which today would not be tolerated. In closing, can I just say that David Jull—or Jully, as he was to me—was a great parliamentarian. He was an assiduous local member, he was an able administrator and he was a very good friend. I pass on my condolences to his
family—his sister, Gwen, and his brother, Peter, his stepchildren and his children. I knew his second wife, Erica, very well and I am sure Erica will be equally moved at David Jull's passing. I did not know his first wife well but I knew Erica very well and I also pass on my condolences to Erica and all his friends.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** On behalf of all the honourable members, I thank the honourable member for Sturt for that very fulsome and appropriate recognition of the service of David Jull. I am not sure, though, that Mr Speaker would appreciate the advice that Mr Jull gave the honourable member with respect to the appropriate use of his diaphragm. I now call the honourable member for Fadden.

**Mr ROBERT (Fadden) (10:15):** It is with some sadness that I rise to pass some comments on the late David Jull, but it is with some joy that I actually follow the member for Sturt, whom I thought spoke incredibly well and very eloquently of his long-time association with David Jull and of some of the great highs, the funny stories and the interesting anecdotes that they shared. Christopher Pyne, of course, spent 12 or 13 years flatting with David, and I am sure some of the great things they had will last a lifetime. I had the great pleasure, of course, of replacing David Jull as the federal member for Fadden. I was David's federal divisional council secretary for many years and then of course had the great pleasure of following in his steps.

David was one of those rare political leaders. He was the longest serving Liberal in Queensland's history, but a man who chose to leave on his own terms and in his own time. All of us decide the time of coming to serve our nation in the federal parliament; very few choose the time upon which we will leave. David chose his time with perfection, at the end of one of the greatest governments the world has seen, in the Howard government. Simply in terms of fiscal legacy, it is a statement that is hard to refute.

David first contested a seat in federal parliament in 1974. He was part of those heady days when Whitlam tried to destroy the nation. He tells a story of when the election had finished and he had lost. He had $5.40 in the campaign account. He went back to the station where he was working, and the head of the station said: 'Well, Jully, I gather you're going to run again?' He said, 'Yes, sir, we are.' 'How much money do you have?' 'Five dollars, forty.' 'Well, best you get fundraising and off you go.' And David did. Of course he went on to win the seat of Bowman in 1975 and then moved across to Fadden in 1984. So David came in in the great wave that swept out Whitlam. He fell victim to the juggernaut that was the Hawke government but came back the following year and then had an enormous career from 1984 through to 2007, through some of the most tumultuous times of our nation.

A man who served 30 years and more cumulatively in the federal parliament, for two years as a minister, David did enormous work in administrative services in getting rid of some of the greater largesse of the previous Labor years, in privatising, in selling down and in actually taking into the black things that were in the red. It was an incredibly difficult time. He told great stories that were analogous to *Yes, Minister*, and it is hilarious to think back to some of them.

Whilst David's time in the ministry was all too short, one of his great contributions was as the chair of what was then the ASIO committee, now the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security—a significant committee of the parliament which he chaired from, ostensibly, 1997 through to 2007. During a time of some of the greatest upheavals in our

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**MAIN COMMITTEE**
national security and domestic security posture, David was at the head of the parliamentary committee, which was there to keep the executive honest as part of the separation of powers. It is a committee that is responsible for listing terror organisations, for sifting through analysis and data, for holding our institutions responsible in their intelligence and security tasks. David was there during September 11. He was there when ASIO ramped up to 600 per cent the size from whence it started, and David oversaw it all. It is truly a tremendous legacy.

I think there is a way to judge a man in terms of the parliamentary process and how it works, and that is to look at his colleagues and staff. I think David would have had the lowest staff turnover—though it would be difficult to check—of any parliamentarian in the modern era. Some people only left his employ when they went off to have children and ministerial staff only left when David no longer was a minister in the Howard government.

At his 4 October birthday bash, all his staff would turn up from time to time because they considered themselves part of his family. Annie, who is now 77, was with David at the time of Tourism Queensland. Sharee was a young girl of 18 whom David brought into the office because she was very good with computers—this was early on in their introduction. Sharee only left in 2007 when David left office. Helen only left his employ to have her family and was one of David's greatest friends. Vivienne Shield was with David for an enormous period of time. Margaret Reilly was with David for a number of years before joining my staff—and is one of my most capable staff. They all speak incredibly highly of David Jull. Prior to him leaving the seat in 2007 and me winning it, we had a farewell bash for Jully on the Gold Coast. All the staff turned up as did previous members for Fadden, and everyone spoke highly of David as a gentleman. I certainly support the Prime Minister's words in House of Representatives on the day David died when she spoke of a true gentleman in the House. That is how we should remember David. He loved his family. I convey my regards to Gwen and Peter and their respective children. He loved his grandchildren, who were with him until the end.

A giant has passed—someone whose life was cut short too soon; someone who contributed greatly to the strength, the health, the wellbeing, the calibre, the content and the character of our nation. It is with great sadness that we mourn his passing. But we also look at his legacy. We remember the fun times that David provided my parliamentary colleagues who served with him. Some of the antics they speak of truly reflect the Jully I knew in serving him at a local level as part of his federal divisional council and then of course in receiving his great support when I took over from him. I will always remember the great support he gave and his words of wisdom, encouragement and help. Transitioning from one politician to another in an electorate can be difficult; transitioning with David was truly a joy. The nation has lost a giant.

Mr TRUSS (Wide Bay—Leader of The Nationals) (10:22): I am very pleased to join with other members to pay tribute to David Jull, one of the extraordinary characters of this parliament and a man who contributed a great deal to public life in Queensland and across the nation. David Jull was born in Kingaroy in the same hospital where I was born. We were born in the same week of the year, although there are several years in age between us. His father was the Anglican minister in Kingaroy at the time. My grandfather was the Lutheran minister in Kingaroy at the time. I never knew him in his days in Kingaroy. He went to other parts of the state and at a quite early age took up a career in journalism—firstly, in radio with
Macquarie News and then as an early recruit at Channel 0, later Channel 10, when it began in Brisbane. He was a newsreader for around 10 years and hosted some of their shows. His deep voice that I note others have referred to gave him an authority and a charm, which certainly warmed his audiences on television and endeared him to many people around the country. I suspect that that deep voice had already been given some its great timbre as a result of the fact that he was a smoker.

He was an extraordinary person, vibrant and full of life. He came into parliament in 1975 as the member for Bowman and became the member for Fadden in 1984, after a brief period following his loss of Bowman. He had an enduring interest in tourism and was a great champion of the tourism industry in Queensland and, indeed, the role of tourism as an industry. In that regard he was amongst the pioneers. He was always quick to assert that tourism was not just about holidays; it was actually a serious industry that delivered significant economic worth to our country and needed to be seen for its economic value as well as for the role it played in our social lives and reinvigorating people for their lives in the workforce. He was certainly a visionary in relation to tourism. During the brief period when he was not in the parliament, he became the deputy manager of the Queensland Tourism Corporation, and I am sure that would have been a labour of love for him as much as something that filled in the gap while he was not a member of parliament.

I think that if there is one thing everybody will remember about him—and this is particularly true for me because I also have an interest in aviation—it is that David Jull had an extraordinary, encyclopaedic knowledge of aviation—aircraft and aviation policies. He knew the flight schedules backwards. He and I were probably the only people in the world who were upset when airlines stopped printing airline schedules, because we used to read them. It is valuable information sometimes when you are in a strange place and need to get to another town. David had encyclopaedic knowledge not only of the airline schedules but of aircraft. It seemed that he knew things about almost every aeroplane that traversed the skies in this country and the world.

Once, when I was with him in Mexico City about to board a DC9 aircraft—to travel I think somewhere in Mexico—David Jull announced to the group that it was a former Ansett aircraft. It was in Aeromexico colours, so how he knew it was an Ansett aircraft as we were boarding I have no idea. He then went on to tell us some of the history of the aircraft and how it had been involved in certain incidents in Australia. I have to say that I was not sure he was not making all of this up, but when we got on the aircraft there were a few Ansett symbols still left on the seats in the plane, so we knew the story was absolutely true. And when we went to other places on that trip, David knew about the aircraft we were travelling in and whether it was a good idea to be on them or not. We certainly heard the history of the aircraft and the people who were flying them.

I know a number of other people have referred to the fact that he was the shadow minister for tourism. I think the job he most would have loved to have in this place was the job of minister for aviation or tourism. When he was shadow minister for tourism a range of issues associated with the airlines were causing a great deal of controversy. He had a particular dislike for Ansett—and it has to be said that he was a critic of Qantas from time to time as well. Ansett at that time was almost the preferred airline of most members of parliament. It had better catering and was perhaps the airline of choice for many members. He would not fly
on Ansett. He referred to them as 'Criminal Air'. He used often to tell the story of how, at the height of one of the Ansett disputes that were going on, he got a telephone call from Sir Peter Abeles, who threatened to 'rub him out', to use David Jull's words. David did not think he was joking. There was certainly an intensity in that relationship. He was a critic of Ansett, and indeed history would suggest that some of the things that David Jull said at that time were a forecast of what in fact happened a little later on. David certainly took a keen interest in aviation.

I would like to mention something else about his encyclopaedic knowledge. Back in the days when members had to make their own arrangements for their travel through their local travel agents or when they went overseas, David was always the travel adviser of choice. He always knew the cheapest fare and how you could get from one place to another and save about half of your travel allowance. He just knew it. He knew the people, and he was always able to give exceptional advice about where people should travel and how they should do it. I mentioned briefly earlier a visit to Mexico. In 1993 my wife and I were part of a delegation of which David Jull was the deputy leader. The group went to Chile and Barbados and then to Mexico for the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum annual meeting. I have to say that it was without question the most enjoyable visit I have been on. The group was great company, but David Jull particularly was great fun to be with—always a story to tell and always jovial. But I recall that when we visited Barbados we were given as a gift a bottle of Barbados rum in a very unusually shaped bottle, and each member of the group brought the rum home. A few months later, David Jull said to me how much he had enjoyed his bottle of rum, that it was the best rum he had ever tasted in his life. I had to confess to him that I was not a great rum drinker and that we had not even opened our bottle. He said he was prepared to offer me half his kingdom for this bottle of rum. A little later, we opened the bottle and I have to say that it is first-class rum, but to this day we have not completely emptied the bottle, so that rum must now be more than 20 years old. I suspect it has matured beautifully by now and, when I get home after David's funeral in Brisbane on Friday, I am certainly going to reopen the bottle of Barbados rum and toast David Jull for many wonderful times, congratulate him and think of his achievements in parliament.

As others have mentioned, he was a small 'l' liberal and for that reason he was often involved in some of the party discussions about policy issues. He always took into these debates passion and enthusiasm but also a willingness to find a way through.

I had not seen David very much since he retired from parliament but I was delighted when he came to the last LNP conference in Brisbane and he seemed to be in good spirits—it was only a couple of months ago and I think it was probably the first of the major LNP functions that he had attended. So it was great to see him there, again being an enthusiastic contributor.

When David made his last speech in parliament, he said that he looked around for a text on which he could base his remarks. Unfortunately for David, I am sure there is not a single text in the whole of the Bible that says anything about aviation, otherwise he undoubtedly he would have chosen it. But he chose a text that I think not many people would have chosen for their final speech. He quoted, from psalm 129, a verse which says, 'Many a time they have fought against me; yea, many a time have they fought against me from my youth up but they have not prevailed against me.' When I think of David's life—the battles that he fought over...
the years and his courage in his latter years when he had a series of health issues—it is clear that his confidence that they had not prevailed against him endured right to the end.

David was a great character. We admired him enormously. He was a great friend, and someone who leaves a gap in the lives of not only the aviation buffs of the country but also those constituents whom he served well, his party colleagues and his parliamentary colleagues. We certainly admired him greatly. I extend my sympathy to his family. His second wife, Erica, I knew quite well, although I did not know many of the other members of his family, but certainly we extend our sympathies to them and assure them of our enduring love and respect for a great Australian.

Mr IAN MACFARLANE (Groom) (10:34): I rise today to speak on the condolence motion for a friend and colleague and someone to whom I owe much in terms of my initial years in this place. David Jull and I shared the last of the Liberal seats in the parliament when we sat on the right side of the Speaker. For me as a new person in parliament and someone desperate to learn the ropes quickly, David Jull was of great assistance as we sat in question time. There was a routine to David in question time. Sitting right up the back and viewing the whole of parliament, David first got a list of the questions, went through them and struck out the words that he felt were grammatically incorrect. Then he made private—sometimes not so private—comments about the incompetence of the minister who had written them. He never allowed a question to start with the word 'minister' and in fact made a few other comments about that as well. Having succeeded in rewriting the question, he would cast his eye around the room to see if it was now time for him to slip out for a cigarette. Unfortunately, as we know, that was part of the reason David has passed away. He would then return, look around again and see if anything of interest was happening and see if he could catch five minutes of energy rebuilding—what you and I, Mr Deputy Speaker, might call sleep—which was usually the point when the then whip, Michael Ronaldson—now Senator Michael Ronaldson—would roll along the back of the seats and say to me in a growling voice, 'Wake him up'.

I think, in reality, David's contribution should not be remembered for his performance in question time, which he felt was unduly boring. David's contribution to this parliament was very broad. As I have mentioned, to newcomers to the House he was an absolute font of wisdom, not just on airplanes, which he was unsettlingly knowledgeable on, but also in relation to the history of the House. I remember David saying to me, 'You'll hear some wonderful stories about the Old Parliament House; it's all rubbish'—he may have used a slightly different word there. He said: 'We were down there crammed in like sardines with three people to a room the size of our en suite. While there was some great conviviality in all of that, this building is much better to work in.' David would set about recalling experiences more as a way of passing on his experience than of just telling a story.

The thing about David that I admired most was the fact that he was absolutely straight. David was a guy that you could rely on. He would not lead you up a blind alley and he did not play political games. In his time he had some political misfortune himself. In the early days of the Howard government, having achieved what must have been a lifelong goal of becoming a minister, for a whole range of reasons that ministry slipped through his fingers and he was never able to regain that position. He did not show bitterness about that. He did have some views on it which he shared with me—and they will remain in my confidence—but there is no doubt that David's contribution as a minister for the short time he was there was enormous
and significant. In terms of his life after the ministry and as a backbencher, he was always there to provide advice, but you had to ask for it. He was someone who felt that, if people wanted to know, he would tell them. He told them frankly and without political spin but he was not there to impose on people his great font of wisdom.

As I said, I had the pleasure of sitting with David for two years up the back of the chamber before I was appointed Minister for Small Business. We were never close but with David you knew that at any time you could roll down to his office and seek some confidential advice—advice about what you should do as a minister or advice on how you should handle a particular issue within the party. He had been in the party for a very long time and, at that time, I had only been in the party a few years. As the shadow minister has just said, if you wanted any travel advice, there was nowhere else to go.

I remember David very fondly. We both suffered from cancer and there was a bond there. Unfortunately for David he was not able to overcome it. As a past colleague of his, and as someone who greatly admired him, I pass on my condolences to Erica and to his family. Unfortunately, due to pre-existing travel commitments, I will not be able to join my colleagues on Friday at the funeral in Brisbane but, if I am at all instinctive about what that day may contain, apart from some of the moments of reflection about David's life and the enormous amount he has done for his community and for Australia, there will be a few stories told. They will all be funny; they will always be about the great companion he was when you travelled with him; they will be about the way in which he mixed amongst his colleagues so easily. As I say, I pass on my condolences to the family. I congratulate David for the life he led—it is a life that many of us would like to emulate. He has been a fine Australian and we should remember him fondly.

Mr VASTA (Bonner) (10:40): It is with sadness that I rise today to speak about my friend, former colleague and long-time Bonner constituent, the Hon. David Jull. Although his passing did not come as a surprise to me after such a long and brave battle with cancer, it is nonetheless a very sad time for many on both sides of this House and of course for his loved ones and friends.

I cannot do justice in five minutes to his decades of tireless work for the community and his distinguished and colourful history in this House, but I would, nonetheless, like to pay tribute to this larger-than-life Queenslander and outstanding Liberal. I first met David when he was the member for Bowman in 1975 and I was a year 4 student at Villanova College, which was a school in his electorate. Even though I was a young student, I can still vividly recall his booming voice and his irrepressible life force. I do not remember what he said but these impressions stayed with me until I met him again 26 years later in 2001 when I was running for the federal seat of Griffith.

David proved to be an excellent source of experience and local knowledge. He was a great support and a damned good bloke with whom I could have a laugh. I was also honoured to serve with him during my first term as the member for Bonner in the 41st Parliament between 2004 and 2007. My colleague, the Hon. Chris Pyne, was right on the mark when he described David as having a 'terrific' personality. But he was also so much more than that. He had a tremendous capacity to truly care for those he represented over his 32 years as a federal member in this House.
My electorate of Bonner took in parts of David's old electorate and his connection with this community still resonates very strongly today. This has been evidenced by the number of Bonner constituents who have rung me in the last week wanting to pay their respects to David. They remembered him for the genuine care and love he frequently exhibited to our local community. Mostly, they have remembered that he forged real connections with people that far outlasted his parliamentary career. He always remembered names and details. He was a great politician. Last week, I received a call from the Hon. Gary Hardgrave, a former member of this House, who, like me, met David at his school, in 1974 when he was a year 9 student at MacGregor State High School. He remembers David as always being full of encouragement for young people such as himself and he even arranged work experience at Channel 0—the television station where he had previously been a director before he entered politics. Gary reminisced that, although he was only 15 at the time, he worked all day at the Carina booth on the day that David won Bowman in December 1975.

The victory party was the best thing he had ever seen, until his own victory party in 1996. Most of all, Gary remembers the campaign T-shirts in the 1970s worn by the bikini-clad girls with the words 'Liberal lover' splashed across the front. In Bonner, we will always remember him most as a fighter. He fought for the Liberal Party, he fought for his community and, in the end, he courageously fought against cancer. David was first and foremost a gentleman, one of the honourable breeds of MPs who have graced Australia's history. His commitment to our nation—but especially to those who knew him—leaves a profound legacy. My sympathy and prayers are with his family and those close to him as he will be greatly missed.

Mr BALDWIN (Paterson) (10:44): I rise to speak on this very sad occasion, but I rise to acknowledge the great work and contribution—not only to this House, but to Australia in general—of David Francis Jull. When I was first elected in 1996 I met this very, very colourful character, a character who seemed to be the fount of all knowledge and almost like the father of the new breed of 1996. I remember the corridor parties; I remember his passion for music but, more importantly, his passion for people. David Jull was a passionate Australian and a very highly effective advocate for his constituents and for the country. As the Prime Minister said when informing the House of his passing, David made lasting friends on both sides of this Chamber. He also made a profound impact on the Australian community and in particular on the tourism industry.

I would like to place on the Hansard record today, as the shadow minister for tourism, some reflections from the industry about David, an industry for which he did so much. In eulogising David on 14 September this year, the Chairman of the Australian Tourism Export Council, John King OAM, restated the words of appreciation ATEC gave upon his retirement just four years ago. On that occasion, ATEC hosted a dinner on the Gold Coast to honour David's services to the industry, where he was presented with a framed letter of appreciation on behalf of the tourism industry. It read as follows:

When you were elected in 1975, Australia welcomed a mere 516,000 international visitors. Tourism was not particularly well-regarded within the bureaucracy and indeed the future of the fledgling Australian Tourist Commission was in doubt.

Enter David Jull. Your hard work through the late 70s as Chair of the House of Representatives Select Committee on Tourism, culminating in a seminal report, and your heartfelt lobbying of the Hon Phillip Lynch saved our industry at one of its darkest moments.
From that point on, inbound tourism didn't look back. Thanks to your hard work, the ATC's budget was increased significantly, its Act was reformed, and parliamentarians began to learn of the importance of distribution and airfares in tourism development. For this you were recognised by ITOA with its Award for Excellence in 1982.

... As an industry made up largely of small businesses, you continued to pursue the cause of small to medium enterprises, a visionary crusade which started with your maiden speech.

In later years you have been instrumental in cementing tourism's place at a level befitting one of Australia's largest export-earners.

... And so, as you retire from Parliament, you have left behind an industry that welcomes over 5 million international visitors, earns us $22 billion in foreign exchange and employs hundreds of thousands of Australians, many in regional and remote areas.

It may well be that David's greatest enduring legacy is a strong and vibrant tourism sector.

Much has and will be said of David's service to the formal policy and parliamentary committees of the parliament and to Australia as a minister of the Crown. David was the Minister for Administrative Services from 1996 to 1997; he was the federal member for Bowman from 1975 to 1983 and the member for Fadden from 1984 to 2007. In addition, he served as chair of the parliamentary committee on the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation and on the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security.

It is for his unrecognised service as an inaugural contestant and active member of the Parliamentary Friends of Tourism group that I would like to draw attention to today. David was a real friend of the tourism industry before Friends of Tourism group became organised during the Howard government. Friends of Tourism is one of parliament's busiest and most useful informal associations and exists for hospitality and tourism businesses and organisations to give the sector a stronger voice within this federal parliament. Its purpose is to foster engagement between members and senators who are passionate about tourism and those in the industry affected by government policies and legislation.

At the time of David's passing, the group he helped create had three scheduled events planned, events to give a platform for aviation and leisure businesses. Bruce Baird, the actual founder of Friends of Tourism, who is now the chair of peak tourism industry Tourism and Transport Forum wanted me to convey his appreciation with the following remarks, and I quote:

The depth and breadth of understanding of, and appreciation for, tourism that today exists in Australian politics and public discourse would have been far less were it not for David Jull.

It was a pleasure to be in David's company. His intellect and political ability was matched only by a wit and joy in sharing a laugh, connecting with others, and appreciating life.

His participation in the "Friends of Tourism" parliamentary association was one of its key driving factors, and made a real difference to the quality of debate in this place about the services sector.

This explains why David was drawn to tourism and those who make their careers in hospitality. It's a serious business—and it is serious fun.

David was well travelled and a great travelling companion. Travel, in itself, was never an objective for him, but a means to extract value for the industry and his country. His advocacy on behalf of the sector has contributed much to its strength today.
David inspired his colleagues, journalists, the bureaucracy and the Australian public to become aware as never before about tourism's importance to our economy, to our quality of life, and even to Australia's reputation on the world stage.

He will be missed.

Earlier this week at a tourism transport forum I said, and truly believed, that David Jull was Australia's greatest tourism minister we never had. David, may you be resting in peace, because you will be sadly missed.

Mr BRUCE SCOTT (Maranoa—Second Deputy Speaker) (10:51): I rise with great pride to make a contribution today on the condolence motion before the chamber on David Jull—'Jully', as we knew him so affectionately. My very first association with Jully was when I was a boarder at the Church of England Grammar School—'Churchie' as we knew it. He too was a boarder at Churchie. After school—

Mr Vasta interjecting—

Mr BRUCE SCOTT: Yes, my colleagues here were not in the school but are all proud of our great colleague and friend David Jull.

Mr Vasta interjecting—

Mr BRUCE SCOTT: Yes, I know. I noticed that. Villanova were not much good on the football field! Anyway, we will not go there in this condolence motion, but if Jully were here then he would probably give us a bit more history of that as well—when we defeated Villanova on the football field, and other sporting events—because he had a great memory and a great recall of events and history throughout his life.

I must say my association with him began when I first was a boarder there at Churchie and he was too—those weekends on the football field or when, as boarders, you were running around. Jully was always one of those guys that had a sense of humour. It was even shining through in those very early days in his life. So I recall that with great affection. We were in different houses and that always caused a bit of rivalry when you were a boarder at school, but he was loved and liked by so many of our associates at school. He maintained a very long association with the school and I think that up until his last days he never lost contact with the network and the old boys association and the school generally. He was very proud, I think, of Churchie. The students who went through it had an enduring association with many of the old boys, the associations and the principals of the school, and I know he was a regular attendant at many of the functions at the school.

Our paths really did not cross again until I was aware of his election in 1975 to this place. I took a little bit of an interest—obviously my own interests were my own family and my own businesses in Western Queensland—but our paths did not really cross until I came to this place in the school of 1990. I do recall, though, with David—and it has been spoken of here in this condolence motion—his interest in and absolute passion for the tourism industry and the aviation industry. He had an enormous knowledge of the aviation industry, not just here in Australia but around the world. I well remember that he was the opposition spokesman at the time of the pilot strike here in Australia when, if you wanted to fly somewhere, you were being flown in a Hercules that had been leased by the then government—the Hawke government—to keep aviation transport moving because of the difficult times that the government of the day were going through in relation to the strike. That seemed to go on
forever. David Jull was the opposition spokesman. I still have this vision of David on The 7.30 Report putting a position—one of great credibility—as to how this could be resolved, why it was important and, if we as a country were not able to resolve this soon, what the impact would be on our inbound tourism and the tourism industry generally. It did have a profound roll-on effect on our tourism industry, particularly the inbound tourism industry, quite apart from our domestic tourism industry.

When I arrived in this place he was always a voice of experience and assistance. That is what you need when you come to this place. You can be very lonely and isolated in those early days, weeks and probably years. But David was always there—a voice to listen to. He would not necessarily offer the advice. As others have said, you would go and see Jully and he always had wise counsel for you. That helped, I think, in my own case. As you put your footprint down in this place, dodging the potholes—we often talk about the 'bearpits' that could be a problem—Jully was always there with great advice. That advice was for both sides of the House. That was the great thing about Jully: it was not about party lines. Anyone could ask for his opinion or advice and he would offer it freely. He spoke with great credibility.

There was also his knowledge of aviation. I think Jully kept a diary of the registration of every plane that he had flown on. It will be fascinating to talk about that with colleagues when I attend the state funeral on Friday. He could tell you whether it was a Boeing or an Airbus. But he also had the registration number and where he sat on the plane. I think he also collected his boarding passes. That is my recollection. I am sure that was the case throughout his life. At a moment's notice, he could recall that: 'Yes I flew on such and such, and this was its registration number.' We as members of parliament all know how often we have to fly, not only as members for a constituency but also on other parliamentary work. Jully had an extraordinary recall for that. I hope that on Friday we are able to find out where those diaries are from some of his colleagues who may know. He kept a fascinating record.

I think the member for Groom said that, if you wanted to take holidays somewhere with your family, you did not go to a travel agent; you went to Jully. He would always give you the best advice and he knew where the best prices were, such was his interest in tourism. He was a great help in that regard as well. He would say, 'Oh, don't go with those.' I will not use the language he sometimes used about a particular carrier, but he was always spot on. He knew intimately the carriers, the prices and the places to get the best prices. He had great connections in the tourism industry.

I was part of the first Howard ministry; so was Jully. It was a very proud moment for both of us to be sworn in at Government House that day, having been mates at Churchie. Being sworn in together as ministers in the first Howard government was another one of those moments that brought us back together. It is one of those very fond memories that I will always retain. Recently a lunch was organised in Brisbane by members of the first Howard ministry. It was called, 'The South Wing'. Sadly, I was unable to attend, because of a conflict due to other engagements. I knew that David had not been well, but I did not think that there would be another South Wing lunch without David Jull. So I regret that I had other commitments that I was not able to change. That will always be for me one of the things that I regret, and like all of us in this place there are things that I have regrets about because of scheduling. When I heard the news, the first reaction I had was: 'Why was I not able to do
that? Why was something else a priority?" We knew that his battle with cancer was one that he
was losing, but I did not think that the end was so near. That is a great regret to me.

In conclusion, David was a great friend, a great contributor to this place and a great
contributor to this nation. That was not necessarily recognised. It has been by some
associations, but more broadly the tremendous contribution that he made has not been
recognised. The footprint that he leaves behind him as he leaves this world is one that will
endure forever. It is a legacy that I am proud to have been associated with. I am proud to have
known David and proud of the legacy that he leaves.

I pass on my condolences to Erica and other members of his family, because any death of a
loved one, a friend or a colleague is a sad time. I look forward to attending the state funeral,
which is a very appropriate way to recognise David Jull, a great friend and colleague. David,
may you rest in peace.

Mr LAMING (Bowman) (11:01): My mate, Jully. Among a fraternity that too rarely have
friends across the chamber, there are many people who could sincerely say, 'My mate, Jully.'
He was an adorable man, a father figure for me as a former federal member for Bowman. He
was a man who you could walk right up to and do your best to wrap your arms around those
great shoulders of his, although in his final years in this place they became more kyphotic
with time. He was on his motorised scooter in the last year or so of his parliamentary service,
breaking land speed records around the corridors of Parliament House until the day that he
left this place.

I met David Jull when I was in grade 10. This larger than life figure arrived in my social
studies class with a Mr Chittenden. Obscuring the light coming through the window was this
huge figure of a man who told us all about politics. At the time, I could not think of anything
worse to pursue than a life in politics. It seemed exciting, but David Jull's stories about living
in a jet and being in Canberra did not engage my interest or affection. So it was almost by a
fluke that this alma mater of ours—I went to the same school that Jully went to—became a
factory for people on the Liberal side of politics who care about the poor, the needy and those
who are repressed. Jully was one of those for sure.

Jully was a raconteur; Jully loved telling a story. The people who come here come from
wide and varied lifestyles, with backgrounds from working in many different areas. But I used
to be genuinely frustrated that Jully had so many extraordinary stories. He could entertain a
crowd of people to the point where you did not want it to end. Being in Jully's company was
to be with someone who, as I said, was larger than life. I remember him talking about his
school days, when he was not always the best behaved of students. In a time when it was
compulsory to wear that school uniform immaculately, he was caught out with his shirt pulled
out, no hat on and a tie that was skewed to the right. Someone picked him up for it and said,
'Tell me your name and tell me who your parents are.' Quick as a whip, Jully remembered the
name of his headmaster and gave that as the name of his parents. I can picture that person
returning to the school and talking about this appalling student and the headmaster saying,
'Tell me who the parents are and I'll do something about it.' Jully, even then, had the last
laugh.

We have already heard how Jully had a fascination with and a passion for tourism. Let us
remember what this was about: it was about selling Australia. Jully came from humble
beginnings, growing up in Lancewood Court in Victoria Point—a truly Australian suburb.
You can picture Jully as a boy with his little bike leaning on the postbox talking to kids across the fence. He was always a networker, a talker and a sharer of ideas, and politics came naturally to him—a direct and logical step from the media, where he described himself as a television journalist with Channel 0. In that segue into politics, Jully brought with him a capacity to not only hear and retell people's stories but act to make sure that injustices were addressed. If you read David Jull's collection of speeches you will hear him at his fiery best as he fought for a third runway in Sydney prior to the Olympics. You will hear him getting involved in the Ansett and the pilot disputes and taking on former Prime Ministers Bob Hawke and Paul Keating eye to eye. Jully had no hesitation in doing that. His speeches are a wonderful read for anyone who has the time to go through the ParlInfo website.

I used to love the way Jully found the funnier side of things in many of his speeches. It became a passion of mine—as a person following on in his part of the world—to learn some of those stories about Jully, to learn about the corners he travelled in my electorate. When I was on holidays once I discovered that Jully had a favourite getaway outside of the electorate. He always kept it secret, as old-fashioned members did, but Jully's little escape was Byron Bay. In a place a little to the north there was a block of six units, and Jully went there every holiday he could to let his hair down, take off his shoes and wander around the sand dunes. I met the body corporate manager and I said to him, 'Tell me what Jully's like.' He told me exactly what Jully's almost military routine was when he was on a holiday: getting the papers, putting the feet up, having a coffee. So I said, 'Let's play a trick.' The body-corporate guy and I sat down, pulled up the phone and we gave Jully a call. I said: 'Jully, I'm down here in Byron Bay. Are you interested in buying any real estate?' He didn't let on. I said: 'Jully, I've just been wandering around with a few real estate agents. There's a place down here in Byron Bay and I've just done a builder's report on it. It's a heap of shit. Seriously, it's going for a song. I can pick you up an apartment here at a fraction of its market price because I've just done the building inspection. It's falling apart. There are all these structural deficits in it.' He goes, 'Wh, wh, which one, Andrew?' Of course, it was his apartment block. I said: 'Mate, it's going for a song. Let me pick you up one. I can probably get it for you for under $100,000.' That pause was priceless. I just loved having final revenge on Jully, having uncovered where his holiday getaway was outside the electorate.

I have to confess that Jully was not a great mentor for me in Bowman, though many would have thought so, because Jully was an old-fashioned type of public figure. Jully encountered a Labor seat with an 8,500 majority and he worked hard in '74—and no-one has talked about that tough election—and got that majority back to 600 votes, which put him in the game for 1975. Too often we forget that, in this game, getting to this great place requires not just one attempt but two, and it is the people who come back a second time who are rewarded. We uncovered in David Jull a person who, after those two attempts and success on the second opportunity, went on to a career of 30 years in public life. Had he walked away in '74, it would have been a completely different story.

Figures like Snedden came up and campaigned street by street and shop by shop—as you did at a time when Bowman was not the outer metropolitan area it is now but a series of hamlets, villages and farms where people often did not know what was going on down the road. It was a true patch of country just 20 or 30 kilometres out of Brisbane, as other parts of south-east Queensland still are today. It is a very different Redlands now, but it retains that
parochialism. Once this region adopted Jull, he was there for three decades. Do not forget that in those days Bowman was a seat that extended all the way into east Brisbane—a massive swathe of eastern Brisbane was Bowman as we knew it. Then matters changed and he was gradually trimmed back to the bayside and ultimately pushed south into the newly formed seat of Fadden in 1984.

Jull had a very brief stint as a minister, to which we have referred. That was in the first 18 months, looking after administrative services. David was first entangled in the difficult issue of monitoring parliamentary travel and the travel of colleagues at a time when his side had returned to government after a long period in opposition. So often these are difficult times, and David took the toughest job of all—monitoring the spending of a huge new arm of government that did not really know the rules. After 18 months he tendered his resignation in what I would describe as tragic circumstances by today's measure. At the time that was what a gentle person did in politics when they felt they bore some of the responsibility for a Public Service outcome. That is probably something that has now vanished permanently from public life in Australia.

David Jull was incredibly energised in visiting schools and he religiously attended ceremonies in the true notion of an old-fashioned parliamentarian. But David Jull also used as his personal political barometer his performance on the bay islands. These are subtropical populated islands within an hour's commute of a major city, which is what makes them unique. Macleay, Karragarra, Russell and Lamb Island—all of these islands are effectively, in addition to Coochiemudlo and North Stradbroke Island, large suburbs that just happen to be on islands and have enormous infrastructure and social challenges as a result. David could easily have won all of these elections without winning the islands, but it is important to remember that not only did he not forsake those places but he used as a barometer of his performance in public life whether he won Macleay, Russell, Karragarra, Lamb or Coochie. The one thing that David Jull could always tell you is which island he lost by five votes and how he came back and won by 20 votes next time, because, believe me, these islands do not brook fools. They are a small, tightly-knit community and, it does not matter if you are a councillor or a federal member, they look for great detail in the performance of their public representatives. David never gave up when many could have retained, and did retain, the seat.

David was a product politically, then, of the Redlands. His seat was eventually moved south and that was a great shame. When I ran in 2001 I had a chance to run next to David and, by 2004, his home of Redlands had been completely displaced from his own seat, and the seat of Fadden effectively became the buffer seat between Brisbane's bay side and the Gold Coast. I kind of felt sorry for David. He had a very, very small, humble and modest electoral office in Springwood on the side of one of Australia's busiest highways, but I think David was removed from his own roots when Fadden dragged him south. Fadden was obviously a seat where he had chosen to run, and another very significant figure in Australian political life, Con Sciacca, chose to run for Bowman and held it resolutely except for the two years between 1996 and 1998.

In many respects, one of my great regrets is that the history of Bowman in the last three years has been effectively cut short by the loss of three federal members for Bowman. A message that I know David would pass on to the last remaining, Con Sciacca, my immediate predecessor is: please, look left and right before you cross the road, Con; you are the last
remaining ex-federal member for Bowman. To have lost Len Keogh just recently and now to have lost David—and, of course, our own Liberal member as well, Andrea West—means that an enormous amount of institutional history from my part of the world has been lost.

David was remembered in a local paper with an extensive story of people who had known him. He had very, very strong and patient connections with community groups that was not always a characteristic of Liberal MPs at the time. But David had the ability to move across the political divide. David found a way as an old-fashioned parliamentarian not to play the party-political game terribly hard—that is what made him such an attractive figure down here to people on both sides of the chamber. It did not matter at what level of public life you were. It did not matter if you only met David in the shopping centre. What David will be remembered for is the furrow left behind in the hearts of so many of us by his passing—that he is no longer there for us. And those previous speakers were exactly right: we just did not see this coming and that is what makes it very, very hard for us, because there were times when we could have seen him but we did not because he did not talk about it and he just said, 'I haven't kicked the bucket yet; there's no problem with me.'

That is a lesson we will use every day and fill it with as much love and achievement and time with our family and, in a political and public life context, time with our constituents because it is an enormous privilege. It might well have been 30 years; for some of us it will only be three. But for David, in that long period, every day was one that he filled as much as he possibly could with connection and community engagement. That is a great lesson for many of us coming into this chamber because, in the progressive movement into social media and highly complex political campaigning, the role of local member can never be forgotten, and here was a person who did it so adroitly.

David Jull, you were an inspiration to many of us. We may no longer be bothered collecting boarding passes anymore or remembering registration numbers of the aeroplanes we travel on, but for the tiny things you did so well you will be remembered on both sides of this chamber.

Ms GAMBARO (Brisbane) (11:14): It is with great sadness that I also rise today to speak to this condolence motion for my dear colleague the Hon. David Jull. Many have spoken about David's long-serving membership of the Liberal Party and the House of Representatives and the fact that he represented not only just one electorate but two electorates, in 1975 to 1983, in Bowman—and the member for Bowman has pointed out in glowing terms—and also in Fadden from 1984 to 2007. He was born in Kingaroy. He was educated at the University of Queensland. He had the most incredible voice, a voice that was meant for radio, a voice that was meant for television and indeed, his humble beginnings in his first foray into paid employment was in the media from 1963 to 1965. He also was a director of TVQ—TVQO in those days—before he entered politics.

I met David when he used to come into my family's restaurant, Gambaro's with friends and colleagues.

Mr Laming: He enjoyed his wine.

Ms GAMBARO: He liked a good drink of wine, as the member for Bowman has pointed out. He was greatly known to my family. He was widely respected, not only in the time he was in politics but also in the time before politics, in both the tourism and media industries.
He had an incredible knowledge of a lot of things. He had an incredible knowledge of tourism. He had an incredible knowledge of cultures. He had a photographic memory, which I will deal with in a little while. His knowledge of Australia and the world was very impressive and expansive.

He was elected to parliament in 1984. He was a shadow minister. He is also known for his work on the security committees of the parliament, particularly the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation from 1997 to 2002 and its successor the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security. He presided over the performance of the Australian intelligence services, particularly in relation to the Iraq weapons of mass destruction issues.

I might talk about these things as a highlight of David's career, but there was much more depth to him than can be encapsulated in my brief outline of his career. I met him when I first came into parliament in 1996, when I was the member for Petrie. He was a very seasoned politician at that stage. He was a man who was always very generous with his time and his advice. I remember that he was someone I could turn to for a laugh. He had lots of stories to tell from his political battles and from life in general—the celebrities he had met and the tourism operators. As a newly elected member of this place I found him very humorous, witty and intelligent. It is no secret that he had friends from both sides of the House and was respected. If he gave you advice, it was frank, it was fearless and it was done with a great deal of sincerity.

The man had a voice for the media, and didn't he have an incredible voice! When he used that voice in speeches in the parliament, boy did we listen. Many people in Brisbane were very privileged to be able to again listen to that wonderful voice when he went back on air on community radio after he left this place. I, like David, have represented two electorates. I was the member for Petrie, and the Jull family name is very well known in Redcliffe. Jull Street is named after the family—Jull Street runs off Victoria Avenue in Margate. His father was a rector and was very well respected in the area for many years.

Many people have spoken about David's photographic memory in terms of aircraft serial numbers, incidents and collisions—on any aircraft, whether it was Qantas, or at that time Ansett. When I was flying to Canberra on a Sunday night, disturbingly, he would tell me the history of each aircraft and how many incidents they had been involved in—not something that you want to hear, particularly when you are in the air as often as we are.

I last saw David a couple of months ago at a private lunch that I organised with some former colleagues. We were really happy to spend some time with him at Gambaro's, again enjoying a seafood lunch. He was obviously in a great deal of discomfort but, as the member for Bowman just said, he never spoke about what he was going through. He never spoke about his pain. He never complained. In fact, it was quite the opposite; with his legendary and ever-present sense of humour he said to me: 'I am fine Gambaro. Don't you start organising a state funeral now,' and, with his good natured humour, he got into me.

His state funeral is indeed this Friday. It is at St. John's Cathedral in Brisbane. This good man deserves to be honoured greatly for the contribution that he has made to the nation. David Jull, you will be sadly missed.

Mr VAN MANEN (Forde) (11:19): My comments will be brief, and that is a reflection of the fact that I have only got to know David over the past 18 months to two years—and I really
got to know David during the election campaign. From my brief time spent with him, as many of the others have alluded to, he was always ready to offer you some advice or to answer a question. There was no question that was too silly for him; he always had the time to speak with you. One of the great things, though, was his tremendous sense of humour. He always had some fantastic story to tell. Whatever the situation was, he could always relate something to his experience in politics. Many of the previous speakers have already touched on his time in this place, and I know from speaking with my colleague Stuart Robert, who is now the member for Fadden, that he—along with many others—certainly holds David in very high regard. He certainly left a tremendous legacy for those who have followed him and a tremendous standard to live up to and to truly reflect on what an honourable profession and responsibility we hold in this place—for this nation currently, but also in terms of what we leave for future generations.

As the member for Brisbane has just touched on, David had a career in television before entering politics, but in my local area subsequently—or even during his time in politics—he joined 101 FM, which was our local radio station after it was granted its first licence in 1988. He was their first on-air announcer. He spent the next 23 years involved with that station, on air announcing and as a director, and he helped to build that station to what it is today. I know that everybody involved with 101 FM is very grateful for his involvement and input in that station over the time.

I am very thankful to David for his preparedness to help me as a new member of parliament and also prior to that as a candidate. It is disappointing in some respects, after listening to all the contributions from those who have worked with him over the years and during his career in this place, that I never had that opportunity. But I am thankful for the brief period during which I did get to spend time with him. My best wishes go out to his brother Peter and his sister Gwen. As I said, I am very thankful for the opportunity I got to know David. His presence, his knowledge and his abilities will be greatly missed.

Mr SLIPPER (Fisher—Deputy Speaker) (11:23): I am particularly pleased to have the opportunity of joining in this condolence motion with respect to the very sad passing of the Hon. David Francis Jull. Honourable members on both sides had an extremely high regard for David. He was the font of all wisdom on matters parliamentary and otherwise, and—whether or not one was close to him personally—he freely proffered his advice and assistance in a whole range of areas. I can recall a number of conversations that I had with David when I joined the parliamentary Liberal Party in 1993 as the Liberal member for Fisher, despite my earlier manifestation as a National Party member for Fisher. David Jull was one of those people who immediately and warmly welcomed me into the Liberal Party family. As the honourable member for Sturt mentioned, he was keenly religious. He was a very strong Anglo-Catholic. He and I had many discussions of a religious nature. I shared his Anglo-Catholicism and I very much enjoyed the conversations that we had over the years. I can recall him turning up at parliament on one occasion having sourced a second-hand book on a famous shrine, an Anglo-Catholic church, which he presented to me. I greatly appreciated that gesture.

He attended the Church of England Grammar School in Brisbane and actually attended at the same time as my father-in-law, Robert Hall. David was a child of the rectory. His father was an Anglican priest, Father Alfred Stephen Jull. The member for Groom mentioned that
David was born in Kingaroy. David had the opportunity of living in a range of localities within the Brisbane Anglican diocese as his father moved from position to position. I believe that, when Father Jull was the parish priest at Holy Trinity Woolloongabba in Brisbane, the former ALP federal president and later Deputy Premier of Queensland, Tom Burns, was an altar boy at that particular church. I suspect that Tom would make certain comments about that experience and I suspect David would probably wonder why his father was not better able to influence what ultimately, in his view, turned out to be the nefarious political inclinations of Tom Burns, the former altar boy at Holy Trinity Woolloongabba.

David was a small 'l' liberal, except that on many issues he was a big 'c' conservative. It is very difficult to actually badge people and call them one thing or the other.

Mr SLIPPER: The member who interjects is also a very complex individual, though happily very much alive. David was a strong conservative. I mentioned he was a religious person and he did not hesitate to live and stand up for his principles whether or not they were popular. As a small 'l' liberal in the Queensland Liberal Party, he was very loyal to what could be called his faction had he been in the Labor Party—of course, everyone knows the Liberal Party do not have factions. He was part of a group in the Queensland Liberal Party supportive of Bob Tucker as state president. At one conference, democracy saw Bob Tucker replaced by Bob Carroll and David made the comment that he was part of a group thereafter to be known as 'the living dead'.

David had a very broad sense of humour. On one of the Howard reshuffles—and I suppose I was a victim of one of John Howard’s reshuffles, as many others were—someone said, 'David, what do you think of the ministry?' He said, 'There is John Moore there and all the rest are Nazis.' Of course, he would not have meant that, but it just indicates David's very rich sense of humour. There was an occasion when Prime Minister Howard issued an edict with respect to a certain matter and David, as the then Minister for Administrative Services, had to circularise his colleagues with this Prime Ministerial edict. With great joy, he used to relate the story of getting a letter from Leo McLeay which basically told David and the Prime Minister to go jump, but not in such polite words. He was also someone who, as has been indicated previously, was an expert in the area of travel. He absolutely detested Sir Peter Abeles. As the member for Sturt said, he used to refer to Ansett as 'Criminal Air'. He also knew the history of just about every plane in Ansett's fleet. He was able to relay the various life-threatening incidents that had occurred with respect to each of those particular planes. David was someone who was much loved by everyone. He was larger than life. While he had his share of political disappointments—and in my view he was extremely badly treated when he was sacked by Prime Minister Howard from the ministry—he did not bear ill will. He remained loyal to the party, although on occasions he would take the opportunity of, shall we say, richly expressing his views as a commentator on various political incidents and what was happening.

It was sad that he did not have a long retirement from parliament. He had the most amazing history in being elected. He had tenacity and principles. I believe that he is one of the few larger than life characters that we have seen in this parliament. I for one felt when he retired in 2007 that the entire parliament was very much the poorer for his political passing. Having said that, the entire community is very much the poorer for his passing from this world.
community will miss him greatly. His friends will feel enormously deprived of the ongoing opportunity to regularly converse with him. He was one of nature's gentlemen. He was a person who I saw as a role model for members of parliament; an icon; a person who had qualities that the rest of us could only aspire to emulate but so often fell short of. I am very pleased to be able to associate myself with the condolence motion moved by the Hon. the Prime Minister and supported by the Leader of the Opposition and colleagues.

Mr BROADBENT (McMillan) (11:32): The first thing that I want to say is that the words that I am about to use were prepared for me by Mary Aldred, daughter of Ken Aldred, who was a member in this House for some considerable time during David's years. The families were very close, so these words drip with the tears of sadness at the loss of a friend and of a colleague. I acknowledge Mary as I begin this address. Hearing the addresses from the other members, I was reminded of two moments with David Jull. I stand here with a really fond memory of a colleague in this House, and I have many fond memories of many colleagues.

Through this history of the nation, seminal figures have shaped the character of our parliament, uplifted the dignity of national politics and committed themselves to enlivening debate in the best spirit of parliamentary democracy. The truly honourable David Jull was one of those seminal figures. Without him, the mosaic of Australian politics would have been incomplete, missing a polished, unique and absolutely uncrackable tile. As a House of Representatives, we have been the poorer in the absence of his wit, gravitas and deep sense of what it truly means to be a member of this place.

Like me, David Jull—'Jully' as he was affectionately known by his friends—represented two seats. All up, he was elected to the House of Representatives nine times, three of which were shared together over this parliamentary career of 30 years. David Jull entered the parliament as a 'seventy-fiver' as the member for Bowman, brimming with the exuberance of not only giving his maiden speech in the Old Parliament House but joining Malcolm Fraser as his government wrested Australia back from the brink of national heart attack. Such was the turmoil of those heady days after the dismissal of the Whitlam government. I imagine that David Jull was just the sort of new talent that any leader would have been delighted to have in their parliamentary party. He was calm, thoughtful and completely unfazed by the task ahead and had a self-effacing sense of humour. A highly successful TV man in his former life, he was a wonderful storyteller who could weave a written tapestry, sewn together with the thread of a lifetime's vast experience, strung tightly where required with the needle of sharp insight and even sharper wit. Again like me, David Jull experienced what it is like to lose your seat, as he did in 1983, and to come back again, rising like a phoenix from the suffocating ashes of an election loss, returning in 1984 as the member for Fadden.

For the new Howard government, David Jull was just the sort of experienced, calm, details man that John Howard looked to as his Minister for Administrative Services in 1996. After all, the moulding and shaping of David Jull the parliamentarian had taken place during the life of the Fraser government, where public administration and propriety were given more obligation than in just about any other Australian government ever.

As history records, the bar was set too high in 1996, and it was David Jull, Jully, who took the fall for other people's indulgences and inability to comply. Not that you heard David Jull complain. But that was the nature of the man. Rather than mull over what should have been, David took on the demanding and prestigious position of Chair of the Parliamentary Joint
Committee on ASIO, ASIS and DSD. This tasked him with the responsibility of reviewing and pulling together recommendations on national security and extended into a review of Australia's intelligence organisations in relation to Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. This was a highly strung time for national security in our nation, and David Jull handled the task with precision, care, and an abiding sense of what was at stake.

David Jull was a man loved by many, especially his staff. I know in this place we all aspire to be good bosses whom our staff want to go to work for. David Jull was truly exemplary in this regard. Viv Shield, who worked as David's electorate officer for many years, had this to say about him: 'I served with him for 11 years but other staff members served for longer. I wouldn't be surprised if David had the least turnover of staff in the parliament. All of us turned up for his annual bash on 4 October, his birthday, because we considered ourselves family.'

Viv has asked me to mention Annie, who is now 77 and served with David from the time he was with Tourism Queensland; Sharee Allaway, who went to work with David when she was just 18 and took the office through the big IT and internet changes through the 1990s; and Helen, who eventually left only to have a family and was one of David's closest friends. Says Viv, 'I can say unreservedly that we all loved him dearly and that he will be sorely missed.'

Sharee Allaway said: 'David was not only a great politician; he was a great man. I do not know if most people realise exactly how wonderful he was to all of us. I do not know of many bosses that at 11.30 in the morning would call for lunch orders and dutifully go and collect our lunches for us! He was there for us through some of the most difficult times in our lives with a cup of tea and good advice. For me David was so much more than an employer—I will miss him more than words can express.'

In his maiden speech, David Jull said:

I see my new role to a great degree as that of an ombudsman for the people of the electorate. David certainly achieved that and he was renowned for never turning away a request for help from his constituents and those in need.

I have said that this place is the lesser without David Jull, and it is. He had a deeply respectful sense of what it means to be a parliamentarian; to have regard for your colleagues no matter on which side of the government benches they sit, precisely because they equally earned the right to be here on behalf of the communities that sent them. David will also be remembered for his abiding belief in propriety and due process in public administration. Abraham Lincoln once said that character is like a tree, and reputation its shadow. The shadow is what we think of it—the tree is the real thing. Mr Speaker, David Jull was the real thing.

I have two anecdotes of my own. When I came here as a new member in 1990, David Jull was a tree to lean on. He really was, and everybody felt comfortable being around the man. You could trust him with your problems and the things that you were facing as a new member not knowing this place. I remember saying, 'How do you get through your correspondence?' He said: 'My staff are fantastic. The letters come in; by the time I get back there on Friday every letter is prepared. We have done it over the phone. Every letter is prepared for me to sign on Friday and nobody leaves the office until every letter we have received in every week is responded to one way or the other.' Every week. Now that is an administrator. I will leave
you with this—it came from David Jull in one of our conversations when I asked him for his thoughts. Mr Slipper, the member for Fisher, raised this when he talked about David's comments about a group of people. I asked David what he thought of this new frontbench compared to the old frontbench. He said: 'Russell, half of the old frontbench were lazy good-for-nothings. The other half were hardworking, diligent members of the front bench. This new frontbench is the exact opposite.'

Mr NEVILLE (Hinkler—The Nationals Deputy Whip) (11:40): I would very much like to pay tribute to David Francis Jull, or 'Jully' to all of us in the House who knew him. He had an extraordinary career. We have touched on various highlights of it. I do not know whether people realise that he faced 12 elections and he won 11 of them. Four of those were in the federal seat of Bowman and eight were in Fadden. As others have said, he missed out in Bowman in 1983 but returned in Fadden in 1984, so he was only out of the place for a couple of years—I do not think that it was even a full two years.

He served on a plethora of committees. He had lots of great loves. Foreign affairs, defence and trade and the importance of Australian security always played heavily on his mind. He made a superb contribution in those fields. He loved that sort of work. He served on several iterations of the standing committee on transport. I served with him on that committee from 1998 to 2001. I remember going on trips and things with him. He always added a great sense of fellowship and focus to any group.

I remember that at that time—and this is a problem with lots of committees—we were having problems with how to get the message out that we were holding inquiries into x, y and z without paying a fortune. If you put a big ad in the metropolitan dailies, that chews up all the money very quickly. Then you have the country newspapers writing in to say, 'You did not put any ads in the country papers, so you should not expect the public to know that there is an inquiry on, because you did not let us know.' We were debating this one day and we decided that for once we would do all this by radio. The next thing was that we were going to have to call in an advertising agency to prepare the ads and everything. At that point, Jully said: 'Stop!' He then said to the committee secretary, 'You just book the studio here in Parliament House and I'll do all the ads.' He had that beautiful, mellifluous voice because he had spent 20 or more years in radio. He went down and did all the ads for no charge. The ads went out and, as I remember it, we had a very good inquiry.

He had a great love of television and broadcasting. He was always on committees like the special television committee, when the House moved up here. He was on the broadcasting committee; he was on the special video materials committee. He was always at the forefront of those things because he had such a good grip on the media and particularly on radio and television. In fact, his early career started at 4IP in Ipswich. A group of people got together—Sir Frank Moore was one of them—and they decided to revolutionise radio in Brisbane. They started from the most humble of all the radio stations in the Brisbane basin, which was Ipswich 4IP. And they totally dominated the Brisbane radio scene. David was part of that group. They called it Colour Radio, which was an unusual name—we did not even have colour television in those days. Colour Radio was quite an interesting concept and it captured the imagination. All the announcers there were of that mould: vital, interesting and innovative. In 2005 the then owner, Graham McVean, invited all those announcers back to the Ipswich station; I think it was then known as River Radio. They went back and David read the
news over a weekend, just to, if you like, have a reunion of all those quite early innovative announcers. They loved it. I remember Graham saying that it was as if they had not been away from the place. David got behind the microphone and read the news in much the same way as he recorded the ads for the transport and infrastructure committee at the time.

He went from radio to Channel 0. In those days the fourth channel was just coming in around Australia. In some states it was known as Channel 0 and in other states as Channel 10. David moved up through the Channel 0 system in Brisbane, which is also now Channel 10. I think he was the general manager; if not, he was the deputy general manager of Channel 0. It too was innovative and it appealed to the younger demographic. Pre my National Party days I was in the Young Country Party. I remember we did a commercial up at Channel 0, because that is where all the groovy young people went and that was where you could get a really good commercial done. I do not remember whether David produced that commercial, but it was a very good commercial. Some of the older members in the bureaucracy of this parliament would remember Bill Carew, who was John McEwen's press secretary. Bill was a journalist around here for many years. I remember that Bill set up that commercial.

As people have said today, David had a great love of aviation. No-one knew the types of aircraft around the world as well as he did. He knew every type of aircraft, how many seats were in the aircraft, what speed it did, what fuel it used and what iterations this country had of this particular plane and what another country might have. You would be sitting on a plane with him going somewhere and he would say: 'Now this particular Fokker Friendship was originally owned by MacRobertson Miller Airlines in Western Australia and it was sold to someone else. Then TAA took it over on such and such a date. We're travelling on that one today.' He was amazing. He said that there was a particular one on the Ansett fleet that we should never travel on, but I forget what that one was.

As others have said, David was not a bloke who carried grudges. He was one of nature's gentlemen. But he had an intense dislike for Ansett and he had some terrible blues with Sir Peter Abeles. One day I went with him from Brisbane to Canberra on an Ansett flight. He would not get on an Ansett flight for love nor money, but he had to go on this particular night to get back to Canberra; that was his last opportunity. He said to me, 'I think I'll choke on this bloody food.' He had a particular dislike of that. But he could always see the humorous side of things.

In addition to that, as others have said, he served as a shadow minister for tourism, aviation and sport and for tourism and aviation—just iterations of the same committee, roughly. It was appropriate that he should have been on those, because they were his great loves—aviation and tourism. In that interregnum—from when he lost Bowman to when he won Fadden—he came the deputy general manager of the QTTC, the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation, where over just those two short years he made a huge contribution. He and Sir Frank Moore, his old mentor, worked very well together, and he added a certain resonance to the QTTC that perhaps had not been there before. He was also a tooth man, not in the sense of excessive food; he knew all the good restaurants. One of his favourites was the Thai Orchid in Springwood in Brisbane. Whenever you were in Brisbane on a parliamentary delegation and you were anywhere on the south side, the inquiry secretary was told in no uncertain terms, 'You must allow enough time to go to the Thai Orchid.' We always ate there at lunchtime when we were on a delegation with David.
As others have described, he was one of nature's gentlemen. Other than that small flaw in his character to do with Ansett there was no malice in the man whatsoever. He was a great Minister for Administrative Services. He was really innovative and he really wanted to do different things. Although I am a great admirer of John Howard, I thought David's forced resignation was unfair. He had a lot more to offer and I do not believe he slipped up on the particular matter that caused his resignation. I think others who should have taken the blame did not. I think the parliament lost a lot of gravitas in the field of administrative services and in regard to members entitlements and all those sorts of things he wanted to straighten out. But that is water under the bridge and, as others have said, he never carried that as a grudge.

He was a man of extraordinary tastes. He loved his school. He loved his sport. He loved radio, television and tourism. He had a colourful and full life. He was one of those men for all seasons. I was talking to David Greenwood, who was one of the team at 4IP and has gone back in recent years to manage the Ipswich radio station, and he described him as one of the most balanced and liked guys in the industry. I say so too. Vale, David Jull.

Mr ENTSCH (Leichhardt—Chief Opposition Whip) (11:52): I rise to contribute to this condolence motion for an outstanding Australian and a good mate, David Francis Jull—or, as many of us affectionately refer to him, Jully. I got to know David when I first came into the parliament in 1996. At that stage, he was somewhat of a legend, making a name for himself with that magnificent radio voice he had which helped him kick off as a young journo many years before. I looked up to him as a mentor. He came into this place as the member for Fadden and served from 1975 to 1983, and unfortunately for a short time he had a sabbatical from the parliament. But he did not waste any time in that period because he became the deputy general manager for the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation until 1984 when he came back into the parliament. So he was able to pursue another one of his passions: tourism. I have heard a number of references in this place to Jully and that passion. While listening to the member for Hinkler I was having my own chuckle. I had an uncle that was the deputy director of Ansett Airlines at the time and, in spite of that family connection, Jully gave them no quarter at all. He had a real bee in his bonnet about Ansett and, more particularly, about Sir Peter Abele. Whenever the opportunity arose he would not hesitate to fire off—and much of what he said was not repeatable in this place. Nevertheless, that endured over all the years I knew him.

As has been said previously, his knowledge of aviation was quite profound. If you wanted to travel anywhere, it did not matter where you wanted to go, all you had to do was ask Jully. He carried the knowledge in his head and he had a little bible with him as well. If you wanted to travel anywhere in the world, he could tell you exactly the best routes and the most cost-effective way of getting there. You could go to anybody else and you would never get that level of advice. Not only that but he could also identify the registration of any aircraft, particularly all our domestic ones, and he knew the whole history of that aircraft. As my colleague from Hinkler said earlier, there was one aircraft that, according to Jully, under no circumstances were you ever to set foot in. I cannot recall the number of it, unfortunately, and hopefully it is out of service now but at the time it was still travelling across the country. That was one plane that you would never ever step on because of Jully's advice. I worked under another tourism legend, Frank Moore. These guys forgot more about aviation and tourism than most of us will ever learn in our lifetime.
When David was appointed in 1996 as the Minister for Administrative Services, I thought at the time it was an outstanding appointment. Jull took on the role with great vigour and he did do a very good job. I have always been seen as a rusted-on Howard supporter but I think what happened to David was absolutely appalling. It was disappointing. It was for actions totally outside David's control. He did not deserve to lose that portfolio, and I think we were much the poorer for it. I was very disappointed that for such a long period of the Howard government Jully spent his time on the backbench. He had an outstanding talent and an ability to do some pretty special things for us. Unfortunately, for reasons which remain unknown to me, that is what happened—sometimes these injustices happen in our lives. He continued on the backbench and he never complained about it. He certainly was not bitter and twisted over it but I suspect he would have been very disappointed. It was totally undeserved. However, he did take on the position of chair of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation from 1997 to 2002 and then of its successor the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security. He presided over that committee, as was said earlier, at a very difficult and controversial time, when it was looking into the Australian intelligence services and Iraq's weapons of mass destruction from 2003 to 2004. I think he did an absolutely outstanding job. I first put a face to the voice when I came in in 1996. I enjoyed a meal at the Queensland Club with Jully and his ex-wife, Erica. We had a fabulous night there. That was the start of a very positive and good friendship. Later on his health started to deteriorate—I think it was 2005 when he lost a lung—and it certainly slowed him down. He had to rely to a great degree on a motorised wheelchair that was provided for him. Nevertheless, it did not slow down his enthusiasm for his work, his passion to provide advice to all of us looking to travel anywhere in the world and his gourmet delights. I had the pleasure of dining with him on a number of occasions at the Thai Orchid in south Brisbane.

In the latter years my office was next to Jully's office in the corridor. Often I would smell a delightful aroma coming out of his office. He had a wonderful staff member, whose name I do not recall, that used to come down here. I am sure the sole purpose was to prepare Jully a gourmet meal. You would drift into his office and see him sitting at his desk. He would be served a most magnificent meal. That became a regular feature. That is possibly why I have more of myself in front of me than I should have. I often joined him because there was often enough for another feed.

He was a very good friend. It is not easy in this place. While you build acquaintances, you do not often build close friendships. Jully was someone you could be close to and trust his advice. The wisdom of that man was something very special. Whenever I needed something, I knew I could go there and he would have good advice.

Both of us left in 2007. I decided to retire to spend time with my son. I knew that Jully was getting towards the end of his time in this place because it was getting a little difficult for him to get around. He made that decision. When he was asked what he was going to do in retirement, he said he was certainly not going to sit around vegetating and watching The Bold and the Beautiful. He certainly did not do that. Right up till the end he participated in lunches. The last one I had with him was only a few months ago. I went to Brisbane and joined him and many of his former colleagues at the Gambaro restaurant for an outstanding meal, a fair bit of reminiscing and a lot of the Jully wisdom that he had no hesitation in passing on.
I would like to pass on my condolences to his former wife, Erica; his sister, Gwen; his brother, Peter; Peter's sons, Stephen and Andrew; his stepsons, Mike and Jay Goldman; and his two grandchildren, whom I know he loved very dearly, Declan and Griffin. He was still very young when he passed away. I think it is going to be a sadder place for his loss. If the legacy of an individual passing from this world is the admiration of his colleagues and friends and the huge amount of respect then I would say Jully achieved outstandingly in that area. I will be attending his service on Friday. Goodbye, Jully. We loved you very much.

Mr EWEN JONES (Herbert) (12:04): I only met David Francis Jull on the one occasion, and that was in the last few months when David knew he was dying. The mark of the man was he sat there, shook my hand—and his grasp was firm—looked me in the eye and wished me well. My association with David Jull goes back an awfully long time. When my family first moved to Brisbane in 1974, Jully was the sports reporter on Channel 0 news. The beauty of those days in TV was that you did not have to be good-looking, which was very handy for Jully. You could quite often see, in the corner of the TV, the smoke drifting up from the ashtray. David Jull used to read the news with Brian Cahill, who was a teacher at Gregory Terrace—his daughter, in fact, works for the member for Ryan here in parliament. The camera was supposed to come back to Jully to do the sport but it came back to Brian Cahill, who was sucking on a black and white in full screen.

I became an auctioneer in 1990, Mr Deputy Speaker, and in the early days of my time at Isles Love in Brisbane we did the DASFLEET sales for the government vehicle auctions, when the government ran its own fleets. I think the measure of the man was that when he took over in 1996 as the Minister for Administrative Services he recognised—in the true tradition of Liberals—that small government was about what private enterprise could do better than government and set in train a path whereby his department would no longer exist. That was a truly brave move by someone who had been sitting in opposition from 1984 all the way through to 1996. He finally got the ministerial leather and then had the courage of his convictions to say, 'My department could be better run by private enterprise,' and actively go out and get rid of it.

David Jull was held in extremely high regard by all who knew him. The stories that you hear about him are all true; they do not need to grow with time. Everyone loved him so much, and I think it should be everyone's goal to be held in such regard by people after you are gone. It should be your goal as a person no matter whether you come from this House or whether you are a mechanic—whatever role you have. Vale David Francis Jull. You will be missed. You were a truly great man and a truly great Liberal.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Murphy): I understand it is the wish of honourable members to signify at this stage their respect and sympathy by rising in their places.

Honourable members having stood in their places—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I thank the Committee.

Mr STEPHEN JONES: I move:

That further proceedings be conducted in the House.

Question agreed to.
STATEMENTS ON INDULGENCE

Evans, Mr Cadel

Debate resumed.

Mr EWEN JONES (Herbert) (12:08): I rise to voice my congratulations to Cadel Evans and to claim him as Townsville's own. Townsville is truly the home of great sport. We were the home of pre-Olympic training for the swimming teams of 1948, 1952, 1956, 1960, 1964 and 1968. We claim as our own Dawn Fraser, John and Ilsa Konrads, Murray Rose—all the truly great Australian swimmers from our golden era—because they trained at Tobruk pool under the legendary coaching of 'Stumpy' Lawrence. Stumpy was the father of Laurie Lawrence—Wallaby, swimming coach and creator of Kids Alive—Do the Five! He is a Townsville boy, Laurie Lawrence. He actually went to a dance with my mother-in-law when she was at St Pat's.

Cadel Evans rode in Townsville. That is why I am speaking about him today and why he is claimed as Townsville's own. To see this guy go round the strand, for someone who does not understand the sport, was nothing special. I was at the dinner where he donated his pushbike to be auctioned by local charities. They raised $15,000 for a pushbike! I thought to myself, 'My goodness, what is going on here?' But to have won the Tour de France after so much heartache and after so much pressure—what an effort. He is a truly great man. In a sport that has been tainted, that we have someone from Australia who can stand up and be better than everybody else in the world at that race is truly unbelievable. I do wish him all the best, I do congratulate him, I do add Townsville's voice to those congratulations. He can come back to the TP Human Capital triathlon and ride the cycle leg in my team next year or any year he chooses.

Ms MARINO (Forrest—Opposition Whip) (12:10): Before I start today I acknowledge the presence in this chamber of Flying Officer Kevin Wilson of the Australian Air Force, who is here as part of the Australian Defence Force Parliamentary Program. We welcome you, Kevin.

I rise to congratulate Cadel Evans on his win in the Tour de France. He is our first ever Australian Tour de France winner. Cadel is a living example of our great Australian spirit, a living example of our Australian capacity to overcome adversity both in life and in sporting endeavours. As Australians we all love our sporting heroes and we are inordinately proud of Cadel's success. We feel as though he epitomises the things we value and respect in our sports people: dedication, planning, focus and discipline, what we know would have been lonely days and lonely years of hard work and sheer determination in competition—often at times of disappointment and frustration; a very graphic example for young people of what it takes to succeed in the pursuit of their dreams and ambitions in sport and in life.

When I read the headlines, like so many of us did, I saw Cadel described as: 'King Cadel', 'Tour de Champ', 'Evans Above', 'King of the Road', and the most telling one of all, 'Our Hero'. That is what we all thought after that: he was our hero. I really want to use this as an opportunity to thank Cadel for inspiring another generation of young people to have a goal. That is what Cadel's win has done: it has inspired a whole lot of young Australians to get on a bike or to take up a sport and to have a go. They have been motivated by his success. He has demonstrated how to do it. He demonstrated that success does not necessarily come easily. He
had much to overcome in his life. So young people are now looking through Cadel's life story and thinking, 'Gee, it did not just happen.'

Cadel was born in Katherine, in the Northern Territory, and spent his childhood in a small Aboriginal community. He spent seven days in an induced coma after being hit in the head by a horse. Doctors feared he would never walk again. That is an excellent motivation for young people. Cadel achieved in spite of the challenges in his life. In fact, his father described him as a good student but an ordinary kid. He said, 'Not in my wildest dreams' would he have ever imagined that his son would become a top world athlete. Cadel even says of himself: 'It is strange that I could become a professional athlete. Physically I am completely unsuitable for almost all Australian school sports. Nearly all Australian school sports require speed and/or size.' He had neither of those. What another great example for young people.

Cadel started young. He was only two when he was into BMX bikes. He made his name as a champion international mountain biker, winning world championships and world cups. His switch to road racing in 2000 saw him go on to win gold and silver medals in the Commonwealth Games, not a minor feat by any means, and gold in the World Championship elite men's road race 2009 as well as a string of major wins in Europe. He was named Australian Cyclist of the Year in 2006 and 2007. Cadel had to manage the frustration of serious injuries, something that plagues all sports people no matter what field they are in. He had to experience mechanical failures and, at times, poor support and poor form. I am sure there are a lot of sports people who would understand those challenges.

In spite of this, in the 2009 Tour de France he took two podium places, becoming one of Australia's most successful cyclists. For a third time he was named Australian Cyclist of the Year. And 2010 brought more success, and he held the yellow jersey for nine of the Tour de France stages in spite of riding with a fractured left elbow from a crash. What courage and what determination.

But as we know, it was the 2011 Tour de France victory that has ignited Australians. Thousands and thousands of us watched his progress through the stages. We saw him chase down the early breakaway and we really wondered how he would go when he had to change bikes and he fell back in the field. We wondered just how he would go after that. But I think Cadel knew not only that he had all his own qualities but that he had a nation riding with him—we were all there with him.

The excitement was quite palpable right throughout the country. If you went into an office here in Parliament House or into any office or workplace—a mechanic's shop or wherever—people were talking about Cadel Evans and willing him to win. Everyone was with him. And, by gee, wasn't the win celebrated! I know from listening to Cadel that it did not really sink in straight after his win just what he had achieved, and probably it has taken him some time to understand just what it meant to everyone in this nation. But after the welcome home parade I hope that now both Cadel and his wife, Chiara, understand just how much his win has meant. He deserves this, as does his family.

I also hope that many young Australian children who live in small, remote, rural and regional communities understand that in Australia you, like Cadel, are not limited by your postcode, and it is not just about sport. It does not matter where you are born or where you grow up, or even how many times people tell you that you do not fit the right profile for your
sport or your ambition. There is no reason why you cannot, like Cadel, follow and achieve your dreams.

The name of Cadel's biography is *Close to Flying*, and I know that all the young people who were glued to their TVs and laptops watching the Tour de France have been inspired by Cadel's sporting achievements. But I also hope, as has been mentioned previously, that they replicate his personal qualities because, as we heard, he is one of the good guys in cycling—he loves the sport and is a fair sportsman. He has a great belief in charities and he supports the Amy Gillett Foundation to help reduce the risk of accidents between cyclists and motorists—something that he and other cyclists have to deal with every day while they are out riding.

And he has said that he has 'a long, strong passion and interest for Tibet and its culture'. He has a range of interests. He sponsors a Tibetan child living in Nepal and studying in a Tibetan school. He also supports Ian Thorpe's Fountain for Youth, which is a foundation producing and distributing reading packs to Aboriginal communities in remote Australia. For so many reasons Cadel is a living example for not only young people but for all of us who know about his story.

I want to finish by again congratulating Cadel. If you read these particular contributions, Cadel, I hope you know just how much your win has meant to millions of Australians and what a profound impact it has on the lives and dreams of some of our wonderful young people in this nation.

**Mr Stephen Jones** (Throsby) (12:18): I wish to associate myself and all the cycling enthusiasts in my electorate of Throsby with the statements of congratulations to Cadel Evans. Cadel was born in the Northern Territory town of Katherine. He later spent time growing up in northern New South Wales and in Victoria—so many Australian towns can claim a little bit of Cadel as a part of their history and culture.

His early years were not without their difficulties. At the age of seven Cadel was injured in an accident involving a horse and spent a week in an induced coma. A love of bike riding came early in life, as it does for many Aussie kids, with the ubiquitous BMX bike. However, for Cadel this love of cycling proved to be an enduring affair that would take him from the Australian Institute of Sport to the Champs Elysees. After a talented junior career as a mountain bike rider, including podium finishes in two under-23 world championships, Cadel made the switch to road racing.

Perhaps the solitude of competitive cycling appealed to the only child of Helen and Paul. Cadel's story highlights two necessary elements common to all who strive for excellence—passion and determination. To quote Cadel's own words:

I worked at it and, over the years, my cycling improved. It's what happens to anyone when they're passionate about what they do. You ride your bike and enjoy it. Ride more, get better at it. Ride more, perfect your method … It's a natural progression when you're having fun.

This simple philosophy—passion, practice and the quest for perfection—has resulted in an impressive list of achievements. Cadel announced his arrival in his first Tour de France in 2005, by winning eighth place in the overall classification—the first Australian since the famous Phil Anderson to finish in the top 10. Many Australians heard the name of Cadel Evans first in 2008, where the absence of the defending champion Alberto Contador led many observers to declare that this young Australian was favourite to win the event. Cadel finished
second overall, which was an amazing achievement by any reckoning, but it was clear that the weight of the nation's expectation was a heavy burden on this young athlete.

Australians are used to sporting success and our athletes regularly punch above their weight on the world stage. Sometimes we expect too much and fail to recognise the quality of the achievement, irrespective of the result. I remember Cadel apologising to Australians for not being good enough to win the 2008 and thinking, 'You are apologising to us when we should be congratulating you.' In 2009, Cadel won the road race and the men's world championship. Unfortunately, injury derailed his 2010 campaign in France. But it would be Cadel's year in 2011. While many of us watched the penultimate stage that delivered Cadel an unassailable lead over his closest rivals, it was the day before that stands out in my memory. I remember that last mountain stage, with the Schleck brothers leading the gruelling climb from the Mondane to the Alpe d'Huez. Cadel's assault on Andy Schleck's lead was frustrated by mechanical difficulties. It was hard not to remember 2008. Would this be another case of so close yet so far? But no-one told Cadel Evans this. He fought back, he refused to submit and he pushed his body and his bike to breaking point and beyond. Cadel finished that stage within striking distance of Andy Schleck. The next stage was his pet event, the time trial—and, as they say, the rest is history. That day's riding was the epitome of courage in the face of adversity. Those champion qualities on display made for an experience that was simply exhilarating and quite unforgettable. It took a few more days before Cadel was crowned overall winner of le tour. But for my mind, Cadel won it on that day on the road to Alpe d'Huez, when he displayed the grit, the determination and the courage to play the hand he was dealt, despite the circumstances. Some may say he played and won the Australian way. I certainly do. Congratulations, Cadel Evans.

Mr ALEXANDER (Bennelong) (12:22): Australians love sport and they love their sporting heroes. We have revealed through various golden eras, where our greatest have excelled, taken on the world and brought glory to each of us through association. Our greater sportsmen or women, however, attain our highest honour of legendary status not just through their triumphs on their field of their endeavour but through our ability to relate to them as fellow Australians, that allows our children to dream that if they were a famous sporting hero they would want to be just like them. The characteristics of our greatest are the characteristics that we as Australians hold uniquely above other standards. Jeff Harding epitomised the sheer guts in the face of adversity in the most brutal of sports, when battered and bruised he fought back from certain defeat to win the light heavyweight WBC title in his 15th professional fight against the great Dennis Andries. Was he our greatest boxer? Maybe, maybe not, but definitely a worthy candidate as our greatest fighter. On the aspect of his character alone, his place in Australian history is secure forever. Our Don is remembered as much for his final innings and the way he accepted his dismissal for a duck that left him short of achieving his goal of a test average of 100. We are as much enchanted by the talents beyond us mere mortals. We take great pleasure in marvelling at the way that Benny Elias could handle a wet football, at the sight of John Konrads gliding through the water and at the agility of Tim Watson—distinctly different from the enormity of Tony Lockett, yet their stature in the game was just the same. Evonne Goolagong's grace about the court belied her speed, which was the equal of Lionel Rose. Hubert Opperman won races in Paris and London and competed valiantly in the Tour de France with a team of just four against European teams of 10. Dawn Fraser's Aussie character of irreverence and final vindication was her mark as much as her
gold medals at three Olympics. We marvel at the legion of tennis greats, from Ken Rosewall's science and artistry to the way that Pat Rafter accepted his loss at the Wimbledon final. Modest in victory and gracious in defeat, and yet all fighters every inch of the way.

Cadel Evans has all of these qualities in abundance. His chance so cruelly extinguished last year after wearing the yellow jersey with pride despite a fractured elbow. At 33 years of age, surely his chance for the greatest crown in cycling was gone. This was accepted with a smile on his face. His family and friends and those who participate in this sport were so aware of his extraordinary achievement in carrying injuries and fighting on—just like Jeff Harding years earlier. This year, burdened by 34 years, past his prime, but still a gallant competitor, he battled all the way. Back in the field during this race, the greatest test of endurance, surely the aged Australian must have had thoughts of the opportunities lost in the years prior haunting the road before him. There was no quit in him. Gracious in defeat last year, modest in victory to a fault this year. To Don, Ken, Evonne, Dawn and Oppy: you have a new and worthy peer, a champion in sport but, more significantly for us Australians and the standards by which we uniquely judge, a champion bloke.

Mr SIMPKINS (Cowan) (12:26): I wish to take this opportunity to pay tribute to a great Australian sportsman, Cadel Evans, because I believe that he epitomises what is great about sport in this country and the great principles of sport at the elite level. There is a tendency among the sport spectating public to see sport as just the competition; to see the final sprint and the podium presentation. That is not where the race was won. Cadel Evans did not just line up at the start of the 2011 Tour de France. He has a long history of competition and training, and that led to his victory.

He was born on 14 February 1977 in the Northern Territory, calling Victoria home for most of his youth. He makes the point that he really did not fit into the sports that were played at his schools, because he was not big and was not fast. Yet it was the case that he developed a strong interest in cross-country bike racing in 1991. Psychologically tough, he was dedicated to this sort of endurance sport. In 1994, he began to branch out into road racing to help with his mountain bike racing. It was, however, not until 2001 that he finally transitioned completely to road racing. In 1998 and 1999, he had won the world cup in mountain biking. We should also remember that he came seventh in mountain biking at the Sydney Olympics.

For the elite competitors like Cadel Evans and Samantha Stosur, winner of the US Open in tennis, there are endless hours of training that we do not see. They often do that training by themselves. While most of us are still asleep, they are up training before dawn without the glitz, without the glory and without the attention of the fans or the media. They train by running long miles, by lifting weights, through strength and conditioning workouts and then through their sports specific training. Heart rate monitors and video recordings of their
techniques are just some of their aids to maximise their performance and, in the case of Cadel Evans, to try to get those extra hundredths of a second's improvement that will see him victorious. The point is that nothing just happens on the day for Cadel Evans or athletes like him; nothing comes down to chance and nor will some lucky charm provide victory.

When you look back at the competitive career of Cadel Evans, it was certainly clear that he had great potential to succeed. Ten years ago, in 2001, he won the Tour of Austria and since then there have been stage or overall victories each year, culminating in victory in the most famous cycling race in the world, the Tour de France.

Although he has trained very hard throughout his career, he has also had to contend with the psychological challenges that are so often very much a part of elite level sport. There is no doubt that Cadel Evans's highs have exceeded his lows. However, his second places in the tour in 2007 and 2008 and then not achieving the podium in 2009 and 2010 would have made a lesser sportsman wonder whether their time had passed, but in 2011 it was clear that Cadel Evans was in excellent form: fit and, above all, tough psychologically. He won the Tirreno-Adriatico race and the Tour de Romandie and came second in the Criterium du Dauphine. His win in the fourth stage was followed by overall victory in the general classification in the Tour de France. As I have already said, such success is not a result of luck. An elite athlete must be psychologically and physically tough. They must be prepared to sacrifice a comfortable existence for the solitude of training, all in pursuit of their dream.

I do not call professional athletes or elite sportsmen heroes. They do not risk their lives for others in pursuit of noble causes. They are not like our soldiers or our emergency service people, but they do provide us all with a very good example of what is important and what great principles of sport exist for others to emulate. They show our young people that great sporting success is not achieved by merely showing up on race day but, rather, that success is the culmination of hard training, commitment and psychological strength. What Cadel Evans has shown us all is that success is not an overnight plan but, rather, the outcome of a dream, brought to reality by a commitment to a lifetime of effort.

We were there with him for that final ride into Paris, but what we know is that if we desire such success ourselves we need to be there for the training and the preparation, where there is no cheering crowd and where it is wet and cold and not just when the sun is shining. We need to understand that defeat may be on the path to victory and that we must be resilient to the challenges that face us. This is what I see as the lessons that Cadel Evans has provided for us all, so I honour him for his lifetime of dedication which has seen him ascend to the very top of cycling in the world.

Mr TEHAN (Wannon) (12:32): It is with great pride and joy that I rise today to speak on this motion to honour and celebrate Cadel Evans, world champion mountain biker, world champion road racer and world champion Tour de France winner.

I got to know about the Tour de France and the intricacies of it from my uncle—my late mother's brother Paddy O'Brien—on family holidays to Magnetic Island. One of the key highlights used to be that, down on the beach the next morning, my uncle described the race and the trials and tribulations which had taken place throughout the night on SBS's coverage. With the way he told of the intricacies of the race, the teamwork that was required and the individual skill and determination that were needed, I grew a fascination for the Tour de France and I started to watch it myself. I have got to say that this year it was fantastic to, once
again, be able to go on a family holiday to Magnetic Island—and my Uncle Paddy was there—at the start of the Tour de France, the first three or four days, and talk to him about it. I remember saying to him, 'It's Cadel versus the Schleck brothers this time. Can he do it?' He was confident that, with the right amount of luck, Cadel could do it—and it was fantastic to see him do it.

I was back at home in the electorate when stage 19 took place. I had been out that night and was lucky enough to get home and to be able to sit down and watch stage 19. I must confess that my heart sank when Cadel hit mechanical trouble. I thought, 'Oh, no, not again.' But Cadel was going to have none of it and, in the true Australian way, dug deep—he dug into his inner self as I do not think anyone else could have—and was able to ride back into the Tour de France in that fateful stage 19. That was important, but there was also the time trial. He had to make up time in the time trial and he had faced a similar situation in 2008. He did not have quite as much time to make up this year, but in 2008 he had to try to catch Carlos Sastre and he was not able to. I could not help thinking, as he lined up for the time trial this year, about how he was dealing with the demons from 2008—whether he was thinking, 'I mightn't be able to do it, again; I might fall just seconds short; it's possible Andy Schleck might ride the time trial of his life and I might just not get there.' But he rode the time trial of his life and put his place in the Tour de France beyond doubt. It reminded me of other memorable sporting achievements I have seen. I remember Pat Cash winning Wimbledon and having that same sense of euphoria, being up late at night and seeing an Australian sportsman achieve such a feat—and what Cadel Evans achieved was great.

It is an absolute pleasure and honour to speak on this motion. I congratulate Cadel Evans, I congratulate his coach and I congratulate his team, because if there is one thing my uncle taught me it is that you cannot win the Tour de France unless you have good team. This year, I think more than any other, Cadel had a team which meant that victory was his. So to Cadel, his team, his coaches—including his late coach, whom Cadel rightly recognised for the incredible contribution he made to Cadel's career—I say: I commend you all, I congratulate you all and I hope I am up at Magnetic Island again next year to witness the start of the race and talk about it with my uncle and, hopefully, see Cadel win back-to-back.

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong) (12:37): I rise to acknowledge the remarkable sporting achievement of a remarkable Australian. At age 34, hailing originally from the Northern Territory, Cadel Evans has achieved what no other Australian has achieved before: winning the Tour de France. Like millions of Australians, my wife and I stayed up late in the night to watch Cadel's performance over the gruelling 21-stage, 23-day, 3,430-kilometre race. As part-time riders and survivors of Tony Abbott's Pollie Pedal, we watched in awe as Cadel showed his sheer skill, tenacity and physical capability.

This year the race, in its 98th year, was full of drama and suspense as Cadel came from behind to seize the yellow jersey in his brilliant ride in the individual time trial through Grenoble on the penultimate day. His battle up the Alps with the Schleck brothers, Andy and Frank, and last year's champion, Alberto Contador—who, by the way, my wife said has the best name in world sport—was something to behold. So too was the incident on the final days, when Cadel struck technical difficulties with his bike and was forced to jump on another machine and chase down those ahead, making up what seemed like a mountain—excuse the pun—of time. Watching the tour, it became abundantly clear how important Cadel's
colleagues in the BMC team were to his eventual win. The yellow jersey may be worn on the 
shoulders of only one, but it really is a victory shared by all. No doubt Cadel will be hoping 
for a similar team effort when he seeks to repeat his victory next year. But, whatever the 
result in 2012, Cadel Evans has secured a treasured place in the annals of Australian sporting 
fame. It caps a wonderful career for Cadel, which has seen him progress from being a 
medallist at the 1995 world mountain bike championships, to the Commonwealth Games time 
trial champion in 2002, to being the 2009 winner of the world championship road race in 
Switzerland.

I know I join with hundreds and maybe thousands of riders in Kooyong, from Hawthorn to 
Kew, from Camberwell to Balwyn and from Surrey Hills to Canterbury, in congratulating 
Cadel and his wife Chiara on this brilliant achievement which will inspire many other 
Australians to take to their bikes. Cadel, you have made your country proud, you have made 
your family proud, but most of all you have performed to the best of your abilities and 
fulfilled your lifelong dream. No person could hope for anymore.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Murphy) (12:40): By way of finality, I too would like to 
associate myself with the magnificent contributions that have been made by honourable 
members to the statements about someone who was clearly an inspiration. We hope that his 
efforts in France inspire many young people to follow the dream that he followed, not to 
mention the great benefit to health and lifestyle. Yes, Cadel Evans kept my wife and me up 
late. We were enthralled with the SBS broadcast, and they should be congratulated for that, 
particularly Phil Liggett for his very incisive comments. Finally, Cadel certainly presents as a 
very modest and humble Australian. He brings great credit to our country. He is a wonderful 
ambassador. Indeed, Cadel Evans you are a great Australian and I too salute you like other 
honourable members.

Stosur, Ms Samantha

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong) (12:41): I rise today to congratulate Samantha Stosur on 
her historic win in this year's US Tennis Open. It was an emphatic victory that will give a real 
boost to Australian tennis and, hopefully, spawn a new decade of future champions. Sam is 
the first Australian female to win a grand slam singles title since Evonne Goolagong took 
home the Wimbledon trophy in 1980, and the first Australian female to take home the US 
Open since Margaret Court in 1975. With Margaret Court winning 18 US open titles—five 
singles, five doubles and eight mixed doubles—over her career, Sam has a hard record to 
beat, but having won the US Open Doubles in 2005, she has two titles and is now on her way.

With her big serve and attacking hardcourt game, Sam had a remarkable tournament. Like 
all great tournament victories, the final is the icing on the cake after a hard fought two-week 
campaign. It should not be forgotten that in the third round Sam defeated Nadia Petrova 7-5 
in the third set after a three-hour-16-minute battle. The second set tie-break of 17-15 is the 
longest in any major in the history of women's tennis. Sam showed great class in the final 
against three-time champion Serena Williams. When Serena lost her cool, Sam kept hers. No 
doubt the 23,000 fans packed into the Arthur Ashe Stadium were hoping for a hometown 
victory, particularly on the symbolic 10th anniversary of September 11, but they cannot be 
left in any doubt that the best player on the day won. Sam came to win and never let the sense 
of occasion disrupt her game plan. With a $1.8 million winners’ cheque and a rising world 
ranking, this 27-year-old Queenslander has the tennis world at her feet. Long gone are the
memories of last year's loss in the French Open final, for now Sam is a grand slam champion. No-one will ever be able to take that away from her. Many people in my electorate of Kooyong are great sport lovers and participants, and they join me in congratulating Sam on her wonderful sporting achievement. It is a victory that will be celebrated by hundreds of tennis players in the local clubhouses of Grace Park, Kew Heights, Kew, North Kew, Hawthorn, South Hawthorn, Deepdene, Canterbury, Balwyn Park, North Balwyn, Willison Park, Camberwell Junction, East Camberwell, Camberwell United, City of Camberwell, South Camberwell, St Dominic's Parish, Boroondara Tennis Centre, Sacred Heart and Victoria Park. No doubt my friends at the home of tennis, the Kooyong Tennis Club, will also be celebrating for Sam is a welcome visitor down there. Congratulations again, Sam Stosur. You have done us all proud and deserve every accolade that comes your way for this historic sporting achievement.

Dr LEIGH (Fraser) (12:45): Typically, when we rise in this place to praise a sporting hero it is in praise of a man. When I was a boy, my focus was on distance events so I looked up to people like long distance runner Steve Moneghetti, triathlete Greg Welch and race walker Simon Baker. As a participant in each of these sports, I admired the ability of these men to develop and sustain their physical and mental ability and to push the boundaries. Not often enough in this place do we talk about the sporting achievements of women. It is harder for women to excel at sport at an elite level. There are not many sports that women are able to play at an elite level for which they are paid a sufficient amount to dedicate their life to the sport. There are few women's sports that attract television coverage and the associated sponsorship and endorsements. Smaller still are the number of women's sports that attract prime time television coverage and the even more lucrative sponsorship deals. Just a handful of women's sports pay their athletes equivalent to men.

Tennis is an exception. In Australia, we have had a long history of champion female tennis players, from Margaret Molesworth, who won the first-ever women's title at the Australasian Championships, now the Australian Open, in 1922, through to players in the modern era such as Margaret Court, dominant in the 1960s and 1970s, and Evonne Goolagong Cawley, until now our most recent grand slam champion with her 1980 Wimbledon title.

Now we can add 27-year-old Samantha Stosur to the list. Stosur's story is one that is pretty inspirational in itself. Her early career focussed on doubles. Sam was ranked No. 1 in the world in doubles by 2006. But she contracted Lyme disease in 2007. It was devastating. She was out of tennis for close to a year and a return to the game was difficult as the illness had left her weakened.

On her return, Sam had a renewed focus on her singles game and managed to creep up the rankings. We thought her loss in the 2010 French Open final might have been the closest she would ever come to winning a grand slam. But this year Sam demonstrated that she has the physical and mental strength to succeed at the elite level by winning the US Open. My staff had been talking in the office about little else apart from Sam for days leading up to her victory. I managed to watch the final few points myself. Not surprisingly, many Australians were late to work that morning. Famously, Sam remembers staying home from school to watch her idol Pat Rafter winning his title in 1997. Now, young Australian girls have seen one of their own achieve this feat. They can see that women are capable of achieving at an elite level too. So, Sam, well done on your victory and may this be the first of many.
While I am speaking on the topic of sports participation, I use this chance to acknowledge the active sportswomen in my office who have helped me prepare these remarks: basketball and hockey player Louise Crossman, and netball and tennis player Angela Winkle. In the ACT, I also recognise the efforts of Karen Hardy to increase the participation of women in sport. Recognising the benefits of team sports, Karen has established her own scholarship. Having attained life membership of her hockey club, Karen no longer needs to pay fees so she is using her saved fees to personally pay for mothers returning to play hockey. Karen's scholarship aims to keep people, particularly women, playing sport. The benefit of sport is not for winning but as a place to come together with people of all different ages, backgrounds and skill levels. Karen describes her team as:

... a place where we can come and not be anything but ourselves. We don't have to be mothers or partners or workers or students or daughters. All we are is us.'

This camaraderie and shared experience—what some have called social capital—helps link people together and build bonds of trust. Yet in the period from 1993 to 2007, the share of Australians participating in organised sport fell from 33 per cent to 27 per cent. In this environment, world-beating sports stars such as Samantha Stosur and local sporting heroes such as Karen Hardy should be particularly applauded.

Mrs ANDREWS (McPherson) (12:50): I rise to congratulate Sam Stosur on her outstanding achievement in the US Open Tennis Championships as the 2011 women's singles champion. Like many other people on the Gold Coast I am extremely proud to call Sam one of our own. Her recent win in the US Open will inspire young sports men and women around the country to pursue their dreams.

Our new champion was only eight years old when she discovered her passion for tennis. At 13 years of age, Sam represented Australia in the World Youth Cup in Jakarta, Indonesia. This marked the first time she would experience the pressure and excitement of becoming a tennis pro.

During the US Open in 2007 Sam was unable to continue past the first round because her health had deteriorated after she was diagnosed with Lyme disease and viral meningitis. This could not have happened at a worse time for the aspiring tennis player, who at the time was rocketing up the ranks. It is amazing that Sam was able to return to the same competition some four years later to walk away triumphant as the world champion.

In the year 2000, Sam was ranked 682 in the world for the singles division and in only 11 years Sam has catapulted herself, through hard work and determination, to be ranked in the top 10 of the world's best female tennis athletes. This is a truly inspirational story for all aspiring sports men and women. It proves that with determination and passion anything is possible even when faced with life's obstacles.

The Gold Coast in particular has a proud sporting culture which has no doubt helped cultivate and nurture the determination and passion that Sam clearly has. Sam is the second woman on the Gold Coast in the space of a week to impress locals, with hurdles champion Sally Pearson also claiming the top honour in her field.

The Gold Coast is home to a number of sporting clubs, including the Titans Rugby League Club, the Gold Coast Suns AFL team, the Blaze Basketball team and numerous surf lifesaving clubs, to name just a few. There is a large outdoor and sporting culture in my electorate and
on the Gold Coast in general and by embracing sport more generally we move our children away from their iPads, mobile phones, computers and TV onto the fields and courts and into the pool and surf. Healthy lifestyles are therefore instilled in our children and the inspirational sporting success of Sam Stosur will certainly provide another positive role model for them.

Reflecting on Sam's tremendous effort I am again reminded of our young sporting heroes of tomorrow. Recently, I had the pleasure of meeting with several of these young men and women in my electorate, as I presented them with their Local Sporting Champions certificates. These individuals were the recipients of the most recent round of Local Sporting Champions grants, where they each received a sporting grant payment of $500 from the Australian Sports Commission. The passion these young men and women have shown for their respective sports is commendable; many of them train within their sporting disciplines almost every day and spend hours attending these sessions in an effort to improve their skills. I would also like to take this opportunity to commend their parents and those who spend their time, effort and financial resources to ensure their children reach their sporting potential, particularly when many parents on the southern Gold Coast are struggling with increased hours of work and the increase in costs of living. All of the schools on the southern Gold Coast offer a variety of sporting programs. In addition to this, the Palm Beach Currumbin State High School offers sporting excellence programs for gifted and talented students, giving them the opportunity to excel in their sporting discipline in a supportive educational environment. While these students are at school they are taught by a combination of school staff members and professional coaches in their particular sporting discipline.

Achieving excellence in sport involves commitment and dedication and I am sure that Sam Stosur's US Open win will inspire the young people of the nation to not only excel in sport but also to take part in sport for the other benefits, including making friends and, most importantly, having fun. In closing, I again congratulate Sam Stosur as this year's US Open women's singles champion and hope that her success will be replicated by countless more Australians in all sporting fields. Well done, Sam.

Ms Marino (Forrest—Opposition Whip) (12:55): Sam Stosur is another Australian sporting hero, whose achievements are highlighted by her dedication to overcoming adversity and reaching the pinnacle of the tennis world. As we know, Sam was born in Brisbane and moved to Adelaide when she was just 6 years old after the family home and business were devastated by floods on the Gold Coast. At the age of eight, Sam was given her first tennis racquet as a present and she showed immediate promise. She entered her first international tournament at the age of 13 in the World Youth Cup in Jakarta, and this was to be just the start of a professional tennis career. At 14 Sam entered the Queensland Academy of Sport and by 16 was enrolled in the Australian Institute of Sport. She clearly showed so much determination, commitment and, clearly, talent.

Sam really came to the attention of the Australian sporting public when she reached the fourth round of the Australian Open tournament in 2006, but by then she was already well known in tennis circles as a great doubles player, having reached world number one doubles status with her partner Lisa Raymond. Her win in the 2011 US Open, I would think, is especially sweet to her given her battle to overcome the horrendous impacts of Lyme disease. I can only imagine what sort of determination and courage it has taken for her to continue with her sport. In 2007, Sam suffered from lethargy and pain that remained undiagnosed.
during that year's Wimbledon and US Open but was finally diagnosed later in the year. Lyme disease, as we know, is caused by an infection spread by the bite of a tick and in severe cases can cause long-term disability, so this is not a simple issue. In Sam's case, most of 2007 and early 2008 were just a battle, but her recovery was a certainty given that she is a strong young woman. She is determined and she is dedicated and in 2009 Sam started to reap the rewards of that. She made a third round appearance at the Australian Open, reached the semi-finals of the French Open and won her maiden singles title in Osaka. She finished ranked 13th in the world in 2009.

I think 2010 is when Australia and Australians really got behind Sam as never before in her career. When she reached the final of the French Open, her first Grand Slam final, people Australia-wide realised that we had a serious contender here and it was perhaps then that Sam too realised that she was a serious contender. Although she was not to win that final, many of us followed her all the way. Australia shared her disappointment, but it was a disappointment that was borne with pride and dignity. In reaching the third round of both the French and Australian Opens in 2011, Sam continued to show great form and carried with her the hopes of this nation. It is fantastic to see that her great build-up has paid an ultimate dividend in the 2011 US Open.

She is the first Australian US Open women's winner since Margaret Court in 1973 and Australia's first female winner of a tennis major since Evonne Goolagong's triumph at Wimbledon in 1980. Once again, Sam carried the hopes of a nation, many of whom got up quite early to support the new champion that she would become. I think the strength that she showed when she was actually engaged in that match—many of us will never forget it. It was absolute determination. There was focus and there was fairness. I think she will go on and represent Australia with pride. Even though Wimbledon has been her toughest major venue, I hope her win has opened a floodgate for her and I hope that she has great confidence.

I congratulate Sam on her success to date. I wish her the best for the future. I also want to acknowledge her gracious acceptance of the trophy that she received and the very generous speech she gave which recognised her rival—at a time, perhaps, when others may not have done so. She showed the real Australian spirit and what a great young person she is in so many ways. I congratulate her and I hope that, as the previous member said, this inspires a lot of great young people in our nation to follow their dreams and their ambitions.

Main Committee adjourned at 13:01
QUESTIONS IN WRITING

Broadband

(Question No. 389)

Mr Fletcher asked the Minister representing the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, in writing, on 26 May 2011:

Further to the Minister's answer to question in writing No. 179 (House Hansard, 10 May 2011, page 54):

(1) Is it a fact that the cost of transit capacity on the Internet is a cost which must be met in providing a service to end users over the National Broadband Network; if so, will this cost be met by NBN Co. or the retail service provider.

(2) If this cost is to be met by NBN Co., will NBN Co. know in advance the likely sum in order to recover it from retail service providers in the final price charged.

(3) If this cost is to be met by retail service providers, will NBN Co. know in advance the likely sum, so that in setting a price for retail service providers it is able to consider the likely margins to be earned by the retail service provider, taking account of all of the retail service provider's costs (including amounts paid by both the retail service provider to NBN Co. and the service provider for transit capacity).

(4) Has NBN Co. developed estimates of what the cost of transit capacity on the Internet (per megabit) will be; if so, what are they; if not, why not.

Mr Albanese: The Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

(1) Yes. Depending on the application, transit capacity is required to connect from the NBN Point of Interconnect (POI) to other parts of the internet. The cost of this connectivity is the responsibility of the retail service provider.

(2) The cost of this capacity is the responsibility of the retail service provider.

(3) NBN Co considered a range of inputs when developing the wholesale costs for the NBN, including the prices in the ACCC's Declared Transmission Capacity Services Interim Access Determination. Whilst NBN Co can model a number of likely cost scenarios, it cannot know precisely all retail service provider's costs as these will depend on a range of commercial choices made by the RSP.

(4) See answer to (3) above.

Emergency Services and Alerts Systems

(Question No. 445)

Mr Fletcher asked the Minister representing the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, in writing, on 4 July 2011:

Is the Minister able to provide the Australian Media and Communications Authority (ACMA's) input towards the development of policy on the communications infrastructure to support emergency services and alerts; if so, what advice did ACMA provide on (a) a Radio Data System versus public mobile and fixed networks as platforms for delivering emergency services and alerts, (b) L and/or S band services to deliver such infrastructure and (c) its discussions with NBN Co. Limited about the potential for its satellite services to include an S band transponder for providing emergency alert facilities.

Mr Albanese: The Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

The question relates to the carriage of alerts via the short message system (SMS), with a supplement being via an L or S band transponder on the National Broadband Network satellite. The ACMA advises
that there is no planned L or S band transponder on the NBN filing and notes that it has not had discussions with NBN Co. Limited on this issue. The ACMA advises that the management of emergency alerts is a matter for the Attorney-General's Department.

Dawson Electorate: Alligator Creek Phone Coverage
(Question No. 448)

Mr Christensen asked the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, in writing, on 4 July 2011

(1) Is the Minister aware that mobile phone coverage is poor in Alligator Creek at the Bowling Green Bay National Park?

(2) Is the Minister aware that good mobile phone coverage in this area could aid the community in seeking assistance during emergencies, such as the accidental drowning of Che-Nezce Perrie Shepherd on Sunday 12 December 2010?

Mr Albanese: The Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

The Australian Government understands the importance of mobile telephony to Australians, in particular in emergency situations.

In recent years the mobile phone carriers have significantly expanded their terrestrial mobile networks. Vodafone Hutchison Australia claims its networks currently cover more than 94 per cent of the Australian population. Optus claims its 3G network provides services to 97 per cent of the Australian population. Telstra claims its Next G network now provides mobile coverage to 99 per cent of Australians.

For the most part the recent extension of mobile coverage across Australia has been based on commercial decisions by carriers. In making a decision to extend coverage to a particular area, carriers will consider a range of factors, including site availability, cost structures, likely levels of demand from users and overall economic viability of the service.

Local governments can assist in identifying potential demand for mobile services in the area. Information such as projections of population growth, visitors to the region and records of traffic volumes can be helpful in assisting carriers to make informed decisions about whether to extend coverage to certain areas.

There are a number of factors that can interfere with mobile reception and, therefore, affect a user's ability to obtain or maintain a mobile phone signal at any given time or in any particular place. These factors include mountainous or hilly terrain, road cuttings, buildings and tunnels. While not all potential sources of interference can be overcome, service providers should be able to advise of ways to minimise interference.

I understand there is unreliable mobile phone reception in the Bowling Green Bay National Park.

In areas where no terrestrial mobile coverage exists, satellite mobile phones provide an alternative means of accessing communications. Satellite phones are not as reliant on the local power supply infrastructure and are more reliable than ground based systems during an emergency. Satellite mobile phone services cover the entire Australian landmass and are available from a number of providers.

Residents of Alligator Creek may be eligible to apply for a subsidy under the Satellite Phone Subsidy Scheme. The scheme improves the affordability of mobile communications for people living and working in areas without terrestrial mobile coverage, by providing subsidies for the purchase of satellite phone handsets.
The scheme provides up to $1000 for eligible applicants who live in areas without terrestrial mobile coverage or up to $700 for eligible applicants who live in areas that have coverage, but spend more than 180 days across a two year period in non-coverage areas.

Under the scheme's rules, those eligible to apply include individuals, small businesses, community groups, not-for-profit organisations, Indigenous corporations, emergency service organisations, health organisations and educational institutions.

Information on the scheme is available from the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy website at www.dbcde.gov.au/satphone. An information kit can be obtained by contacting the scheme administrator on 1800 674 058 or via email at satphone@dbcde.gov.au.

An alternative to telephone communications is the use of distress beacon units, such as Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs) or Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs). These devices are designed to assist in an emergency by alerting rescue authorities and indicating location. More recent models in corporate Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) technology, enabling much more accurate determination of the location compared with earlier models.

These devices are not as limited by terrain as mobile phones and, by providing the location, will speed up any rescue effort. A variety of providers around Australia offer these for sale or hire.

Other technologies that could operate in areas without terrestrial mobile coverage include Citizens Band or ultra-high frequency (UHF) radio. It is important to be aware that these technologies cannot connect to the telephone network.

Broadband
(Question No. 451)

Mr Fletcher asked the Minister representing the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, in writing, on 5 July 2011:

What:
(a) consideration has been given to the fact that the Ka band satellite solutions proposed by NBN Co. Limited will be affected by adverse meteorological conditions, particularly cyclonic events, and
(b) arrangements are being made for remote land and maritime based mining and oil/gas operations that presently use C band services if the frequencies that use this band are re-allocated for commercial wireless broadband purposes.

Mr Albanese: The Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:
The Government and NBN Co are aware that all telecommunications platforms are potentially susceptible to catastrophic weather events, such as cyclones. In developing the Ka-band satellite platform, NBN Co is also working to develop strategies to minimize disturbances caused by such events.

The C-band currently supports a number of uses including fixed wireless and satellite services. As such, there are a number of arrangements already in place to allow services to share this spectrum band.

In May 2011, the Australian Communications and Media Authority outlined that, while under consideration, the C-band is not yet formally included as a potential band for mobile broadband. However, it is standard ACMA procedure for any band replanning activity to take into consideration many factors including the operation of existing services and would involve consultation with interested stakeholders prior to any new arrangements being adopted.
Tourism Australia: Board of Directors  
(Question No. 476)

Mr Baldwin asked the Minister for Tourism, in writing, on 16 August 2011:

What is the (a) name, (b) position, (c) terms of appointment, and (d) tenure of appointment of each member of the Tourism Australia Board of Directors.

Mr Martin Ferguson: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

The Tourism Australia Board of Directors comprises the Managing Director, Chair, Deputy Chair, and six other members. The current membership of the Tourism Australia Board of Directors is:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Term of Appointment</th>
<th>Tenure of Appointment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr Andrew McEvoy</td>
<td>Managing Director</td>
<td>Five Years</td>
<td>25 January 2010 to 30 November 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Geoff Dixon</td>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>Three Years</td>
<td>1 July 2009 - 30 June 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Kate Lamont</td>
<td>Deputy Chair</td>
<td>Three Years</td>
<td>1 July 2009 - 30 June 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Terri Janke</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Three Years</td>
<td>1 July 2011 - 30 June 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Sandra McPhee</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Three Years</td>
<td>1 July 2009 - 30 June 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Janet Whiting</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Three Years</td>
<td>1 July 2011 - 30 June 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Brett Godfrey</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Three Years</td>
<td>1 July 2010 - 30 June 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Mark Stone</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Three Years</td>
<td>1 July 2010 - 30 June 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Didier Elzinga</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Three Years</td>
<td>1 July 2010 - 30 June 2013</td>
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Tourism Australia: Membership
(Question No. 479)

Mr Baldwin asked the Minister for Tourism, in writing, on 16 August 2011:

In respect of Tourism Australia:

(1) What are the details of all memberships with organisations that are funded by this agency, including the (a) name of the organisation, (b) cost of membership, (c) duration of membership, and (d) reason for membership.

(2) What are the details of all sponsorships, including event sponsorships, funded by this agency, including the (a) name of the recipient, (b) cost, (c) duration, and (d) reason.

Mr Martin Ferguson: The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) (a) Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA)
   (b) $20,000
   (c) Annual membership
   (d) To ensure representation and engagement in international tourism fora and access to tourism data.

(a) United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)
   (b) $155,000
   (c) Annual membership
   (d) To ensure representation and engagement in international tourism fora and access to tourism data.

(2) (a) Foreign Correspondents Association
   (b) $3,500
   (c) Annual sponsorship
   (d) To foster sound relations with foreign correspondents covering international tourism.

(a) John Brown Foundation
   (b) $10,000
   (c) Annual sponsorship
   (d) To support development of young Australian tourism industry professionals.

(a) Australian Hotels Association
   (b) $20,000
   (c) Annual sponsorship
   (d) Sponsorship of annual conference.

(a) Tourism and Transport Forum
   (b) $20,000
   (c) Annual sponsorship
   (d) Sponsorship of annual conference and leadership series.

(a) Australian Regional Tourism Network for the Australian Regional Tourism Convention
   (b) $5,000
   (c) Event Sponsorship
   (d) To foster relations with tourism industry representatives.

(a) National Tourism Alliance—National Tourism Awards
   (b) $50,000
(c) Awards Sponsorship
(d) To foster relations with tourism industry representatives and encourage the development of the Australian tourism industry.
   (a) ATEC Symposium
   (b) $10,000
   (c) Event sponsorship
   (d) To foster relations with tourism industry representatives and encourage the development of the Australian tourism industry.

Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy: Senior Executive Service

(Question No. 561)

Mr Briggs asked the Minister representing the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, in writing, on 25 August 2011:
How many staff were employed by the Minister's department in the Senior Executive Service (ie, SES) on 1 July (a) 2008, and (b) 2011.

Mr Albanese: The Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:
(a) 37 staff employed by the department in the SES on 1 July 2008
(b) 38 staff employed by the department in the SES on 1 July 2011