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FORTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—SEVENTH PERIOD

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

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

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

Party Leaders and Whips
Liberal Party of Australia
Leader—Hon. Malcolm Bligh Turnbull MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Julie Isabel Bishop MP
Chief Government Whip—Ms Nola Bethwyn Marino MP
Government Whips—Mr Ewen Thomas Jones MP and Mr Brett David Whiteley MP

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

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

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Division</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Williams, Mr Matthew</td>
<td>Hindmarsh, SA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilson, Mr Richard James</td>
<td>O'Connor, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood, Mr Jason Peter</td>
<td>La Trobe, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyatt, Mr Kenneth George AM</td>
<td>Hasluck, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zappia, Mr Antonio</td>
<td>Makin, SA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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Clerk of the House of Representatives—D Elder
Acting Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—D Heriot
Parliamentary Budget Officer—P Bowen
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<td>Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Indigenous Affairs</td>
<td>Senator Hon Nigel Scullion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Women</td>
<td>Senator Hon Michaelia Cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet Secretary</td>
<td>Senator Hon Michaelia Cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Digital Government</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Counter Terrorism</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister</td>
<td>Hon Alan Tudge MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister</td>
<td>Senator Hon James McGrath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Productivity</td>
<td>Hon Dr Peter Hendy MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Cabinet Secretary</td>
<td>Senator Hon Scott Ryan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development (Deputy Prime Minister)</strong></td>
<td>Hon Warren Truss MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Resources, Energy and Northern Australia</td>
<td>Hon Josh Frydenberg MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Territories, Local Government and Major Projects</td>
<td>Hon Paul Fletcher MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister</td>
<td>Hon Michael McCormack MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Foreign Affairs</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Trade and Investment</td>
<td>Hon Julie Bishop MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for International Development and the Pacific</td>
<td>Hon Andrew Robb AO MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Tourism and International Education</td>
<td>Hon Steven Ciobo MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Minister Assisting the Minister for Trade and Investment</em></td>
<td>Senator Hon Richard Colbeck</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Attorney-General</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Vice-President of the Executive Council)</td>
<td>Senator Hon George Brandis QC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Leader of the Government in the Senate)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Justice</td>
<td>Hon Michael Keenan MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs</td>
<td>Senator Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Treasurer</strong></td>
<td>Hon Scott Morrison MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Small Business</td>
<td>Hon Kelly O’Dwyer MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Treasurer</td>
<td>Hon Kelly O’Dwyer MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister to the Treasurer</td>
<td><em>Hon Alex Hawke MP</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Finance</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(Deputy Leader of Government in the Senate)</td>
<td>Senator Hon Mathias Cormann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Hon Mal Brough MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources</strong></td>
<td>Hon Barnaby Joyce MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources</em></td>
<td>Senator Hon Anne Ruston</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science</strong></td>
<td>Hon Christopher Pyne MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Leader of the House)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Science</td>
<td><em>Hon Karen Andrews MP</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Innovation</td>
<td><em>Hon Wyatt Roy MP</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Minister</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Immigration and Border Protection</strong>&lt;br&gt;Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs</td>
<td>Hon Peter Dutton MP&lt;br&gt;<em>Senator Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for the Environment</strong>&lt;br&gt;Minister for Cities and the Built Environment</td>
<td>Hon Greg Hunt MP&lt;br&gt;Hon Jamie Briggs MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Health</strong>&lt;br&gt;Assistant Minister for Health</td>
<td>Hon Sussan Ley MP&lt;br&gt;<em>Hon. Ken Wyatt MP</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Sport</strong>&lt;br&gt;Minister for Rural Health</td>
<td>Hon Sussan Ley MP&lt;br&gt;Senator Hon Fiona Nash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Defence</strong>&lt;br&gt;Minister for Veterans’ Affairs&lt;br&gt;<em>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC</em></td>
<td>Senator Hon Marise Payne&lt;br&gt;Hon Stuart Robert MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hon Mal Brough MP&lt;br&gt;<em>Hon Darren Chester MP</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Communications</strong>&lt;br&gt;Minister for the Arts&lt;br&gt;(Manager of Government Business in the Senate)</td>
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<td>Senator Hon Michaelia Cash</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Hon Christian Porter MP&lt;br&gt;Hon Stuart Robert MP&lt;br&gt;<em>Senator Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Education and Training</strong>&lt;br&gt;Minister for Vocational Education and Skills&lt;br&gt;(Deputy Leader of the House)&lt;br&gt;Minister for Tourism and International Education</td>
<td>Senator Hon Simon Birmingham&lt;br&gt;Hon Luke Hartsuyker MP&lt;br&gt;Senator Hon Richard Colbeck</td>
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Each box represents a portfolio. Cabinet Ministers are shown in bold type. As a general rule, there is one department in each portfolio. However, there is a Department of Human Services in the Social Services portfolio and a Department of Veterans’ Affairs in the Defence portfolio. The title of a department does not necessarily reflect the title of a minister in all cases. Assistant Ministers in italics are designated as Parliamentary Secretaries under the Ministers of State Act 1952.
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<td>Hon Bill Shorten MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister Assisting the Leader for Science</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Kim Carr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister Assisting the Leader on State and Territory Relations</td>
<td>Senator Katy Gallagher*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Women</td>
<td>Senator Claire Moore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manager of Opposition Business (Senate)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Cabinet Secretary</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Jacinta Collins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Opposition</td>
<td>Hon Michael Danby MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary Assisting with Digital Innovation and Startups</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy Manager of Opposition Business (Senate)</td>
<td>Terri Butler M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Leader of the Opposition</td>
<td>Hon Tanya Plibersek MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Development</td>
<td>Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Trade and Investment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Trade and Investment</td>
<td>Dr Jim Chalmers MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Stephen Conroy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Defence</td>
<td>Hon David Feeney MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Veterans’ Affairs</td>
<td>Hon David Feeney MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC</td>
<td>Hon David Feeney MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Defence</td>
<td>Gai Brodtmann MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Infrastructure and Transport</td>
<td>Hon Anthony Albanese MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Cities</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Tourism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Regional Development and Local Government</td>
<td>Hon Julie Collins MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Western Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Northern Australia</td>
<td>Hon Warren Snowdon MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Treasurer</td>
<td>Hon Chris Bowen MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Small Business</td>
<td>Michelle Rowland MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Treasurer</td>
<td>Hon Dr Andrew Leigh MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Competition</td>
<td>Dr Jim Chalmers MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Productivity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary to the Shadow Treasurer</td>
<td>Hon Ed Husic MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business</td>
<td>Julie Owens MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>TITLE</td>
<td>SHADOW MINISTER</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Finance</td>
<td>Hon Tony Burke MP</td>
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<td>Hon Gary Gray MP</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment, Climate Change and Water</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations</td>
<td>Hon Brendan O’Connor MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Employment Services</td>
<td>Hon Julie Collins MP</td>
</tr>
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Shadow Cabinet Ministers are shown in bold type.

* Senator Katy Gallagher’s appointment to the Shadow Ministry is effective from 1 November 2015. Senator the Hon Jan McLucas will serve as Shadow Minister for Housing and Homelessness and Shadow Minister for Mental Health, and represent the Shadow Minister for Northern Australia, the Shadow Minister for Health, the Shadow Assistant Minister for Health, the Shadow Minister for Sport and the Shadow Minister for Indigenous Affairs in the Senate until 31 October 2015.
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Thursday, 12 November 2015

The SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Smith) took the chair at 09:00, made an acknowledgement of country and read prayers.

BILLS

Treasury Legislation Amendment (Repeal Day 2015) Bill 2015

First Reading

Bill—by leave—and explanatory memorandum presented by Ms O'Dwyer.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Ms O'DWYER (Higgins—Minister for Small Business and Assistant Treasurer) (09:07): Excessive and unnecessary regulation reduces productivity and investment, stifles job creation, creates uncertainty and saps confidence. Achieving a reduction in regulation across the economy represents an enormous opportunity to increase Australia's productivity and competitiveness.

In 2013, the government made an election commitment to cut red-tape costs by $1 billion a year to improve our nation's competitiveness, help to create more jobs and lower household costs.

This target has now been well exceeded, with the government announcing more than $2.45 billion in regulatory savings, just two years after election.

The Treasury portfolio has delivered some big reforms, including recent reforms from the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) to facilitate business to take up digital disclosure, leading to an annual saving of $299 million, and the Australian Taxation Office upgrade of ATO online, providing access for business to manage their tax affairs in a digital environment. Upgrades to the online portal are estimated to have an annual saving of $109 million.

But we have not just delivered reforms for big business.

For example, the changes to Pay As You Go instalment system entry thresholds removed an estimated 447,000 small businesses from the system.

- This means that 45,000 small businesses that have no goods and services tax reporting requirements will no longer have to lodge a business activity statement.
- The remaining 402,000 small businesses with modest or negative income that are still required to lodge a business activity statement will no longer have to interact with the Pay As You Go instalment system.
- This reform will save small businesses around $67 million each year in red tape.

From 1 July 2015, we expanded access to the Small Business Superannuation Clearing House. This change means an additional 27,500 employers can now use this free service to pay their employees' superannuation. Using the free clearing house service saves small business time, and reduces their paperwork.
The reforms through the new franchising code we introduced on 1 January 2015 will deliver an estimated $8.6 million per year in red-tape savings across the sector.

The $5.5 billion Growing Jobs and Small Business package in this year’s budget builds upon these initiatives.

The package allows for all small businesses to immediately deduct every eligible asset costing less than $20,000 purchased between budget night and the end of June 2017.

It also includes lower taxes for all small businesses, with a 1.5 percentage point cut to the company tax rate for small companies and a five per cent tax discount for unincorporated entities. Providing small businesses with a reduced rate of tax enables them to retain more earnings and improve their cash flow—a critical issue for small businesses’ survival and success.

This bill forms part of the government’s commitment to repeal counterproductive, unnecessary and redundant legislation.

Schedule 1 to this bill amends the Superannuation Guarantee Administration Act 1992 to simplify the superannuation guarantee charge and makes the superannuation guarantee charge and penalty more proportionate to the non-compliance. This is a tax imposed on employers by the Australian Taxation Office when the employer does not meet their superannuation guarantee requirements on time.

The current superannuation guarantee charge regime can be very punitive for employers who inadvertently pay their SG contributions late or short-pay by a small amount, which can have a significant impact on small business.

When the superannuation guarantee regime was introduced in 1992 the very punitive superannuation guarantee charge was considered necessary to ensure employers complied with the new superannuation guarantee regime.

The government is committed to employees receiving their superannuation so that Australians can save for their retirement. However, it is important to right-size the regulatory environment where appropriate.

For example, this schedule will change how nominal interest is calculated under the superannuation guarantee charge. Currently, nominal interest is charged from the beginning of a superannuation guarantee quarter rather than from the due date of superannuation guarantee contributions, so employers have to effectively pay an additional four months of interest if they make a mistake or inadvertently do not pay on time due to cash flow issues. The changes in this schedule will fix this problem by aligning nominal interest over the period that the superannuation guarantee amount is actually outstanding. This is fairer and less complex for business.

The second change this schedule makes to the superannuation guarantee charge is to align the penalties under the superannuation guarantee charge regime with the administrative penalties that exist under the tax administration act 1953. This change will simplify penalties under the superannuation guarantee charge regime by having penalty rules which are consistent with those applied to other tax obligations.

Currently under the superannuation guarantee charge regime, penalties of up to 200 per cent of the superannuation guarantee charge can be levied by the Australian Taxation Office.
on employers who do not comply with their superannuation guarantee obligations. This penalty is usually remitted to levels that reflect the nature of the breach.

The third change will align the earnings base for calculating the superannuation guarantee charge with the earnings base used to calculate the superannuation guarantee. Currently these earnings bases are different; aligning them will reduce costs and confusion for employers.

While the changes in schedule 1 will simplify the SG charge and make the penalty more commensurate with the breach, they will provide adequate incentives for employers to comply with their SG obligations in the future.

Schedule 2 to this bill will amend superannuation laws to enable the Australian Taxation Office to pay certain superannuation amounts, such as unclaimed super balances, directly to people with a terminal medical condition. It will also remove the requirement for superannuation funds to lodge a lost members statement with the Australian Taxation Office.

The first change ensures that people who are dealing with the tragic circumstances of being diagnosed as terminally ill or injured do not also have to deal with unnecessary complexity to get access to superannuation savings held by the Australian Taxation Office.

Superannuation balances are generally able to be released tax free to people with a terminal medical condition.

Super funds can already pay balances they hold directly to such people when a valid claim is made.

However, the existing law only permits the Australian Taxation Office to pay unclaimed super directly to terminally ill or injured people in limited circumstances. In most cases, when a terminally ill person makes a claim, currently the Australian Taxation Office first has to transfer the money into an existing account in a super fund before they can access it. This creates unnecessary delays and paperwork for people who should be able to access their super.

In fact, if the person does not have a super account, the red tape they face under existing law increases. For example, if a person on finding out that they are terminally ill withdraws their balance and closes their super account, the person will need to create a new account just to receive their unclaimed super held by the Australian Taxation Office.

This government will not subject people to needless bureaucracy, particularly when they are facing such difficult life circumstances and are likely to be at their most vulnerable.

Enacting this bill will allow the Australian Taxation Office to pay super amounts they hold or administer directly to a terminally ill or injured person. This will eliminate a pointless step in the claims process and provide people with faster access to their super when they need it most.

Schedule 2 will also remove an additional reporting requirement for super funds.

Let me explain by giving you some context.

The Commissioner of Taxation maintains a register known as the Lost Members Register, which contains details of members who have been reported by their super providers as lost. This register is maintained for the purpose of reuniting people with their lost super. The register is updated periodically, using information reported to the Australian Taxation Office by super funds.
This information is currently reported to the Australian Taxation Office by super funds twice a year through the lost members statement. This is a requirement under superannuation law.

However, since 2013 similar information has also been reported by funds to the Australian Taxation Office as a result of a separate reporting obligation under tax administration law. This bill will remove the extra requirement for funds to lodge the lost member statement. This will remove an additional reporting burden for funds and reduce their compliance costs, without reducing access to information as it will continue to be collected under tax administration law. People will continue to be able to use myGov to search the register for their lost super.

Schedule 3 to this bill contains amendments to the Corporations Act 2001 to modify the notification and reporting obligations applying to certain corporations that have property in receivership or property in respect of which a controller is acting.

These amendments remove the unnecessary compliance costs, reputational damage and investor confusion caused by having to include 'in receivership' on all of a company's public documents, rather than only those documents that relate to the affected trust. The amendments will also reduce the administrative burden on corporations' officers by reducing the matters upon which they are required to report to a 'controller'.

Schedule 4 to this bill repeals inoperative acts and provisions of the tax law. This includes the repeal of the Commonwealth borrowing levy, which has been inoperative since 1997, repeal of the tax-exempt infrastructure borrowing concession, which has been inoperative since 2012, and the repeal of various provisions relating to concessions for equity investments by financial institutions in small and medium enterprises, which have been effectively inoperative since 1999.

Full details of these measures are contained in the explanatory memorandum.

I commend this bill to the House, and I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Debate adjourned.

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

**First Reading**

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Hartsuyker.

Bill read a first time.

**Second Reading**

Mr HARTSUYKER (Cowper—Minister for Vocational Education and Skills and Deputy Leader of the House) (09:14):

I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The bill will allow for amendments to be made to the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Act 1989. These amendments will strengthen the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies' (AIATSIS) governance
arrangements. The amendments will also refocus it on its core activities of collection and preservation of Indigenous culture and heritage.

AIATSIS' work involves curating, researching and preserving our internationally significant collection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage.

AIATSIS holds over a million items of historical and cultural significance. According to a recent independent analysis, AIATSIS holds the most extensive and best-contextualized collection of Indigenous Australia in the world.

These items come in all manner of media and formats, some of which cannot be replaced. The national collection includes more than 175,680 titles of printed material, 5,000 manuscripts, 2,600 rare books, and 650,000 photographs relating to Indigenous Australia dating from the late 1800s.

It also includes the Australian Indigenous Languages Collection, which contains over 4,300 titles, and more than 40,000 hours of audio.

The language collection is of such international significance that it is now part of the UNESCO Australian Memory of the World Register.

AIATSIS is proud that its collection grows at a rate of some 1,400 items per year. Importantly, AIATSIS holds audiovisual recordings of some Indigenous communities and languages which no longer exist.

Maintaining a collection of such breadth, cultural significance and value is not without enormous challenges.

This bill is part of a reform agenda that will assist AIATSIS to position itself for the future.

It is an agenda that has been developed through consensus—that recognises the national importance of AIATSIS and acknowledges there must be change to ensure its sustainability.

In addition, in May this year, the former Minister for Education and Training, the Hon. Christopher Pyne, worked with the AIATSIS council on the establishment of the AIATSIS Foundation. The Governor-General, His Excellency General the Hon. Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC, launched the foundation.

The AIATSIS Foundation will make it possible for the broader community and philanthropists to support and contribute to the critical work of AIATSIS.

This follows steps taken in the 2014–15 and 2015–16 budgets, when $8.3 million in additional funding was provided over those two years. This was done so that the most immediate risks to the preservation of the national collection of Indigenous cultural materials could be addressed.

This bill now takes important steps to reform the appointment process for the AIATSIS Council and refocus the functions of AIATSIS towards the purposes it is uniquely placed to achieve.

This includes that the national collection is maintained as a major research resource and is the largest of its kind in the world.

More and more of this information is being used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to reconnect with their culture. It is also increasingly being used to enable cultural revival, including access to lost languages.
The amendments in the bill reflect the contemporary environment for the heritage and culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It affirms AIATSIS’ national leadership role in preserving, understanding and communicating this heritage and culture for future generations.

The bill will refresh the appointment process for the AIATSIS Council.

In making appointments in the future, consideration will need to be given to the overall skill set of the council so that effective and contemporary governance practices guide the work of AIATSIS. The principle of diversity will be embedded, and importantly so will the requirement to maintain an Indigenous majority on the council.

In the future, the council will be refreshed on a rolling basis by limiting membership to a maximum of two consecutive terms.

These changes will provide AIATSIS with a dynamic and strategic council to oversee and guide the activities of the institute into the future.

AIATSIS currently has a wide range of legislated responsibilities which include: promoting, publishing and undertaking relevant research; assisting in training people, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as research workers in relevant fields; establishing and maintaining a cultural resource collection; and encouraging understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage.

Streamlining the number of legislated functions that AIATSIS is required to undertake, from eight to five, will better target available resources to ensure that maximum effort is directed towards preserving the national collection.

Since the AIATSIS Act was enacted in 1989, the landscape for preserving, understanding, communicating and developing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage has changed and grown.

AIATSIS will be better positioned to focus on preserving, maintaining and reviving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, languages, culture and histories. Also, it will be better positioned to focus on preserving the traditions passed on from one generation to another, now and into the future.

This bill is an important next step towards ensuring the preservation of this important national collection. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Deregulation

Dr HENDY (Eden-Monaro—Assistant Minister for Productivity) (09:21): by leave—Today marks the fourth red tape repeal day of this government. The coalition made a commitment before the last election to reduce red tape by $1 billion annually. I am pleased to announce on behalf of the government today that we have achieved double that target with $4.5 billion in red tape savings announcements in our first two years. We have repealed over 10,000 legislative instruments and introduced legislation to repeal over 3,600 spent and redundant acts from the Commonwealth books. For every $1 added to the cost of regulation, the government has made decisions that cut over $11. We have improved our systems for regulatory decision making and begun to change the culture of decision makers and regulators.
to one that recognises the burden that is imposed both by the regulations and by the way they
are administered. It is not 'mission accomplished' but we have certainly achieved a great deal
in two years.

I will shortly have more to say about how we can build on these successes, but let me say
at the outset that the future agenda will be focusing on productivity, as the driver of prosperity
and improvements in our living standards. In addition we will particularly be turning our
minds to how we can better reduce the regulatory burden on businesses and individuals across
all levels of government.

Today we announce that we are focusing a renewed, larger effort to involve the states and
territories in regulatory reform. The states have indicated their desire to engage the
Commonwealth on taxation issues. We will be looking to them to engage much more strongly
on removing duplication and regulation that hamper innovation and productivity.

For almost 25 years, Australia has experienced an unprecedented expansion of our
economy. It is recognised here and internationally—by the OECD and the IMF—that our
performance has been made possible by two major forces:

- productivity growth underpinned by two decades of structural reforms; and
- the surge in trade as a result of the commodities boom during the 2000s.

We are smart people living in a diverse and open country. We have the world's fastest
growing markets at our doorstep. Historically, we also have a strong track record of seizing
new opportunities and technologies.

However, we can all see the emerging pressures in Australia's economy. Most obvious and
immediate, the terms of trade have fallen by 30 per cent since their peak in 2011, driven by
lower commodity prices. This is forcing some difficult adjustments in our economy.

Over the longer term, like many other countries, our demographics are also slowly shifting.
Today, there are four to five working-age people for every person over the age of 65. By mid-
century, this ratio is expected to fall to fewer than three. There will be more pressure on our
aged-care and healthcare services, but with proportionally fewer people to deliver and pay for
them.

Ultimately, it is productivity growth that is the primary source of a sustainable
improvement in a nation's living standards. We have an ambitious policy agenda that includes
looking at every aspect of the tax system, reforming our Federation to improve service
delivery particularly in health and education, competition reform, and strengthening the
security of our financial system.

Another key part of our economic policy is regulatory reform. Inefficient and ineffective
regulation takes resources away from people, drives up costs for businesses, and drags down
our economy. Our goal is not only to reduce the cost of complying with regulation but, where
regulation is necessary, ensure it is designed in the best way possible. This means regulation
that is fit for purpose and easy to comply with. It also involves changing the way we think
about regulation—so that it is not seen as a costless way to address policy issues.

What have we achieved so far? Since 2013, the commitments we have made to reduce
regulatory costs have amounted to $4.5 billion per year. This is well beyond the cumulative
$3 billion target the government committed to at the last election. What this equates to is less
time required by individuals and businesses to fill out forms; less time seeking external advice; and less hard earned revenue spent on building systems and purchasing equipment to meet the regulatory requirements of the government.

For example, we're continuing to develop new ways to make our tax system easier to comply with. The latest taxation tool—myDeductions—allows individuals to record their deductions using their phone. The days of the shoebox full of old receipts are gone.

We're committed to implementing a single permit system for coastal shipping to build a more competitive and efficient shipping industry. This enhances the access of Australian manufacturers and primary producers to cheaper, reliable shipping services and makes our products more competitive internationally and domestically.

We're implementing a more proportionate risk-based framework to assess industrial chemicals whilst maintaining safety standards. This means low-risk industrial chemicals will get to market faster, allowing companies like cosmetics manufacturers to create new products as well as safer versions of existing products.

Over the course of 2015, we have cut red tape to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars through continuing to improve the administration of the tax system, enhancing communication through digital disclosure, the student visa program, and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, to name a few items. I invite people to visit the Cutting Red Tape website to see the full list in a document we are releasing today titled 'The Australian government spring repeal day November 2015', where scores of initiatives are outlined.

We are genuinely changing how and why we regulate. During 2015 we have made Commonwealth regulators more accountable for the regulatory burden they create through the common set of performance measures established under the Regulator Performance Framework. Cabinet decisions are informed by a regulation impact statement that lays out the costs and benefits of proposals.

The government's efforts are being recognised. We have reversed the decline in our global ranking of the burden of government regulation. In 2015, Australia climbed to 80th in the world according to the World Economic Forum. Just two years ago, we were 128th. But we're not content with being 80th in the world—we can and will do better.

The Cutting Red Tape agenda has been an important element of our economic strategy. As the government's new Assistant Minister for Productivity, I have no doubt that the time is right to build on this success. So we are starting a new chapter in our approach to regulatory reform. It needs to support flexibility in our economy so that we encourage innovation to the greatest extent possible.

Regulatory barriers can also hinder competition and the market forces that push firms to innovate and perform at their best. As the Harper review found, there is still a multitude of Commonwealth, state and territory, and local government regulations that create barriers to entry, advantage some businesses over others or reduce incentives to compete. We need to look at all our options for supporting innovation as well as to engage more effectively with the states and territories and local governments.

The Commonwealth can only achieve so much for the Australian economy on its own. Inefficient regulation costs more than just time and money—it makes our economy less agile. We have all seen this in the difficulty and pace of our regulatory regimes in adapting to digital
disrupters like Uber or the rise of online retailing. In an age of rapid technologically driven change, we simply can't set and forget when it comes to rules and regulations. The recent draft Productivity Commission report on business set-up, transfer and closure rightly noted that our regulations and our regulators need to be flexible and adaptive in the face of evolving technology. In short, we need to build into our efforts the process of continual regulatory review, to ensure that our regulatory frameworks remain fit for purpose.

Over the coming months the government will work with stakeholders on the priorities important to our economy, on the tools to assess and prioritise change, and on the schedule of reform. In particular, the government invites the states and territories to work with the Commonwealth, either bilaterally or through COAG, to revitalise the unfinished productivity reforms within our federation. This does not mean that ongoing removal of unnecessary and ineffective red tape will stop. We are not going to rest on the gains we have made. We are enhancing the policy reform agenda so that it has a broader focus, while still relieving the regulatory burden.

The government are proud of what we have achieved to date and the bills before the House today are a further step. We look forward to working with the wider community on developing new ideas and sweeping away business constraints in order to continue the economic success of Australia. I present a copy of my ministerial statement.

Dr CHALMERS (Rankin) (09:31): I relish the opportunity to talk about productivity and the opportunity to respond to this ministerial statement. Our economy is undergoing a very important transition away from one based on very high prices for our commodities into one that must be based on the ability of our people to turn technological and other change to our personal and national advantage.

We have had a remarkable quarter century of economic growth, but that quarter century of growth will be in serious jeopardy unless we build new sources of opportunity and new ways to create jobs. As the opposition leader says, Australia's choice is between being a smarter nation or a poorer nation. We have made good choices before in the 1980s, 1990s and during the GFC, which I mention not as some sort of nostalgic shibboleth but as a demonstration that good decisions are not beyond us in this country. Our history should be behind us pushing us forward, not in front of us pushing us back. Good choices are within our reach. But if we get them wrong, if we focus on wrong things, we can kiss goodbye the living standards which have been the hallmark of our recent history and a benchmark for the rest of the world.

Being smarter not poorer is really about being more productive. Productivity growth is what we need if we are to create wealth, to lift living standards in this country and to ensure there is enough opportunity and enough employment to go round. There are all kinds of ways to slice and dice the data on productivity growth, but in essence the story is that in the 1980s we had terrible productivity growth at 1.3 per cent; in the 1990s it was terrific at 2.1 per cent; for the first decade of the 2000s it was 1.4 per cent, roughly where it is now; and the IGR forecasts use the long-term average of 1.5 per cent.

I do not have time to dig into all the reasons for our productivity performance or the influences on it, or to discuss the softness in productivity growth right around the world. The point is this: we can argue about what is causing our current productivity growth of 1.4 per cent, but it is beyond argument that that kind of productivity performance is insufficient to maintain and advance Australian living standards.
Faced with this serious challenge, it is disappointing to see that the sum total of the government's plan is to wage this ridiculous war on legislative punctuation, which they describe as 'red-tape reduction'. When I heard last night that we were getting a statement this morning from the Assistant Minister for Productivity, I have to confess I did get my hopes up. I printed it out, I settled in, I made a coffee and I got the little pink highlighter out, but my hopes were dashed. I was combing through the statement looking for the value and ready to colour in the big points, but the lid never came off the highlighter. The felt never hit the page. Not a millilitre of pink ink was spent.

Instead of a well-considered plan to genuinely boost productivity in this country, we got a recycled version of the same old limp and lifeless slogans of repeal days past. This is the fourth repeal day in the life of this government. It has become a tattered, yellowing hand-me-down from one parliamentary secretary or assistant minister to another—from the member for Kooyong to the member for Pearce and now for the member for Eden-Monaro.

From past repeal days, it is worth reminding ourselves that, amidst all the fanfare and all the noise, we have had three sets of omnibus bills that have totalled $56.8 million in deregulatory savings. We have had the repeal of a law related to the registration of mules for defence purposes. We have had the repeal of a law relating to state navies. We have had changes from 'e-mail' to 'email,' from 'facsimile' to 'fax'. We have had acts repealed where the principal act had already been repealed. We have had the repeal of the Delivered Meals Subsidy Amendment Act 1980 when the main act, the Delivered Meals Subsidy Act 1970, had already been repealed in 2009. We had the removal of 40 hyphens, two commas and one inverted comma. We have had two full stops changed to semicolons and one semicolon changed to a full stop. We have inserted one new full stop, one colon, one hyphen and one comma. What a joke!

The Omnibus Repeal Day (Spring 2014) Bill has not even passed the parliament. The bill from autumn 2015, once it was introduced in March 2015, took nearly six months to be debated in the House of Representatives. Out of the $56.8 million in savings from the three sets of bills only $14 million have passed the parliament.

Those opposite are long on fanfare and short on reform. On this side we are up for genuine red-tape reduction. In government we abolished more than 16,000 acts and legislative instruments—16,794 to be precise—and we instituted the seamless national economy reforms that lowered business costs by $4 billion a year—something that I was personally proud to work on in another role in this building.

The government like to claim, as the assistant minister did moments ago, that the decisions they have taken will save $4.5 billion per year. It is worth reminding everyone what this includes. It includes nearly $200 million from stripping away consumer protections as part of the Future of Financial Advice reforms and $5 million out of the pockets of cleaners through the abolition of the Commonwealth Cleaning Services Guidelines. I could go on and on about the farcical nature of these so-called red-tape reductions, but I think you get the point. The point is this: when this country needs a serious plan to boost productivity in this nation they get instead, from their government, the recycled talking points of the Abbott era, the same over-claimed savings and the same hole in their economic agenda where productivity growth should be.
It says it all about those opposite that in a ministerial statement on productivity there is nothing about education, nothing about human capital, not even infrastructure and more specifically broadband infrastructure. When I printed out the statement, I thought that there was a page missing, I thought that I had got the ordering wrong, I thought the printer might have broken as I went through it, over and over again, looking in vain for some reference to human capital—arguably the most important driver of productivity in an economy like ours. There was nothing about teaching and training our people for the jobs of the future; nothing about giving them the tools they need to succeed in a modern market economy, characterised by the breathtaking pace of change by grasping new technological opportunities; nothing about lifelong learning or the workforce that we will need to be competitive; nothing of the sorts of issues that my colleague the member for Kingston spends her time working on when it comes to lifelong learning in this country.

Productivity growth will not come from eliminating commas in legislation nor, for that matter, from slashing penalty rates or jacking up the GST. It will take economic leadership, but the gains will come from the bottom up, from a better educated workforce and from better infrastructure, including 21st century broadband infrastructure. It is left to Labor to fill the gap in the economic debate left by the failure of those opposite to understand these basic truths. On this side of the parliament, the Leader of the Opposition and the colleagues on the front bench have released more considered and costed policies from opposition than any other alternative government in more than two decades, and many of them, if not most of them, are carefully calibrated to boost productivity in our economy.

Our plans to substantially reform universities so that we have more and better quality graduates actually finishing their degrees, high-quality degrees, that are workforce ready when they finish will boost productivity in our economy. Our special focus on more graduates, teachers and start-ups in the science, technology, engineering and maths disciplines will boost productivity. Coding in Australian schools, primary and secondary, the language of the 21st century, will boost productivity. A start-up year at university to create a culture of innovation and invention will boost productivity, as well as a TAFE funding guarantee to provide certainty to the vocational training sector.

All of these things will make our workforce more capable and adaptable, and will contribute to future growth of productivity in Australia, especially when you consider them hand in hand with our plans to turbocharge infrastructure by strengthening Infrastructure Australia and giving it the capacity to work with other financing options to build the infrastructure that we need to be a productive economy.

We are in a defining moment in our national economic trajectory. We need to work out how to make this extraordinary change work for us and not against us. It is always the right time to be thinking about and talking about productivity but acting as well, and that has never been more true than it is now. We cannot count on our history. We cannot count on that quarter century of growth to deliver another quarter century of growth from here. If we do not become more productive, we will go backwards; we will not grow in a sustainable way.

The government’s failure to treat productivity as a priority risks turning economic growth and opportunity into a memory. We need dedicated, forward-thinking investment in the drivers of growth and opportunity in this country. The government cannot spin their way out of the challenges we face—soggy growth and sluggish productivity—and they cannot just
have another day of editing away misplaced commas and hyphens because that will not cut it either.
Debate adjourned.

BILLS

Omnibus Repeal Day (Spring 2015) Bill 2015

First Reading
Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Dr Hendy.
Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Dr HENDY (Eden-Monaro—Assistant Minister for Productivity) (09:41): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.


These bills are a part of the government's efforts to clean up the Commonwealth's statute book. Collectively, these three repeal day bills will repeal over 900 Commonwealth acts, making it easier for users of Commonwealth legislation to find and access regulations.

The omnibus bill is a whole-of-government initiative to amend or repeal legislation that is not the subject of individual stand-alone bills.

This omnibus bill alone will amend or repeal legislation across 14 Commonwealth departments. Much of this legislation is either spent or redundant and has remained on the Commonwealth's statute books well after fulfilling its purpose.

For example, the omnibus bill will repeal the Wool International Act 1993 and the Wool International Privatisation Act 1999 from the Agriculture and Water Resources portfolio. These two acts are both redundant because WoolStock Australia Limited was wound up and delisted from the Australian Stock Exchange in 2001.

The omnibus bill will also abolish the Medical Training Review Panel and simplify approved provider obligations in the area of aged care within the Health portfolio.

In October 2014, members of the Medical Training Review Panel identified an overlap between their functions and those of the National Medical Training Advisory Network. Part of the advisory network's functions is to provide advice on medical workforce planning and medical training plans to inform government, employers and educators. Given this focus, it was agreed that the advisory network could pick up the panel's annual reporting obligations on medical education and training and the panel's role would cease.

We do not need two bodies to do the same job.

The omnibus bill will also simplify legislation in the Health portfolio. For example, the bill will improve the administration of residential aged care by amending provisions in the Aged Care Act 1997. Provisions within the act require approved providers to notify the Department of Health of changes in key personnel in their employment within 28 days. In cases where an employee leaves and is replaced by another, this would constitute two notifications to the department even if neither change materially affected the quality of care. Examples of
unnecessary regulations can matter—the department receives in the order of 10,000 notifications from aged-care providers each year.

In spite of these amendments, the Aged Care Act 1997 will still require approved providers to notify the department of changes in circumstances that materially affects the provider’s suitability to provide care.

Simple but sensible changes provide scope to reduce the unnecessary notification regime without undermining the quality of care. This will reduce compliance costs for businesses and community organisations who are approved aged-care providers. The Department of Health has estimated that this will lead to an annual saving of $1.16 million in compliance costs.

The omnibus bill will also repeal part 3 of the Fisheries Administration Act 1991, which establishes the Fishing Industry Policy Council. Why might we do this, Deputy Speaker? The fact is that the council has not convened since the legislation was enacted in 1991.

The same consultation and advice functions that the council was supposed to provide have been fulfilled by other working groups and committees. This includes fisheries management advisory committees and ad hoc representative committees, such as that formed for the reviews of the Commonwealth harvest strategy and bycatch policy.

The omnibus bill will also amend various acts in the communications and the arts portfolio to remove duplication.


Consultation is not being affected.

The provisions proposed for repeal involve a variety of inconsistent approaches to the time and method of consultation. In some cases, the consultation periods in question range from 14 to 60 days. Some of the consultation provisions in question require publication on a website; while some require publication in multiple newspapers. There is no policy rationale for this inconsistency and inflexibility.

Not only is this confusing, but the repealed consultation provisions are unnecessary. Section 17 of the Legislative Instruments Act 2003 requires a rule-maker to be satisfied that appropriate and reasonably practicable consultation has been undertaken prior to making a legislative instrument.

Users of Commonwealth legislation should not have to sift through outdated, unnecessary regulations to determine whether they still apply.

The omnibus bill will also repeal a number of spent acts, such as the Statistical Bureau (Tasmania) Act 1924. The act approved an agreement between the Commonwealth and Tasmania to integrate the statistical office of Tasmania into the Commonwealth, and for the Commonwealth to compile and issue statistics specifically for Tasmania.

Integration of statistical functions is complete and these statistical services compiled by the Commonwealth are now obsolete. The act has served its purpose and can be repealed.
Similarly, the Papua and New Guinea Loan (International Bank) Act 1970 is redundant. The act related to a Commonwealth guarantee on a loan made to Papua New Guinea by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development in 1973. The bank has confirmed that the loan has been repaid in full and hence the act can be repealed.

Allowing spent and redundant acts or provisions to remain in force on the Commonwealth's statute book does not serve any purpose. It only makes it harder for businesses, community organisations, families and individuals to find out about the regulations that matter to them.

To date and subject to the passage of legislation through parliament, in total this government has taken decisions to repeal over 10,000 legislative instruments and around 3,600 acts of parliament.

Through the omnibus bill, the AAR and the SLR bills, this government is continuing to demonstrate its commitment to make steady and consistent progress to reduce red tape.

Proper housekeeping is part of every government's responsibility to ensure that the rules the parliament agreed to in the past continue to remain 'fit for purpose'. I call on both Houses to show bipartisan support for the omnibus bill and its non-controversial measures. This will clear up the Commonwealth's statute book and remove the redundant and unnecessary legislation that have outlived their purpose.

I thank the Office of Parliamentary Counsel and others for the significant time and effort that went into preparing this important omnibus bill.

With this, I commend the Omnibus Repeal Day (Spring 2015) Bill 2015 to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Amending Acts 1990 to 1999 Repeal Bill 2015

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Dr Hendy.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Dr HENDY (Eden-Monaro—Assistant Minister for Productivity) (09:50): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.


This bill continues the government's efforts to streamline the statute book by removing 877 amending or repealing acts enacted between 1990 and 1999. This is the fourth in a series of amending acts repeal bills introduced by the government. Together, these four repeal bills will repeal over 3,500 amending acts made between 1901 and 1999.

The bill repeals each act mentioned in its schedule. The repeal of these acts will not alter existing arrangements or make any substantive change to the law. They are no longer required as the amendments and repeals that they provide for have already occurred.

At present, the acts proposed to be repealed by this bill are part of current law. Examined out of context, it may not be clear whether they have continuing effect beyond the amendments that they made.
Their repeal will make the statute book easier and more efficient to use.

If an application, saving or transitional provision is included in one of these acts, any ongoing operation of the provision will be preserved. The acts do not contain any other substantive provisions with ongoing effect.

People with a specific interest in the text of these spent acts will still be able to access them on ComLaw, but they will be clearly marked as 'repealed'.

Debate adjourned.

Statute Law Revision Bill (No. 3) 2015

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Dr Hendy.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Dr HENDY (Eden-Monaro—Assistant Minister for Productivity) (09:52): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Statute Law Revision Bill (No. 3) 2015 is part of the government's 2015 Spring Repeal Day package.

The bill is part of ongoing efforts to repeal spent or redundant legislation and correct minor errors in Commonwealth laws. The bill improves the clarity and accuracy of the acts it amends without making substantive changes to the law. These many small changes contribute to reducing the burden of regulatory compliance for individuals, community organisations and businesses.

Schedules 1 and 2 to the bill correct technical errors and incorrect cross-references, remove redundant text and renumber text within principal and amending acts.

Correcting these legislative provisions helps to make the law easier to understand and use.

Schedule 3 to the bill amends the Child Support (Registration and Collection) Act 1988, continuing the work of the previous Statute Law Revision Bill. The amendment makes clear that the Crown in right of the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory is bound by the act in question. It also modernises the drafting of the associated provision about the Crown's liability to be prosecuted for an offence.

This change clarifies the intended operation of Commonwealth legislation.

Schedule 4 to the bill modernises language used in offence provisions, while schedule 5 updates indexation provisions to match the current terminology preferences of the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Schedule 6 of the bill repeals spent or obsolete provisions. For example, a provision of the Do Not Call Register Act 2006 required a review to be conducted and the resulting report to be tabled in parliament. The review concluded in May 2010 and the report was tabled in September 2010. The provision is therefore redundant and can be repealed.

These ongoing corrections and improvements to legislation are important to ensure that the Commonwealth statute book remains up to date, accurate and user-friendly.

Debate adjourned.
Export Control Amendment (Quotas) Bill 2015

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Dr Hendy.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Dr HENDY (Eden-Monaro—Assistant Minister for Productivity) (09:55): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Where export tariff rate quotas are established by trade agreements Australia seeks to manage the quotas in order to offer exporters the maximum concessions possible on agricultural products.

Australia currently administers 33 quotas that save exporters millions of dollars in tariffs each year.

For example, the eight new quotas introduced under the Japan-Australia Economic Partnership Agreement saved exporters approximately $3 million in tariffs between January and May 2015.

Current arrangements provide for quota to be managed under four separate acts.

Consultation with industry has determined that a comprehensive quota regime is preferred to the current arrangements.

Today the government brings forward the Export Control Amendment (Quotas) Bill so that all quota export certification arrangements for agriculture can be carried out under a common set of powers.

This would be achieved by abolishing one act in its entirety, parts or divisions of two other acts and consolidating provisions within the Export Control Act 1982.

This bill proposes amendments that would provide the secretary with powers to make orders providing for, or in relation to, the establishment and administration of a system or systems of tariff rate quotas.

Orders are proposed to be made to cover goods currently subject to quota regulation but could cover any other goods that quotas may apply to in the future.

The bill will provide the ability for the secretary to make directions in relation to matters covered by an order.

The proposed amendments will also enable the directions to override the order. These powers are similar to powers regulating existing meat quotas under the Australian Meat and Live-stock Industry Act 1997.

This bill would also introduce new powers consistent with contemporary, flexible and efficient legislation. These include the use of registers and computer systems to make decisions in relation to tariff rate quotas.

The bill facilitates a reduction in red tape in accordance with the government’s election commitments.

Bringing regulation of quotas under the same legislation as other export controls of the same commodities will offer opportunities for synergies in deployment of resources.
It will also enable a consistent approach to appointment of third parties as authorised officers where they are permitted by importing countries.

The bill will commence on royal assent except for repeals of existing regulation of quotas. This allows for all existing quotas to run their course under current legislative arrangements before being phased out and orders under the new powers to commence. The existing legislation governing quotas is repealed later on 1 January 2017.

The bill complements the government's strategic approach for capturing premium markets outlined in the Agricultural competitiveness white paper and builds on the gains from recent free trade agreements with our major trading partners.

Debate adjourned.

**Tax Laws Amendment (Gifts) Bill 2015**

**First Reading**

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Hawke.

Bill read a first time.

**Second Reading**

Mr HAWKE (Mitchell—Assistant Minister to the Treasurer) (09:59): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill amends Division 30 of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997* to add two entities as deductible gift recipient specific listings from 1 January 2015: National Apology Foundation Ltd and International Jewish Relief Limited.

The National Apology Foundation Ltd will endeavour to sustain the spirit and the substance of the National Apology to Indigenous Australians to future generations of Australians.

The International Jewish Relief Limited helps impoverished and struggling Jews, and strengthening Jewish response to worldwide humanitarian crises and disasters to communities regardless of religion and geography.

By obtaining deductible gift recipient status, these entities will be able to attract additional public financial support for their activities, as taxpayers can claim an income tax deduction for certain gifts to deductible gift recipients.

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

Debate adjourned.

**COMMITTEES**

**Publications Committee Report**

Mr COULTON (Parkes—The Nationals Chief Whip) (10:01): I present the report from the Publications Committee sitting in conference with the Publications Committee of the Senate. Copies of the report have been placed on the table.

Report—by leave—agreed to.
BILLS

Australian Citizenship Amendment (Allegiance to Australia) Bill 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed on the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr MARLES (Corio) (10:02): I rise to speak in support of the Australian Citizenship Amendment (Allegiance to Australia) Bill 2015 and I do so on the basis of also indicating support for the amendments to this bill, which were made public yesterday by the government and were the consequence of an agreed set of recommendations from the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security. Together these represent the package which is being put before the parliament today and, as I say, we indicate support for that.

Citizenship of our country is as an important incident of a legislative act as has occurred in this place since Federation. It is the basic building block of our society. It sets out critically the rights that all of us have as inhabitants of this country and members of this society. Equally, it establishes obligations that we have to each other as members of this country, as citizens of Australia. So when we talk about questions of citizenship and look at amending this act in particular, we are dealing with deeply serious matters, which, by definition, go to the very core of what it is to be an Australian.

The idea of potentially stripping dual citizens who engage in some form of terrorist related activity was in fact one raised by the government as early as January of last year, 2014. It is an idea which has been in the public domain in Australia for some time. It was re-enlivened as a discussion this year—and I note the member for Bass is present and he wrote an article, I think, on 16 February this year articulating, again, a view that persons, who engage in terrorist related activity who are dual citizens, ought to be subject to having their Australian citizenship stripped.

Again, this is a debate which has continued from that moment. It is a debate which has concerned at times the opposition. I think it is a debate which has been difficult. It is a debate which many in Australia have found uncomfortable. But it is a debate, nevertheless, that is important to have. Because it is a debate, on the one hand, that deals with legitimate national security issues, which are about supporting a principle that has in fact been in the Australian Citizenship Act from the very time it was introduced into this parliament in 1948—that is, that a person who takes up arms against Australia in the army of another nation, who is a dual citizen, automatically loses their Australian citizenship. That has been on the statute books in this country since 1948.

We made clear from the point of view of the opposition at the very outset that we were prepared to have a sensible updating of that principle, noting that the kinds of conflicts in which we find Australia engaged today are not necessarily the traditional state-on-state conflicts which defined the first half of the 20th century. When you are looking at terrorist organisations and entities like ISIS, applying that principle in a modern context does require some consideration of amending the Citizenship Act, and we were prepared to do that.

On the other hand, we were concerned that, in a country which has the second highest proportion of its population born outside of its borders of any country in the world today—in other words, a country which has a huge component of its population who are dual citizens or
at least are capable of being dual citizens—it is absolutely critical that we do not walk down a path where we suddenly say that there are two classes of Australian citizens. There are those who are single Australian citizens and those who are dual Australian citizens, and somehow there is a different set of criteria which applies to these different classes of Australian citizen. We can never be a party to that. The opposition will never be a party to that, and I think it is very important that this parliament never endorses any sentiment of that kind. I do not suggest that on the part of the government but I do note that there were many in various migrant communities who spoke to me about their concern that this debate raised that question, so we were very mindful that the way in which this debate be conducted and where it ultimately landed were done in a manner and ended in a result which did not see us unwittingly creating two classes of Australian citizens.

The bill we are currently debating was ultimately introduced into this parliament on 24 June. It was referred very quickly to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security as it should have been. This committee worked diligently through members of both the government and the opposition to look at the proposals that were being put forward and to see how they could be best managed to get the result that sought to address the genuine national security issues which were clearly at issue here. I commend the work of all of those on the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, because it was a fantastic piece of work that they undertook. Their report stands as a testament to the way in which people in this place across the political spectrum can work together to come up with a really good outcome. Their recommendations are the basis of the amendments which were circulated yesterday. They make this much better as a piece of legislation.

As part of my contribution today I want to deal with some of what the committee looked at. One of the first things that the committee considered was the question of the constitutionality of the bill. There were a number of eminent legal theorists and jurists in this country who gave evidence before the committee, raising serious concerns about the constitutionality of the legislation and particularly whether or not it offended in some legal form the separation of powers as they are set out in the Constitution. It has to be said that a number of the opposition members on the committee shared the concerns that were being raised by a number of those who put forward those submissions, and indeed a discussion of that can be found from paragraphs 3.37 to 3.43 of the PJCIS report. I think that is an important statement around this question.

At the heart of the proposition that what we are dealing with today is constitutional, the government assured us, was advice from the Solicitor-General indicating that this was indeed a constitutional form of legislative enactment. The opposition members of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security asked to see that report—not an unreasonable request in circumstances where there had been the issues raised by those giving evidence before the committee. Sadly and regrettably from our point of view, the government was not prepared to release the Solicitor-General's advice. I think that is regrettable. That said, the government did provide, by way of a letter dated 27 August 2015 from the Attorney-General to the shadow Attorney-General which is referred to in the report, an assurance that from the government's point of view the legislation that is before us today is constitutional and that that was the effect of the advice provided to the government by the Solicitor-General.
Here is where that leaves the opposition. This is at the end of the day the government's legislation. It is for the government to establish the constitutionality of any piece of legislation it puts before this parliament. It has, by way of that letter on 27 August this year, assured the opposition and, through the committee, the Australian people that what it has put before this parliament is constitutional. The question of constitutionality lies with the government, and ultimately it will be for the government to bear the responsibility of that. On that basis we are prepared to move forward in dealing with this legislation.

The committee also came up with 26 substantive recommendations providing for amendments in respect of the legislation. As I said at the outset, they, together with the initial bill, form the package that we are dealing with today. In essence, this package provides for the stripping of citizenship from dual nationals who engage in terrorist related activities in three different circumstances. For the benefit of those listening: the reason this is focused on dual nationals relates to Australia's commitment not to render people stateless. There is a requirement that somebody be a dual national; otherwise, the stripping of a sole national would render somebody stateless, which would be contrary to Australia's international obligations.

There are three circumstances in which this may occur. Firstly, by way of conduct, where a dual citizen, by virtue of the conduct they have taken, has engaged in a way which is inconsistent with their allegiance to Australia. The phrase 'conduct which is inconsistent' is one that was examined very closely by the joint committee. This idea of engaging in a form of conduct, obviously terrorist related conduct, which is inconsistent with someone's allegiance to Australia automatically giving rise to loss of their citizenship is clearly a significant step to take. But that was the first mechanism by which this package sought to remove someone's citizenship—I will come back to the way in which that has been dealt with by the committee in terms of a number of the recommendations associated with that.

Secondly, where a person has engaged in the service of or has been fighting with a declared terrorist organisation. There is a provision for the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection to declare a subset of the already declared terrorist organisations to be the relevant organisations for the purposes of this bill. In a sense, this is the most obvious updating of the legislation from the original intent in 1948. Whereas that was about fighting in the service of an army of a foreign country fighting against Australia, this is engaging in the service of or fighting with a terrorist organisation which has been declared for the purposes of the legislation. An act of that kind would result in you automatically losing your citizenship. Thirdly, if you have actually been convicted of a terrorist related offence, and those offences are prescribed in the legislation, then you would lose your citizenship. So the circumstances are: losing it by engaging in terrorist related conduct, losing it by virtue of fighting with a registered terrorist organisation or losing it because you have actually been convicted of a terrorist related offence. That is the basic architecture of the legislation which is before us today.

At its broadest, that of course had the potential to apply to an enormous number of Australians. At its broadest, if we were talking about a situation where anyone who had the potential to be a dual citizen could, at the discretion of the minister, be stripped of their citizenship if they were engaged in terrorist related conduct, it is potentially something that could have applied to millions of Australians, and we had concerns about that. Indeed, many
of the committee's members had concerns about that, and that was the question that was dealt with at some length by the parliamentary joint committee—in a sense, to nail this down and to have greater focus in relation to the package before us. That focus has now been achieved by the amendments that were announced yesterday, and I want to go through them.

There were a number of amendments that were introduced yesterday. I will not go through all of them but I will go through a number of them. The provisions relating to those convicted of a terrorist related offence have now been amended such that the list of offences to which this section relates has been reduced. For example, an offence relating to the destruction of Commonwealth property, which was in the original bill, is no longer included in the offence. The provisions in the bill relating to conduct inconsistent with the allegiance to Australia have also been amended such that they now apply to dual citizens who have engaged in the conduct offshore only or who have engaged in conduct onshore and have subsequently left Australia. This is a very important measure in reducing the scope of this package. The provisions in relation to losing or having your citizenship stripped by engaging in terrorist related conduct can only occur in respect of conduct which has occurred offshore or where someone has engaged in conduct onshore and then fled the country. In that sense, we are not talking about this having application literally to the millions of Australians who are dual citizens or who may have access to dual citizenship. We are talking very specifically about people who are offshore engaging in those activities or people who have fled. That alone reduces the potential application of this bill from millions literally down to dozens, and it focuses the bill and this legislative package very directly on the issue that it is seeking to deal with.

The bill outlines a set of criteria now for the minister to consider before declaring a terrorist organisation for the purposes of the act. The declaration of terrorist organisations will also be a disallowable instrument, meaning the parliament has greater oversight in respect of that process. The term 'in the service of' as it relates to serving with a terrorist organisation has been clarified for the purposes of section 35. This amendment now ensures it is clear that acts done under duress or unintentionally—for example, a parent covering the living expenses of a radicalised teenager—would not be covered by the act. All provisions will only apply in the event that the minister receives an adverse security assessment in relation to the dual citizen.

The minister will now be required to provide or make reasonable attempts to provide the dual citizen with notice of the revocation unless the notification would compromise ongoing operations or national security. The decision not to provide notice must be reviewed every six months thereafter. Importantly, under this revised bill revocation of a person's citizenship will not affect the citizenship of other family members, including children. Based on the committee's recommendation, the bill now has much more limited retrospectivity than it originally had when put before the parliament.

Those dual citizens who have been convicted of a serious terrorism offence within the past 10 years and who were sentenced by a judge to a minimum of 10 years in prison for that offence may have their citizenship revoked under the new laws. As a result of amendments recommended by the committee, revocation of citizenship in these limited circumstances will be subject to the minister's discretion, having regard to a number of criteria including current security threats. The government will be required to publicly report every six months on the number of times the changes have been applied and to provide a brief statement on the reasons they have been applied. Finally, and really critically, a person affected by any of these
changes will have the right to appeal the loss or revocation of their citizenship to the Federal Court.

All of that represents a significant narrowing of the package that we have before this parliament in limiting ministerial discretion and now allowing review and appeal rights to those affected by decisions under this legislation. This is a far better package. This has considerably reduced the degree of retrospectivity associated with this package. As I said, perhaps most significantly, the overall scope of the number of Australians that this can be applied to literally has shrunk from millions down to dozens. But it is important, in saying that, that this legislation now exists, because we have struck the balance between two really important concerns which are at tension with each other. I think what we now have before the parliament can in no way suggest that there is a piece of legislation which creates two classes of Australian citizens—there is no way at all given the very narrow focus of the bill before us.

But, equally, it is important to acknowledge this fact: we saw Australian citizens participate in fighting in Afghanistan. A number returned to Australia who had had significant experiences in that conflict and we would want, for the sake of the security of the Australian public, to be very concerned about their activities. There are more people that we know of, Australian citizens, who are today fighting in Iraq or in Syria against Australian forces and we are going to have to engage in one form or another with that population of Australians when this conflict is over be they in this country or be they staying overseas. This is not the way in which we deal with every one of them but it does represent a very important tool available to our national security agencies in order to deal with those who have been radicalised in that process and those who may well present a significant danger to the Australian public. So it is a very important legislative reform that we have before the parliament today so that we can put the safety of Australian citizens as being paramount and this legislation does that. And I think it does that in a way which does not have any of the adverse effects that many legitimately were concerned about. But I think the work that has been done by the committee and the amendments that form part of this package have struck that balance correctly, which is why we now support this legislation.

Finally, I must say something about what has occurred in the last 48 hours because there has been some media speculation about how this bill has progressed to the parliament. I say it with regret actually but I say it because I think it is important that we get the record straight. As I understand it, this went before the government party room on Tuesday. From the point of the view of the opposition, we were provided with copies of the actual amendments—13 pages of amendments—which give expression to the 26 recommendations of the committee at about a quarter past two on Tuesday. That was done through my office and those amendments were provided to us on an embargo basis, meaning we could not share them beyond our office, and obviously that limited the ability for this to be considered by the opposition. We had a briefing from the government at four o'clock on that day—and when I say 'we' I mean I had a briefing. I asked for the shadow attorney-general to be present, clearly because he had been leading the opposition's efforts as a member of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security and in giving legislative expression to arrangements which he had as big a hand in securing as any person. It made sense that he was there but it was indicated to us that he would not be welcome at that briefing.
Of the 26 recommendations, in the 35- to 40-minute briefing I received, we were able to work through 12 of them and how they had been translated into legislative form. At that point, we were then told that this was going to be put in the parliament, nevertheless, for debate yesterday morning. That ultimately would have been a very regrettable step, to have required the opposition to walk down the path of dealing with this in circumstances where we had not had time to go through what were considerable amendments to an arrangement which was the basis of the consensus between the government and the opposition.

There was a press release that was issued by the government on Tuesday night that came out at about 7:30, which had in it a table which correlated the recommendations of the committee with the various provisions of the amendments—that was a sensible table to put forward. What it made clear was that the exercise of writing these amendments was absolutely one of translating the recommendations into legislative form and that was the exercise that we were seeking to work through. Finally, we indicated that we could circulate those amendments yesterday morning and they became public then. What we were asking through all of this was simply to have the time necessary to have the proper briefing so that we could—

Mr Nikolic interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Goodenough): Order! The member for Bass.

Mr MARLES: What we were seeking was the necessary time to assure ourselves that the amendments that we did not see for the first time until 20 past two on Tuesday that they were able to be properly debated on the Wednesday morning.

Mr Nikolic interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member will be heard in silence.

Mr MARLES: I make this point: this is an issue which has been in the public domain since January 2014. The member for Bass, who is busy interjecting, wrote his article in February of this year. For want of 24 hours to give the opposition to give the proper time to scrutinise these amendments, games were being played such as to put this into the parliament and to deny us that opportunity. Now all of that echoes silly behaviour which seeks to make political gain out of matters of national security. And when one party seeks to make political gain out of national security—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Nikolic: I rise on a point of order. Will the honourable member accept an intervention under standing order 66A?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Corio has the call. Please proceed.

Mr MARLES: National security is not a matter which is owned by either party. National security is something which is owned by the vast majority of this parliament across the political spectrum. The vast majority of members of the Labor Party and conservative parties, evidently, have enormous concern for the security of our fellow Australian citizens. It was a Labor Prime Minister who created Australia's navy. Labor Prime Ministers were in power at the critical moments of both the First World War and the Second World War. It was a Labor Prime Minister who established ASIO. Labor has as strong a history in relation to national security as any party that has served in this parliament. But when we see one party
consistently trying to use national security as a means by which it gets political advancement—and that is what we have witnessed over the last 48 hours—that belittles the significance of Australia's national security and seeks to make partisan an area of policy which is simply not.

What we have seen in the way this opposition has acted—be it in respect of metadata, be it in respect of this issue in relation to stripping dual citizens, be it in respect of Australia's engagement in armed conflict overseas, be it in respect of strengthening the character test—is an opposition which has been absolutely willing to work through, in a bipartisan and a constructive manner, national security issues to reach a very sensible conclusion. But all we have asked along the way is what the Australian people would expect of us along the way—that is, that we use our wit and our intellect, and we review everything that is put before us thoroughly. That is all that we sought to do in the last 48 hours by seeking a day in which we could examine amendments against the backdrop where this has been in the political domain since January of 2014.

The government really does need to think very carefully about the way in which it handles these matters. This has been, in many respects, an exemplary process, one which has led to a very sensible set of amendments and a legislative package which creates the balance between dealing with a very legitimate issue of national security, whilst making sure that there are not a whole lot of other adverse consequences which people legitimately have concerns about as well. And we got there. We got there by working through on this in a constructive and bipartisan manner.

But it behoves all of us, in this place, to ensure that the way in which we engage, when it comes to national security, is not to seek to make this an issue which belongs to one party rather than to the other. And because that has not occurred in respect of this legislative package, I am pleased to say that the opposition supports it.

Debate adjourned.

COMMITTEES

National Disability Insurance Scheme

Report

Mr BILLSON (Dunkley) (10:33): On behalf of the Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme, I present the committee's progress report on the implementation and administration of the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

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

Mr BILLSON: by leave—It is an honour to be representing the Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS in presenting my first report as the committee's chair. I want to thank the outgoing chair, Mal Brough, for his careful stewardship of the committee and his involvement, along with all of the committee members—a bipartisan, multiparty effort, I should say—to gather evidence from the field and to convey our learnings in this report. I particularly want to acknowledge Jenny Macklin, the mother of the NDIS, for her wisdom and wise counsel and full engagement in this discussion, and also commend the committee secretariat, led by Mark Fitt, a dedicated, hardworking team for their ongoing efforts and contribution.
This report deals with one of the most significant social reforms for a generation. Just as the Snowy Mountains scheme was an extraordinary, complex and nation-changing venture for its generation, the NDIS is a crucial and transformational endeavour of profound importance for our time. The National Disability Insurance Scheme's purpose is to help and support more than 460,000 Australians with disability to live meaningful, fulfilling and independent lives. It is about removing barriers that impede clients achieving their goals and their aspirations.

The way the NDIS seeks to do this is by taking a whole-of-life approach to disability care and support. Importantly, it also seeks to make the lives of carers easier, by recognising their selfless commitment to the wellbeing of their loved ones and by aiming to ensure necessary support is available and can be counted on, drawing from a suite of service options and providers; through a client-centred and client-led care-planning model that offers choice in the support options available and the providers to deliver that; and, linkages to enable an informed assessment of what is reasonable and necessary support to facilitate the enablers of the kind of life that we all, as humans, hope for; to be able to enjoy and sustain positive relationships, a sense of belonging, individual autonomy, active involvement in decision-making, active engagement in our community, using one's unique strengths in ways that provide a challenge and making a contribution.

These are the drivers of the vision of the NDIS. It is the quintessential embodiment of a new kind of human service and support delivery system, envisaged by the Harper review as the way forward to empower, to delight and to best meet the needs of clients and their aspirations, and also to enable and embed quality, innovation, efficiency, responsiveness, as the drivers of success for service providers and to underwrite ongoing excellence.

Our role, as a committee, is to oversee the implementation of the scheme to ensure that it has the best chance of success.

The report we are tabling today looks at the learnings from the early rollout of the scheme and outlines the committee's future work priorities and recommendations. The report draws on government's and agency's actions following last year's report; progress at the original four trial sites that began in July 2013; the three new trial sites that commenced on 1 July 2014; some specific challenges that are facing participants and issues that arise from the providers' perspective as well; and also systemic issues and what we need to learn from and embrace to ensure future success. Trial visits have been part of the committee's work, as have public hearings, many submissions and pieces of correspondence to the committee.

The good news is that the report has identified that the NDIS is working and changing people's lives for the better. The feedback and performance indicators include very encouraging satisfaction ratings and highlight how welcome, valued and transformational the NDIS is proving to be for participants and carers.

But it has also identified a number of challenges that still face the scheme that need to be addressed and to be drawn from as insights as the rollout continues. We will need a conciliatory and coordinated effort between federal and state governments and with the board, the agency itself, service providers, advocates and key peak organisations, including hearing from and embracing the insights from those the scheme is designed to assist. This will involve ongoing, steady consideration and ongoing attention.
I will not go through a full, comprehensive list, but a couple of things that have emerged are the transition of people from state support to the NDIS, an area that requires ongoing attention; the development and readiness of service providers to support the pace of the scheme's rollout; the capacity of the disability sector workforce to support the pace of the scheme's rollout; the interface of the NDIS with mainstream services; issues around housing and accommodation and how to make sure that is available; resolving transport issues; and also assisting Indigenous people and people generally living in more remote and rural areas to make sure that the full benefits of the scheme are enjoyed.

There are also issues about the linkage to mainstream services and the tier 2 supports that are quite pressing. Finalisation of this, we think, should be a matter of some urgency, as we encourage all states to sign on through bilateral agreements. The committee welcomed New South Wales and Victoria having agreed to new bilateral plans for the transition period to the full scheme, and we encourage the other states and territories to engage and finalise their agreements as quickly as possible.

There is a clear message, though, in the report that, even where challenges exist in areas of limited choice and delivery to thin markets, if you will, particularly in remote and rural areas, the committee rejects any notion of simply transferring bulk funding to states and territories to beef up government controlled 'business as usual' service response as some kind of default option. We reject that, and we urge the states and territories to recognise that clear message from the report.

As I am someone who is new to the committee but has always been interested in and invested in this cause, three key things have emerged for me as I have worked through the report and listened carefully to committee members and the broader community. How do we ensure that we have informed, knowledgeable and competent participants able to fully engage in navigating the opportunities, choices and ambitions enabled by the NDIS? There are many moving parts, and for some this can be quite overwhelming. Making sure that that can be handled and navigated well is a key issue.

What is the best response where choice of support and providers is far from abundant to ensure that the scheme's objectives can still be achieved for participants in these communities?

And, as the scheme rollout continues, how will we ensure that commensurate capacity is built and sustained, in terms of participant know-how; new provider formation; the existing provider adaptation and transition to the new funding and delivery paradigm; the agency's leadership, its management systems, quality assurance and the like; and the workforce supply and capacity? These are all key issues that we think need ongoing attention.

Just in conclusion: the message from the report is that we have cause to be optimistic. There are many, many good things happening with the rollout of the NDIS. It also makes a clear statement through its dozen recommendations: the increased rollout is not something that will be achieved well on autopilot. This is not a set-and-forget enterprise. It is going to require the best of all of us and of all the governments at whatever level that are involved, the agencies, the industry itself, the advocates, the participants and above all the clients that we seek to delight.
I commend this report and reassure those with a great interest that we have more work to do. In the coming year we will focus on accommodation, mental health, Indigenous issues and workforce capability. There is much to do. The committee is energised. We are focused on our important work. I commend this report to the parliament.

Ms MACKLIN (Jagajaga) (10:42): by leave—I thank the member for Dunkley, and I congratulate him on his appointment as the new Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme. As I am sure he knows, it is an important job. We look forward to his energy and enthusiasm, which he will no doubt bring to this new role. I want to acknowledge the work of the former committee chair, the member for Fisher, and congratulate him on his promotion to the ministry. I thank all of our other colleagues on the committee and the staff of the committee for their hard work in preparing this report.

As the member for Dunkley has said, the findings of the report are very encouraging. It is a very exciting time for people with disability, their families and carers. The trials, now in eight locations, are progressing well. Around 20,000 Australians have been found eligible for support, and 18,000 have had their individualised plans already approved. Satisfaction rates are high, and costs are generally below the target prices. In short, the National Disability Insurance Scheme is doing exactly what it was designed to do. The NDIS is changing lives.

For this report, the committee visited the new trial sites here in the ACT; in Tennant Creek, in the Northern Territory; and the two trial sites in Western Australia. We got to hear directly from people with disability who are now taking part in the scheme and to see what the NDIS is meaning for them. Of course, all of us were very moved by the stories that we heard—stories of new hope, of new opportunities.

I do acknowledge that these stories held a special pleasure for me. As the member for Dunkley has acknowledged, I was the Minister for Disability Reform when the NDIS was designed and implemented. Throughout my time as minister I did hear many thousands of personal stories; all of them were inspiring but, I am sorry to say, few at that time were positive. They were stories of people with disability, their families and carers who were very tired and, often, very fed up—fed up with trying to work with a system that would not work for them. There were stories of adults who had wheelchairs that they had outgrown; of young children who were not getting the early intervention that is so vital to their development; of parents and carers who could not remember the last time they had a break; and of parents, of course, who have just been worried sick about what would happen to their adult sons and daughters when they were no longer around.

In the time since the NDIS started from a good idea then to government policy and to a reality we have seen all of this start to change. Two years ago I was in Newcastle to celebrate the launch of the National Disability Insurance Scheme. We returned to Newcastle in August this year, and I met two young women, Peta Lambert and Natalie Howland—two young women whose lives have been dramatically changed.

Before the NDIS came to Newcastle, Nat was living at home with her mum and Peta was living in a group home. Like all young women, they of course wanted to move out and live independently. Now, that is exactly what they are doing—living in their own home, that they own and share together, in Newcastle, and all because of the National Disability Insurance Scheme.
It was a Labor government that did this, that made the National Disability Insurance Scheme real. But I want to acknowledge that the great news in the last month or so is the signing of the bilateral agreements between the Commonwealth government and New South Wales and Victoria. As the report indicates, we are concerned that other jurisdictions have now missed the deadlines that were set by both levels of government for the bilateral agreements to be signed. This is a very serious concern for the committee, but most of all a very serious concern for people with disability and for carers. We must see the National Disability Insurance Scheme rolled out on time. There cannot be any delay, there cannot be any 'go slow' and we do not want to hear any excuses for failure by any level of government.

So I want to encourage this government here in Canberra to get on with the signing of the bilateral agreements in Tasmania, South Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory as quickly as possible, and to work with the Western Australian government to determine the future of disability services in that state. We must deliver the National Disability Insurance Scheme on time. Hundreds of thousands of Australians depend on each of us to make sure that happens.

Communications and the Arts Committee

Membership

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Mitchell) (10:48): Mr Speaker has received advice from the Chief Government Whip nominating a member to become a member of the Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts.

Ms O’Dwyer (Higgins—Minister for Small Business and Assistant Treasurer) (10:48): by leave—I move:

That Mr Ramsey be appointed a member of the Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts.

Question agreed to.

BILLS

Foreign Acquisitions and Takeovers Fees Imposition Bill 2015
Register of Foreign Ownership of Agricultural Land Bill 2015
Returned from Senate

Australian Citizenship Amendment (Allegiance to Australia) Bill 2015
Second Reading

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

Mr Nikolic (Bass) (10:49): As a member of parliament's Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, it gives me great pleasure to speak in support of the Australian Citizenship Amendment (Allegiance to Australia) Bill 2015. It is a particularly welcome opportunity, because migration and citizenship are at the heart of my personal story.

In early 1965 my parents and I migrated from the former Yugoslavia. Like most migrant families, we had our highs and lows, but it is undeniable that everything I have achieved as a member of this great country started since arriving in Australia and from receiving the great
gift of citizenship. That is why in my first speech in this parliament, on 13 November 2013, I said that nurturing a stronger sense of community and citizenship was at the forefront of my priorities as a politician. So I share the disappointment of most Australians when some amongst us betray that gift in the worst possible way, by engaging in terrorism-related conduct.

This bill addresses that conduct. It allows us to revoke the citizenship of dual nationals who by their demonstrated and unlawful conduct breach their allegiance to Australia, its laws, its democratic beliefs and its collective values. Foremost amongst our values are Australians' collective notions of decency, tolerance and 'a fair go'. You do not often hear Australians speak openly about values. Rather, they lend their tacit support to them by living them practically—and they reasonably expect others to do the same. And, just as importantly, they know innately that such values lie at the very heart of what makes this nation what it is, and why it works so well.

The new powers in this bill are a necessary and appropriate response to resurgent terrorism. By enacting this bill, we make a significant contribution to the security of all law-abiding citizens.

Four key threads are at the heart of this bill and its provisions, and they are, first, that Australian citizenship is a gift; second, that citizenship is part of a societal compact; third, that this bill represents best consultative policy; and, fourth, that this bill aligns with global, regional and domestic security imperatives. I will address each of these briefly.

There is no doubt that Australian citizenship is a gift. A simple audit of the problems that beset many other parts of the world provides eloquent testament to citizenship as a gift—what Abraham Lincoln might have described as 'a self-evident truth'. The ingredients comprising this gift can also be partly quantified. One way of doing so might be to ask those in the gallery or those listening to this broadcast to consider the five 'crown jewels' of citizenship.

The first is a truly free and functioning democracy which, while invariably strongly and passionately contested, is contested with ideas and words and not with guns and bombs. Indeed, the only odd angry shots you hear fired in the exercise of our democracy are verbal in nature—mostly fired on this hill, in state parliaments and in council chambers around the country.

Secondly, Australia possesses immense wealth born of diverse natural resources—mineral, agricultural and environmental. Australia has been blessed in numerous mining booms; equally it possesses extraordinary reserves of energy.

Third, Australia enjoys a functioning system of taxation and applies the proceeds for the wider collective good. Moreover, the vast majority of Australians understand the necessity of paying their fair share of tax as the price of a civilized and functioning community and country.

Fourth, Australia enjoys government-provided systems of health and education, without which national wellbeing would wither.

Fifth, Australia has a generous welfare safety net for both the unemployed and the elderly.

Out of this strategic audit, a key point flows. Each of the individual and collective entitlements that I have just mentioned comes automatically with being an Australian citizen, regardless of how that status is attained. In much of the rest of the world, such rights and
automatic entitlements are either non-existent, illusory or out of reach. And the sum of such entitlements is opportunity. Australian citizens are blessed with opportunity like nowhere else in the world. The fact that I was born into village life in Yugoslavia and now stand in this parliament representing the people of Bass bears testimony to the value of this gift. And, when you add your own personal motivation, focus, loyalty and effort, anything is possible.

But those like me who are blessed with the opportunity to live, work and raise a family in this great country must acknowledge the reciprocal and individual obligations that accompany this gift, the most important of which is to live a life that is at the very least lawful and is ideally one of constructive contribution to our society. Doing so demonstrates a tangible allegiance to our nation and that for which it stands. This is collective opportunity, built on the recognition of individual responsibility.

The dual ideas of mutual obligation and a common, reciprocal bond are at the core of this bill and are reinforced by it. That is why this bill states:

… the Parliament recognises that Australian citizenship is a common bond, involving reciprocal rights and obligations, and that citizens may, through certain conduct incompatible with the shared values of the Australian community, demonstrate that they have severed that bond and repudiated their allegiance to Australia.

Together, the rights and obligations of citizenship comprise a moral and ethical compact of sorts between Australia and her citizens, including dual citizens. This bill now seeks to support the ethical and moral dimensions of this compact with a legal framework and formal administrative policy. It focuses on eight threats in particular:

(a) engaging in international terrorist activities using explosive or lethal devices;
(b) engaging in a terrorist act;
(c) providing or receiving training connected with preparation for, engagement in, or assistance in a terrorist act;
(d) directing the activities of a terrorist organisation;
(e) recruiting for a terrorist organisation;
(f) financing terrorism;
(g) financing a terrorist;
(h) engaging in foreign incursions and recruitment.

Irrespective of the geographic locality of any of these offences—whether they are in or outside Australia being immaterial—the loss of Australian citizenship for a dual national so convicted is automatic and irrevocable. It is worth noting that law has provided for the automatic loss of citizenship for someone who has served in the armed forces of a country at war with Australia since 1949. This updated legislation sends a deliberately strong signal to those dual nationals amongst us who seek to harm Australia and her interests. Because such loss is irrevocable, it is intended to make potential transgressors think carefully about the life-changing consequences both to them directly and to the families and friends they would leave behind and potentially never see again.

Therefore, by intention and design this policy is clear, firm and targeted. It is undoubtable that this bill also represents best consultative policy, because it has been through months of making and remaking, including via the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, of which I am a member. I would like to praise the consultative, thoughtful
consideration of this bill by the PJCIS, and I congratulate my friend the member for Wannon for his leadership as chair of our committee. I also thank the member for Holt and the other members opposite who are on that committee for their bipartisan support of our recommendations. I was pleased to see the Attorney-General and the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection confirm yesterday that the government would be implementing all 27 recommendations of our committee. As a consequence, what people have in this bill is wholly fitting for our nation's security requirements.

If the contents of this bill are seen as unique and perhaps still offensive to some, it is most likely because the circumstances that led to the need for it are themselves unique and offend our collective values. Indeed, until the relatively recent past, Australia stood alone amongst the inhabited continents of the world in never having suffered from a persistent internal national security threat. The same boast could not be made for Africa, Europe, Asia and both Americas. Yet again, this is a reason for every Australian to celebrate and embrace the rights of citizenship that have been gifted to them. It is worth reinforcing that, with its focus on protecting the law-abiding and innocent, this bill is prudent and pragmatic in nature specifically targeting resurgent terrorism, which threatens Australia and the world.

The Review of Australia's Counter-Terrorism Machinery found that the terrorist threat in Australia is rising; the number of Australians joining extremist groups overseas is increasing; the number of known sympathisers and supporters of extremists is increasing; and, the number of potential terrorists is rising.

Consider that our security agencies are currently managing over 400 high-priority counter-terrorism investigations. This represents a doubling since early 2014. Since September last year, when the national terrorism public alert level was raised to high, 26 people have been charged as a result of 10 counter-terrorism operations. That is more than one-third of all terrorism related charges since 2001.

Around 110 Australians are currently fighting or are engaged with terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq. And almost 200 people in Australia are enabling terrorism in the Syria-Iraq conflict through financing and recruitment or are seeking to travel there. Supporting and engaging in terrorist activities against Australia's interests is a clear breach of a person's commitment and allegiance to our country—a bond that should unite all citizens. So the new powers in this bill are a necessary, measured and appropriate response.

It is also worth noting that in previous generations Australia's geography afforded it a fortress-like protection from many remote international crises. As such, Australians often had the luxury of choosing whether or not to become involved, as opposed to circumstances beyond their control which compelled them to do so. In 2015, 'fortress Australia' is an increasingly redundant idea. Yes, we can and must devote ongoing effort, determination and professionalism to the protection of our nation's physical borders, but this physical imperative must also be complemented by other supporting steps like those enshrined in this bill.

One of the enduring paradoxes of the modern age is that, while individuals have never been more interconnected, there are some amongst us—indeed, in every nation—who have also never been more isolated from the mainstream. This paradox is unfolding everywhere and at multiple levels—within nations, within communities and even within families.
It is nearly impossible to quantify the number of families in Western nations who have been beset by surprise and grief at the departure of misled young people departing without notice to join terrorist groups, attracted through a combination of naivety, active and sinister misrepresentation, and cultural isolation. This dilemma continues with too many young people still potentially susceptible to the false allure of conversion to extremism in all its perversions.

In closing, let me to reiterate to the House that this bill is in keeping with collective and consultative policy-making at its very best. This is on four counts: it is policy that is practical; carefully targeted; arrived at only after extensive debate, public hearings and committee consideration; and which has, at its very core, the protection of law-abiding Australians. This includes our dual national communities, who are so widely admired for their diverse contributions to Australian national life and wellbeing and for their figurative enrichment of our unfolding national story. Through the collective and cooperative efforts of such communities, Australia has been made a significantly better country and one which will continue to make its place at the forefront of modern democratic nations poised to meet the evolving and emerging challenges of the 21st century.

It gives me very great pleasure to commend this bill and the recommendations of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Tax Laws Amendment (Combating Multinational Tax Avoidance) Bill 2015

Consideration of Senate Message

Bill returned from the Senate with amendments.
Ordered that the amendments be considered immediately.

Senate’s amendments

Tax Laws Amendment (Combating Multinational Tax Avoidance) Bill 2015

Senate Amendments—
(1) Page 2, clause 2 (table item 1), omit the table item, substitute:

1. Sections 1 to 3 and anything in this Act not elsewhere covered by this table 
   The day this Act receives the Royal Assent.
2. Schedules 1 to 4 
   The day after this Act receives the Royal Assent.
3. Schedule 5, Parts 1 and 2 
   The day the Tax and Superannuation Laws Amendment (Better Targeting the Income Tax Transparency Laws) Act 2015 receives the Royal Assent.
4. Schedule 5, Part 3 
   The day after this Act receives the Royal Assent.

(2) Schedule 1, page 7 (before line 10), before item 5, insert:

   4A After section 3C

   Insert:

   3D Reporting of information about significant global entities

   (1) This section applies to a corporate tax entity for an income year if the entity is a significant global entity (within the meaning of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997) for the income year.
(2) The entity must, as soon as practicable after the end of the income year, give the Commissioner a general purpose financial report for the income year.

(3) For the purposes of this section, a general purpose financial report must be prepared and audited in relation to the entity in accordance with:

(a) accounting principles and auditing principles; or

(b) if such principles do not apply—commercially accepted principles, relating to accounting and auditing, that ensure the statements give a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of that entity (or that entity and the other entities on a consolidated basis).

An expression used in this subsection that is also used in the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 has the same meaning as in that Act.

(4) The Commissioner must give a copy of the report to the Australian Securities and Investments Commission.

(3) Page 17 (after line 3), at the end of the bill, add:

Schedule 5—Reporting of information about corporate tax entities

Part 1—Repeal of Act

Tax and Superannuation Laws Amendment (Better Targeting the Income Tax Transparency Laws) Act 2015

1 The whole of the Act

   Repeal the Act.

Part 2—Application

2 Application

(1) This item applies if the Tax and Superannuation Laws Amendment (Better Targeting the Income Tax Transparency Laws) Act 2015 receives the Royal Assent before this Schedule commences.

(2) Despite section 7 of the Acts Interpretation Act 1901, the Taxation Administration Act 1953 as in force immediately before that Royal Assent continues to apply, by force of this item, as if the amendments made by the Tax and Superannuation Laws Amendment (Better Targeting the Income Tax Transparency Laws) Act 2015 had never been made.

Part 3—Reporting of information

Taxation Administration Act 1953

3 Subsection 3C(2)

Omit "The Commissioner", substitute "Subject to subsection (2A), the Commissioner".

4 After subsection 3C(2)

Insert:

(2A) If:

(a) an entity applies to the Commissioner in writing; and

(b) at the end of the income year the entity is an Australian resident that is a private company for the income year that neither:

(i) is a member of a wholly-owned group that has a foreign resident ultimate holding company; or

(ii) has a foreign shareholding percentage of 50% or greater; and

(c) the Commissioner is satisfied that to make the information publicly available may be significantly prejudicial to any of the entity’s current or future commercial negotiations;
the Commissioner may determine that subsection (2) does not apply in relation to the entity. An expression used in this subsection that is also used in the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997* has the same meaning as in that Act.

(2B) A determination under subsection (2A) is not a legislative instrument.

5 After subsection 3C(3)

Insert:

(3A) The Commissioner must ensure that the information made publicly available under subsection (2) includes:

(a) a statement to the effect that:

(i) the information may not reflect the full financial position of the entity; and

(ii) more comprehensive information may be available from the Australian Securities and Investments Commission; and

(b) the address for the part of the Australian Securities and Investments Commission’s website via which the information referred to in subparagraph (a)(ii) may be found.

6 Application of amendments

The amendments made by this Schedule apply in relation to an entity for the 2013-14 income year and each later income year unless the Commissioner has, before the commencement of this Schedule, made publicly available information about the entity for the income year under subsection 3C(2) of the *Taxation Administration Act 1953*.

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (11:05): I move:

That the amendments be disagreed to.

The government is acting to ensure multinational corporations pay their fair share of tax in Australia, where they earn that income, and we have put forward well-considered legislation that achieves this objective.

The opposition say that they like to support these goals, but yet when called upon to support this well-considered legislation, which is needed to ensure that multinational corporations pay their fair share of tax, the opposition chose to play politics and block this critical piece of the government's tax integrity plan last night with the amendments that have now come before the House. Not once between the former Treasurer introducing the Tax Law Amendment (Combating Multinational Tax Avoidance) Bill 2015, on 16 September 2015, and the Senate's decision yesterday did the opposition or crossbench raise with me as Treasurer—or with the former Treasurer—that they had any concern with this piece of legislation. Not once did Labor or the crossbench ask to meet with me to discuss this legislation.

Instead, after years of work—by the OECD; the Treasury; the Australian Taxation Office; the government—and after hundreds of meetings and discussions—consultation with stakeholders and experts considering all the requirements, consequences and implementation issues; a committee report from the Senate which included Senators Xenophon and Labor Senator Dastyari and which recommended the bill be passed, with no dissenting report—the Senate, on the run and at the last minute, has sought to dramatically amend this bill and to include a raft of peripheral additions. This is a very shabby and irresponsible way to deal with such a serious issue. This is a very shabby process that cannot be supported and should not be encouraged.
The opposition have failed to act in good faith and failed to be part of a sensible discussion and process on this issue. They have chosen cheap, opportunist politics over good policy process. This is the type of cynical, old politics that Australians are sick of. It is very disappointing. The government are setting a new tone in politics in this country. The opposition remain locked in the old politics of the past. The opposition are following a very similar path, as we know, when it comes to issues of changing the tax system. So haphazard was the way the proposed amendments came about that there were no less than six proposed amendments circulated.

This is not how you make policy; it is policy on the run. The government will not accept a cobbled together, last minute, back of the envelope amendment which seeks to re-write our tax integrity measure that has been drafted to be consistent with the G20 OECD BEPS program as part of a two-year process. What is more concerning is that the amendment which the Senate is asking this House to consider repeals another law, the better targeting income tax transparency measure, which the Senate passed a mere three weeks ago.

Suddenly, a number of senators admitted yesterday that they did not understand the bill when they voted on it—that is their right—and got it wrong and they wanted to vote it out. This type of flip-flopping may be acceptable to the authors and supporters of these amendments, but it is not how the Turnbull government does business and sets policy. The government will not support law made on a whim. These admissions by certain senators that they got it wrong a few weeks ago provide me with no confidence that these same senators are now able to make a clear decision on this incredibly important area of law.

But I finish on this point, Mr Acting Deputy Speaker Goodenough: the government will take the time to carefully consider the issues raised in these amendments, who might be affected, the potential unintended consequences and whether there is any real substance to what is being proposed by the Senate. I will consult with the Commissioner of Taxation next week and discuss with him these new obligations to be imposed, as proposed, on businesses and how they might in anyway assist to improve our taxation system, because, at the end of the day, that is what the government are interested in. I will consult with senators who are prepared to engage in good faith on this issue, and I am disappointed they failed to do this so far up until this point.

This government are interested in getting the policy right, not playing politics like the opposition have done. The government are not rejecting the consideration of the issues raised in these amendments, rather the appalling process that has produced these amendments, which give me no confidence as to their veracity and merit at this point. And that is why the government will not accept these proposed amendments and the appalling manner in which they have been put forward. What we are interested in doing is considering the issues raised, but we will not endorse this shabby process sponsored by the opposition.

Mr BOWEN (McMahon) (11:10): Of course the opposition will resist this move by the Treasurer. The Treasurer says we have seen a shabby process. That shabby process is called parliamentary debate and a vote of a chamber of parliament, the other place, and it is a vote the government lost. It happens from time to time. From time to time, governments lose votes. I know it does not happen in this place very often but it does happen in the other place, and the Treasurer has to get used to it. He lost a vote, get over it. Get over it. He lost the support of the crossbench. It happens. It is not a shabby process. It is called democracy. It happened to
us from time to time when we were in government. We had to deal with it. It is called losing a vote. I know the Treasurer is used to getting his own way in this House, I understand that, but in the other house you actually have to talk to people.

In the Senate, senators expressed a view which was in accord with that of the opposition, a consistent view that the opposition have had. The Treasurer says he is surprised at the Labor Party's point of view and he says we should have told him that we support tax transparency. Well, the Labor Party have been arguing that for months. And, yes, the Treasurer is right about one thing: he says the Labor Party lost a vote in the Senate a couple of weeks ago about tax transparency. Yes, that is correct. We understand that; we lost the vote. And last night, we won a vote on the same issue because the crossbench were persuaded by our arguments. What happened was—

Mr Morrison: So how will it go here?

Mr Bowen: Well, I think I can predict how it will go here. Yes, we can predict that. You are going to create a dispute between the houses. That is your call. You could just accept the loss. But, no, you do not want to do that. What you are going to do is create a dispute between the houses. That is a matter for you. That is not my call; that is your call. That is the Treasurer's call.

What has happened is that the senators have looked at this matter and at the way they voted last fortnight and they have said, 'Hang on a second, there's a problem.' The problem is that there was a Senate inquiry with an organisation giving evidence before it and it turns out that that organisation is not entirely genuine. It has no members. It is called the Family Office Institute. The Family Office Institute argued to those senators that they were a grassroots organisation and that the legislation would cause them grave concern if tax details were to be made public.

It turns out that the Family Office Institute have no members and are what is called an astroturfed organisation. If the Treasurer wants to talk about shabby processes, let's talk about that. If he wants to talk about shabby processes, we can talk about shabby processes. The Senate was less than impressed with that shabby process, and the Senate voted last night. But this so-called shabby process that the Treasurer is concerned about, which is called the Senate voting, was brought about when the senators looked at this and said, 'Hang on a second, we're not very impressed by this tactic that has been employed by supporters of the government's legislation,' and they decided to reinsert tax transparency. But they did so with a caveat and it is a caveat the opposition are more than happy with.

It is a caveat whereby somebody can apply to the tax commissioner not to have their information disclosed if it is a significant and legitimate concern. That is a fair check and balance, in our view. It was not our suggestion but we are happy to work with that. We are happy to accept that in the interests of good faith. So the vote passed the Senate. The Treasurer says that the Labor Party are blocking this. In fact, the legislation passed the Senate, I am advised, unanimously. That is not how you block legislation—by voting for it. That is not how it works. I know the Treasurer has a problem with parliamentary processes. I know he thinks they are shabby. But when you are actually happy with a piece of legislation, you vote for it. Occasionally, the government is going to lose, but the government actually won last night on the legislation because it passed. That is not called blocking. The Labor Party voted for it. That is not blocking legislation.
I know it is a complex scenario, but the Labor Party supported the legislation. That is not how you block it; it does not work that way. I know the Treasurer is new to the job and still working out how to get legislation through. Last night, Treasurer, you took a win. Know when to accept a win. You got your legislation through; that is called ‘winning’. We are happy to support it, and we voted for it. We just had a suggestion—a friendly suggestion—which the Senate agreed with and adopted. It improved the legislation before the House and it improved the legislation before the Senate. The Treasurer is quite right: the Senate recognised that, in our view, they got it wrong a couple of weeks ago. They came to that view and it was negotiated through the Senate last night. That is what happened. The legislation has passed. The Treasurer should just accept the fact that he won the day and got his legislation through, and he should move on.

Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (11:15): It would be one thing to come into this place and say: 'For policy reasons, we disagree with what the Senate has just done. We all want to achieve a certain outcome, but we think there is a better way of doing it than what the Senate has done. Here is a series of reasoned arguments as to why that's wrong.' But to come in here and call it a 'shabby process' shows us what is really motivating this government. Only a blue blood government with a born-to-rule mentality would call democracy a 'shabby process'.

What happened yesterday in the Senate was that the Senate said: 'We have an opportunity here to introduce a bit of transparency into our tax system. We have an opportunity to say that rules should apply across the board so that those people and those companies that are at the top end of the income spectrum in Australia have to disclose the amount of tax that they earn, so that Australians can have an informed debate, so that we can have the kind of debate that the Prime Minister has urged us all to have—one where we know the facts and they are put on the table—and so that we can have a reasoned debate about who should pay their fair share of tax.'

We are reading in the papers every day a new argument about why everyday Australians should pay a bit more in terms of the rise of the GST. Then, when we say it would be good if Australia did what some other countries have done and have a look at the disclosure around how much tax some of the wealthiest companies operating here are actually paying so that consumers might be able to then vote with their feet, or so that voters might be able to say: 'Perhaps it's right that they should pay a little bit more. Perhaps tax reform should start at the top rather than at the bottom. Perhaps you should go after some of those very wealthy private companies in Australia who may be operating under various other arrangements. Perhaps you should go after others instead of coming after us first.'

The Senate, in this instance, is much more representative of the Australian people than this government is. The Senate said, 'Maybe we can improve this bill by including a requirement not only for all of the things the government wants to do but also something that would make it better; something that would introduce a bit more transparency into our tax system.' But what we know—and we see it on every occasion, whether it is immigration or taxation—is that transparency is to this government what sunlight is to a vampire. They are scared of knowing the facts and of having the facts made available to the Australian people. We see it time and time again.

First things first: if you want a more informed debate about tax in this country, then let the Australian people know how much tax is being paid by the people at the top end of town. Let
us know and then we can have an informed and reasoned debate. If you believe in democracy, do not come in here and call what happened in the Senate a shabby process. What happened in the Senate was that people from across different parts of the political spectrum said: 'It is our role as the upper house of this parliament to hold the government to account. When we think the government could be doing better we will tell them how.' When the government said that the only way to deal with tax in this system is to shield their rich mates from having to give the kind of information that in other countries is provided on a regular basis, the Senate said, 'We don't agree with that.'

The more we learn about what has happened the more we feel that we have been misled. We were misled when organisations pretending to be grassroots organisations came to us and said that there are good reasons as to why this should happen. The Senate said, 'We were astroturfed.' There was an organisation set up only to deal with the proposed mechanism that had been floated previously about requiring a bit more transparency, an organisation that was set up to represent the top part of the one per cent that most people in this country can never aspire to be in. They fronted up and they said that they were representative of what was going on. We in the Greens called them out early, but others said, 'We didn't realise that you weren't what you said, so we want to revisit the decision we made before and we want to take this chance to improve the bill.'

What happened in the Senate was democracy. The Greens are incredibly proud to have moved the amendments that are now here before this House. I would have hoped that the government might give it a bit of reasoned consideration. I would have hoped that the government might think about it for a bit longer that it has, than the 12 hours overnight. But, no, the government has come in here and said, 'It's our way or the highway.' We are going to stand up for these amendments. I am very pleased to have been part of having them passed yesterday.

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

The House divided. [11:24]

(The Deputy Speaker—Mr Mitchell)

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**AYES**

| Abbott, AJ | Alexander, JG |
| Andrews, KJ | Andrews, KL |
| Baldwin, RC | Billson, BF |
| Bishop, BK | Bishop, JI |
| Briggs, JE | Broad, AJ |
| Broadbent, RE | Brough, MT |
| Buchholz, S | Christensen, GR |
| Ciobo, SM | Cobb, JK |
| Coleman, DB | Coulton, M (teller) |
| Fletcher, PW | Frydenberg, JA |
| Gambaro, T | Gillespie, DA |
| Goodenough, IR | Griggs, NL |
| Hartsuyker, L | Hastie, AW |
## AYES

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## CHAMBER
Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (11:30): I present the reasons for the House disagreeing to the Senate amendments and I move:
That the reasons be adopted.
Question agreed to.

Australian Citizenship Amendment (Allegiance to Australia) Bill 2015
Second Reading

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

Mr DREYFUS (Isaacs—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (11:31): I rise to speak to the Australian Citizenship Amendment (Allegiance to Australia) Bill 2015. This is a very serious piece of legislation. It deals with a topic of fundamental importance to our community. Citizenship, the full political and social membership of a national community, is a core human right. Article 15 Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares:
1. Everyone has the right to a nationality.
2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Australia was, through the work of 'Doc' Evatt in the earlier years of the United Nations, intimately involved in the formulation and adoption of the declaration. In the following decades, we have become party to several international treaties, which flesh out the content of the right to a nationality, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Citizenship is a very special kind of right. As political theorist Hannah Arendt put it, it can be described as 'the right to have rights'. Arendt, who like other German Jews was made stateless in the 1930s, had a firsthand understanding of just how important citizenship is. In recognition of this, Australia has also become party to international instruments which seek to prevent statelessness, most importantly the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

When we legislate in this place on the topic of citizenship, then we must be very cautious. We must be mindful of our obligations under international human rights laws and of the essential values those laws codify. But we must also acknowledge the special status of citizenship in Australian society, in particular. Australia is a multicultural nation. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have lived on this continent for many tens of thousands of years, but the rest of us are migrants and, in the long view, very recent migrants indeed.

Australia and Australianness cannot be defined by reference to race or creed. Citizenship is, and must be, what brings the great diversity of our community together. It is no
coincidence that the development of a distinctive Australian citizenship, as opposed to British
subjecthood, has run in parallel with the development of a modern, diverse Australian society. Any changes we make to the law of Australian citizenship must strengthen the bond that
citizenship provides between all Australians.

This bill provides for an extraordinary sanction—the loss of Australian citizenship and all
of the rights that flow from it. This is clearly a very serious matter. That said, it has always
been recognised that citizenship involves mutual obligation. Australia owes important duties
to its citizens. Citizens owe important duties to Australia, most basically a duty of loyalty. This is made clear in the schedule to the Citizenship Act, which provides for a citizenship
pledge reading:

I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people, whose democratic beliefs I share, whose rights and
liberties I respect, and whose laws I will uphold and obey.

Australian law has long provided that, where that duty of loyalty is breached in the most
fundamental way, loss of citizenship can follow. Since at least the creation of Australian
citizenship in the Australian Citizenship Act 1948, Australian law has provided that dual
nationals who fight with enemy states during times of war can forfeit their Australian
citizenship.

Much has changed since 1948. Wars are not often declared in the modern era—indeed
Australia has not done so since 1948—and the clearest threats we face often come from non-
state actors. Accordingly, there has been discussion in this place and beyond since early 2014
about the possibility of updating the Citizenship Act to reflect these changed circumstances.

Under the leadership of the member for Warringah, the government tied itself in knots on
this issue. The government engaged in all sorts of wild rhetoric. They sought to exploit the
critical matter of citizenship for cynical political advantage, to the extent that members of the
former Prime Minister's own cabinet rebelled and we saw a series of extraordinary cabinet
leaks and internal fights within the coalition parties.

Labor's position, however, has been consistent. We have said all along that we see the
sense in updating the existing law to reflect the circumstances of a new century. We believe
that, just as a person who fights for an enemy nation at a time of war, a person who fights
with a terrorist organisation hostile to Australia, or who commits serious acts of terrorism,
should be liable to forfeit their citizenship in certain circumstances.

But we have always maintained that this update to our citizenship laws must be carefully
designed. It must not operate too broadly or have unintended consequences. It must pay due
regard to the importance of citizenship. It must not strip an Australian of a fundamental right
unless that person has repudiated their right to citizenship by choosing to engage in conduct
that is inconsistent with allegiance to Australia. It must accord with our international
obligation not to make a person stateless.

While the government under the leadership of the member for Warringah was interested in
political posturing, Labor has always been interested in getting the detail of this legislation
right. This bill was introduced into the parliament on 24 June 2015 and referred to the
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security. Once again it fell to the
intelligence committee to fix the many problems in the bill that was proposed by this
government. The committee held public hearings. It heard evidence from relevant agencies,
from civil society and from legal experts. It has produced a report of considerable weight and has made 26 substantive recommendations for changes to the bill or clarifications about how it is intended to operate. As a consequence, the form of the bill we debate here today, as amended in response to the report of the committee, is vastly improved from that which was first introduced into the parliament by the government in June.

Improvements were made in each of the three limbs of the bill in respect of section 33AA and section 35, which provide for loss of citizenship by conduct, and in section 35A, which provides for loss of citizenship consequent to a conviction for specified criminal convictions. As regards the two conduct limbs of the bill—sections 33AA and 35—the most important recommendation is that those provisions should operate only with respect to a person who is outside Australia. Labor accepts the need for a means of cancelling citizenship in the absence of a conviction in an Australian court. Most—perhaps all—of those who lose their citizenship under this bill will already have left Australia, often with no intention ever to return. We accept that it is impractical to insist on a conviction in such circumstances. However, the bill in its original form would have allowed for citizenship to be stripped in the absence of a conviction in circumstances where a person was in Australia and therefore available for prosecution in the usual way. The removal of this possibility is appropriate. It recognises that the deprivation of rights as important as citizenship ought ideally occur through judicial process with all of the protections that that process entails.

The committee also recommended very significant changes to the operation of section 35A, the new provision which would allow for the revocation of a person's citizenship consequent to conviction for certain offences. This part of the bill ought at a level of principle present the least concern. By relying on a prior conviction, section 35A contains within its operation the usual protections of the judicial process. However, as originally drafted, this part of the bill overreached very significantly. It went well beyond the kind of conduct which ought to attract the very serious sanction of revocation of citizenship. The government, for reasons unclear to me, included in the original bill a whole range of inappropriate offences. These ranged from the archaic, such as 'unlawful drilling'; to the obscure, such as 'seducing a person serving in the Queen's forces from his or her duty and allegiance'; to the deeply trivial: 'damaging Commonwealth property'. All of this was the core purpose of this bill. It went well beyond the stated intention of the government and it went well beyond what Labor supports: the sensible updating of existing citizenship law. Frankly, it is incredible to me that the government would even introduce into the parliament a bill which would strip the citizenship of a person for, say, defacing a postbox.

In the intelligence committee we cleaned this mess up. As amended, the bill will apply only to serious terrorist offences and to the most serious national security offences, including treason. This is appropriate. What is more, we have imposed a further discipline on the section 35A power by insisting that it only apply where a sentence of six or more years has been imposed for such an offence. Again, this provides the assurance of judicial oversight. It provides an assurance that this power will only be used where an independent court has ruled that the relevant criminal conduct is of a very serious kind. It ensures that this power will never be applied lightly.

The government asked the committee to consider the retrospective operation of section 35A. Of course, it is unusual to legislate retrospectively, especially with regard to a matter as
serious as the loss of citizenship. The committee, accordingly, accepted only a very limited form of retrospective operation. As amended, the bill will provide that the section 35A power can operate only on convictions for the relevant offences secured in the last 10 years and only where a sentence of 10 years or more has been applied.

As we have with each round of national security legislation in this parliament, Labor has also focused on oversight and transparency. The powers this bill provides must not only be appropriately constrained; they must also be seen to be so. The public must be able to have confidence in this law and in its operation by the government. We have provided for oversight and for review of this bill.

These are all very important changes. Once again the committee has proved its value in scrutinising and improving government legislation. Once again Labor has shown that we will take a bipartisan but not uncritical approach to national security matters, that we will work with the government to keep Australians safe but that we will provide constructive input on how that is to be done, and that we will insist on change where change is needed. I note in respect of every one of the matters I have listed that the government has accepted the committee's recommendations.

There is one important matter that the committee was, unfortunately, unable to fully address. As is recorded in its final report, the committee heard evidence from a number of leading constitutional experts. Those experts raised serious concerns about the constitutional viability of the bill. Naturally, Labor was concerned by this. We want this bill to work. We want it to be free from constitutional risk. We asked the government to answer the criticisms made in evidence to the committee by releasing to us its legal advice on the bill's constitutional prospects, provided by the Solicitor-General. The government refused. In lieu of the advice, the Attorney-General wrote to the committee to assure us of the government's strong view that the bill is constitutionally sound. I note that yesterday the Prime Minister, Mr Turnbull, was asked about this matter. He said he, too, was confident about the bill's constitutionality. The Prime Minister said:

… the Government's advice is that the laws, if challenged in the High Court, would be upheld.

I regret that the government has not released its advice, even in confidence, to the opposition. This would have been consistent with the spirit of constructive bipartisanship in which national security has been handled during this parliament. In the absence of that advice though, Labor must take the government's confidence about this bill at face value. We accept the government's assurance to the committee, to the parliament and to the Australian people that this bill will stand a constitutional challenge. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr SIMPKINS (Cowan) (11:46): I very much embrace the opportunity to speak on the Australian Citizenship Amendment (Allegiance to Australia) Bill 2015. This is a serious bill and this is a bill that many of us have wanted for a long time. It was initiated entirely from this side of the House, from the government, and was not proposed by anyone else in this parliament. It is my view, and that of many here in the Parliament of Australia, indeed of many across the country, that citizenship has meaning and that, whilst there are rights involved, it is the responsibilities that come with citizenship that are most important, and that matter is what this bill addresses.

It is right that for those who engage in such despicable behaviour and anti-Australian criminality related to terrorism we should have the ability to withdraw citizenship. What we...
know is that the number of Australians joining extremist groups overseas is increasing, as are the number of sympathisers and supporters of such extremists. This means that the pool of potential terrorists is getting larger. I know that even in Perth there are those active in talking up the cause of jihad, and I thank the AFP and ASIO for their superb work in countering this threat to the nation.

As has been said, there are currently more than 400 high priority counter-terrorism investigations, a number that has doubled since early 2014. In the last 14 months, 26 people have been charged from 10 counter-terrorism operations. The numbers are increasing, and those who deny the threat are extremely foolish. It is also known that more than 100 Australians are currently fighting or engaged with terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq. It has been said that there are around 190 people in Australia who are supporting terrorism in the Syrian or Iraqi conflicts through financing and recruitment or who are seeking to travel to engage in those conflicts.

Unfortunately, not all of the traitors to this great country, who fight for Daesh and other extremist terrorist groups, die pointlessly and before they cause harm to the people they persecute and brutalise. For those who do not die, earlier this year we, the government, started developing amendments to the Australian Citizenship Act 2007 in order to provide for the loss of citizenship in the case of dual nationals engaged in terrorism related conduct. It is the view of the government that some citizens have taken action, and some will take action in the future, that is not compatible with the common values of our society and that those actions are fundamentally at odds with the Australian community and, therefore, they have broken faith with the nation.

The original bill has been looked at by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security and, on 4 September, 27 recommendations have been proposed. These will be coming and there will be further action on two additional points. The bill contains a number of elements. The first element is renunciation of citizenship by conduct. This renunciation by conduct is provided for under section 33AA. It provides:

\[
\text{… a person who is a national or citizen of a country other than Australia renounces their Australian citizenship if the person acts inconsistently with their allegiance to Australia by engaging in—}
\]

specified conduct. That conduct includes overseas terrorist activities 'using explosive or lethal devices' and committing a 'terrorist act'. It also includes an involvement in training:

\[
\text{… connected with preparation for, engagement in, or assistance in a terrorist act;}
\]

\[
\text{(d) directing the activities of a terrorist organisation;}
\]

\[
\text{(e) recruiting …;}
\]

\[
\text{(f) financing terrorism;}
\]

\[
\text{… … …}
\]

\[
\text{(h) engaging in foreign incursions and recruitment.}
\]

Obviously, the conduct provisions in this element are limited to individuals who have engaged in the conduct offshore or engaged in relevant conduct onshore and left Australia before being charged and brought to trial in respect of that conduct.

The second element extends the law that already allows for the automatic loss of citizenship where a person serves in the armed forces of a country that is at war with Australia. The extension applies to a person who is also a citizen of another country, who is
overseas and fights for or is in the service of a declared terrorist organisation. Obviously the provisions do not apply to acts that are unintentional, under duress, or for the purposes of independent humanitarian assistance.

The third element of this bill includes a new section, section 35A, which provides a power to the minister to determine a person's citizenship has been lost once they have been convicted of a relevant offence. It should be noted that the loss of citizenship is not automatic upon the conviction. Where a person is convicted of treason, espionage, terrorism or international terrorist activities using lethal devices et cetera, provided that the person has received an overall sentence of at least six years for an offence with a maximum penalty of 10 years or more, a determination is made by the minister provided that the minister is satisfied that the conviction demonstrates that the person has repudiated their allegiance to Australia and that it is not in the public interest for the person to remain an Australian citizen. I would also say that judicial review is available to persons affected by the provisions for loss of citizenship in this bill. Of course the Federal Court and the High Court have jurisdiction.

With regard to retrospectivity, I absolutely support the need for this to be part of this bill. The parliamentary joint committee recommended that conviction based provisions apply retrospectively for relevant offences that occurred prior to the commencement of the bill. That is good, and this provides the opportunity to deal with terrorists such as Abdul Benbrika for his 2009 conviction regarding his leadership of a terrorist group that planned attacks in 2005 against Crown casino and the MCG.

I find the progress of this bill, and what appears to be its imminent passing, particularly satisfying. This is very much the sort of critical legislation for national security and safety that we need to advance. I have long believed this to be required. Personally, I first raised this issue in the parliament on 26 October 2009 when I said:

I think it is also very sad that there are some people in this country that have taken up citizenship and seek to change this country in a fundamental way. By that I mean those who have recently been convicted in the Sydney terrorist trial are from families that have come to this country and used the superior freedoms and liberties of this country while finding fault with this country and seeking to change it with their extremism and fundamentalism. I think it is all very well that we have the ability to grant citizenship, but what we should have is the ability to withdraw that citizenship from those who seek to betray this nation with acts of murder and terror.

In my address in reply speech on 18 October 2013, I also said:

On a related point, all would be aware of recent commentary in the media about persons holding Australian citizenship going to train for war and fighting as a mercenary or volunteer in Syria. Several years ago I spoke in parliament with reference to those who had been granted Australian citizenship as refugees only to travel to places like Yemen to undertake terrorist training. Those people represent a great threat to the security of this country. Similarly, we should view anyone who travels to Syria to take up arms with great suspicion. When people raise their right hand and make the oath or affirmation of citizenship it does actually mean something. When they pledge their loyalty to Australia and its people and that they will uphold and obey our laws, their pledge to this nation is broken when they take up arms and attribute that to some religious authority. I therefore encourage the immigration minister to examine the options of the withdrawal of citizenship for those who break their pledge to Australia. I appreciate the difficulties in ascertaining the facts, but those who already hold the citizenship of another nation and who break faith with this country through crime should be held accountable, and the withdrawal of citizenship should be an option. I supported this option before I was elected and I support it now.
Since then I raised the issue with the former Prime Minister Mr Abbott on 12 September 2014, 16 July 2014 and on 15 February 2015. I also spoke in our party room about this in March 2014 and May 2014. On 16 June 2014, I also spoke about Islamic State and said:

What also concerns me is that there are likely to be Australians who have signed up to be part of such an evil organisation, and I certainly commend the government on their attempts to stop people leaving this country by cancelling passports to stop their involvement. I would also say that where such people have dual citizenship they are exactly the sort of people from whom we should remove Australian citizenship. We do not want them in this country in the future.

On 3 September 2014, I said:

The truth remains that we do have traitors in this country. They are Australians who believe in Islamic State and in violent Wahhabism. These people, and their supporters, must be stopped and prosecuted before they leave Australia or provide support. Dual citizens must have their citizenship revoked. Terrorists are traitors to this nation, they are a threat to this nation and they must be dealt with very firmly in order to protect this nation from terrorism.

Similarly, I also spoke on this topic on 14 July 2014 when I moved a motion on this specific subject. I thank Minister O'Dwyer for her speech on that motion as well. That motion read:

I move:

That this House:

(1) notes the increasing instances of Australian citizens taking up arms for foreign military and extremist causes including, but not limited to, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, representing a threat to good order in international affairs and the safety of Australian citizens;

(2) acknowledges:

(a) that by taking up arms or supporting such causes, those citizens have failed to comply with the pledge they made when they became an Australian citizen, to uphold the laws of Australia; and

(b) those who have taken up arms or supported such causes, and

were born Australian citizens but have a second also repudiated their allegiance to Australia; and

(3) urges the Government to amend the Australian have Citizenship Act ' to allow the revocation of the status of citizen for those who take up arms, or provide material and/or financial support for military/extremist causes, except where such action is at the direction of the Government.


So it is with a significant background that I wholeheartedly endorse this bill. But before I conclude I would also make mention of another proposal I put to the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection some time ago. My proposal was about a new preamble for citizenship ceremonies, and I put it forward because it is my view that the current preamble to the pledge of Australian citizenship is too much like the oath or the affirmation itself. What it needs to be is a fundamental statement that makes very clear what new citizens are committing to. I therefore reiterate the preamble that I think should be stated before anyone takes the pledge.

The proposal reads: Australian citizenship represents full and formal membership of the community of the Commonwealth of Australia. Every Australian citizen has rights and protections, but also serious responsibilities. Persons on whom Australian citizenship is conferred accept these obligations: (a) loyalty to Australia, its people and laws above all other nations, peoples and laws; (b) commitment to the Australian democratic model of government and renouncing all other systems, be they political or religious; and (c) to respect the rights
and liberties, of all people regardless of gender, race or religion, as all are equal before the law as Australians.

To conclude, I say that this country has been successful because of the fundamentals upon which it was founded and the fundamentals that continue to guide us. This cannot be the subject of any form of compromise in the form of an apologist approach for political correctness. We should be proud of this country. It is a great country which has always stood up for the weak, the defenceless and the besieged. The strength of our country is in our traditions, our institutions and our values. The will of our country to act when the hard decisions need to be made comes from the collective faith of the great Australian culture, which is the culture of the majority forever grounded in the belief of the supremacy of the democratic tradition; a majority culture that will forever be guided by the one and only set of secular laws; a majority culture that supports those who aspire to improve themselves, while also being there to support those who need it and cannot provide for themselves. This is a majority culture that has a strong belief in the principle of personal responsibility. It has a strong belief that all citizens and residents have rights, but never without responsibilities. This country has a majority culture of Judeo-Christian values, and there is nothing wrong with that and nothing to be apologised for.

This bill is about accountability. When it comes to citizenship, those who take up that citizenship are responsible for their actions, and there is a consequence for their lack of loyalty to this great country. I therefore commend the bill to the House.

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (11:59): I rise to speak on the Australian Citizenship Amendment (Allegiance to Australia) Bill 2015. In all matters of national security, Labor have given bipartisan support. But the Labor Party will never be a rubber-stamp for the government. We take security very seriously. We are the party of John Curtin, who led this nation through World War II. We are the party of Ben Chifley. We have a strong tradition of looking after national security. There are people like Gough Whitlam, a flight lieutenant in the Air Force in World War II, or the great Tom Uren, a prisoner of war in Burma—someone who actually saw the nuclear bombs dropped on Japan and then, because of those experiences, went on to become a great warrior for peace. So we understand security. This legislation requires great scrutiny. Labor will continue to apply proper scrutiny to any changes to legislation proposed by the government. Obviously, that is the crucial role of an effective opposition party.

This piece of amending legislation has been thoroughly scrutinised by not only Labor but the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security. I note the Labor representatives on that committee: the deputy chair, Anthony Byrne; Mark Dreyfus, a QC and the former Attorney-General; Penny Wong and Stephen Conroy from the Senate; and also Senator Katy Gallagher, former leader of the ACT. Great Labor minds were brought to bear on that committee when they looked at this amending legislation. The committee handed down its final report, a bipartisan report, on 4 December, and it made 27 recommendations for amendments to the bill that was originally introduced by the Attorney-General. These recommendations have been implemented, and I will speak further about those.

Firstly, what does this bill put forward by the Turnbull government seek to do? It seeks to amend the Australian Citizenship Act 2007—in particular, the ability to revoke the Australian citizenship of an individual if they have dual nationality. The Australian citizenship of an
individual with dual nationality can currently be revoked under section 35 of the Australian Citizenship Act in circumstances where that person serves in the armed forces of a country at war with Australia. That provision of the legislation has been in operation since 1948, when that legislation was brought in by that great Labor Prime Minister Ben Chifley, who followed John Curtin as Prime Minister—I think there was Prime Minister Forde for eight days in between. Chifley was responsible for some very progressive reforms, such as the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and the Snowy Mountains Scheme. Because of the timing of his prime ministership, he was also responsible for the postwar immigration scheme that saw the enactment of the Australian Citizenship Act and that time of great migration to Australia.

It is a very serious proposition to strip an Australian citizen of their citizenship. It was a very serious proposition in 1948, when the original provision was enacted. It is a very serious proposition now, when we are looking at making this amendment. Our citizenship is crucial. It is very important. I go to many citizenship ceremonies, and it is always touching to see the pride in the faces of brand-new Australian citizens. Some have come here because of love; some have come here through hardship; some have come here through economic opportunities and have then become Australian citizens. I always give them five tips at the end of the citizenship ceremony, if I am the presiding officer.

Mr Danby interjecting—

Mr PERRETT: They are not official tips, and I will not go through all five, member for Melbourne Ports, but I will tell you the fifth point that I make. It is done in a light-hearted way, but I say to them that, as Australian citizens, they have to choose an Australian sporting team to support. If they are a rugby-loving person from New Zealand who has just become an Australian citizen, I say, 'I understand why you might want to support the All Blacks, but you've got to find an Australian team to make your No. 1 team in some sport.' But I say, 'I can understand why, if you love rugby, you might make the All Blacks No. 1 and Australia No. 2, but if you ever make Australia your third team in anything, we can deport you.' It is said in a light-hearted way, but it is making a point about loyalty to a new country. When they make that oath, when they take that pledge, they are taking on values that say Australia is now part of their life. It is not about denying their connections with other countries; it is about having to make a new place in their heart for Australia.

When I walk around the streets of Moorooka, where I live, or Sunnybank, where I work, I know that we are an inclusive society. Every face that I see tells me that we can be an inclusive society when we, as a nation, are at our best. I have seen division being cultivated by politicians and other members of society, but I know that, at our best, we are an inclusive society. We are welcoming to new citizens. Inclusion in our society is very important to a sense of belonging for all of us, even for Indigenous Australians.

But, just as in 1948, when the original section was introduced in the act, if a dual citizen puts on a uniform and fights against Australia then they are not showing the allegiance to Australia that a citizen is expected to. They are betraying that pledge, if they became a citizen by way of a ceremony. It was more obvious that an Australian citizen was fighting for a country that was at war with Australia in 1948 and in the postwar world, when many politicians were people who had fought in those wars. The lines on the 1948 map are not quite the same as they are on the 2015 map. The lines are a bit more blurry, the borders perhaps a bit more porous, in some parts of the world than they were in 1948. In 2015, in this digital,
interconnected world, it is just as important to protect Australia, particularly from these non-state actors who have caused so much mayhem.

Australia still needs to be protected from not only hostile countries but terrorist organisations—an enemy that operates across porous borders and even, sadly, in the shadows of Australian homes and on Australian streets. It is important that this legislation is amended to accommodate the modern-day threats to Australia in this digital age. The importance of allegiance to the country has been mused about before, particularly by the former Prime Minister. Before the Turnbull coup, the then Prime Minister used to wrap himself in a flag and talk about this in a way that sometimes I think created division in society and caused great stress to certain groups in society. In 1774, Samuel Johnson wrote that patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel. I have seen people literally wrap themselves in our flag—and I will not name her—so I know that people will exploit political situations under false patriotism because they are trying to divide this nation.

Our citizenship and our true allegiance to country are part of who we are and part of who I am. Citizenship is an essential and fundamental right. We can trace it back to statements and treaties that we signed and back to the great Labor leader Doc Evatt and the declaration of human rights. As I said, it goes to the core of who we are and who I am. We have many citizens in Australia who have dual nationality. Labor will not tolerate any attempt to undermine the status of dual nationals in this country. In fact, the original legislation, which was introduced back in June, would have potentially roped in four, five or six million Australians. Thankfully, the PJCIS made many recommendations to narrow the scope of this bill. It is now a much more targeted response to the issue that it is aiming to address, rather than creating mischief and fear amongst people, such as in my electorate—be they the Vietnamese community in Oxley, the African community in Moorooka, the Taiwanese and Korean communities in Sunnybank or the many other dual nationals in my electorate.

It is very important that the serious action of stripping citizenship of a dual Australian citizen is balanced against the seriousness of the threat to Australia. Labor believes that the provisions of this bill now achieve that balance. A person will only be stripped of their Australian citizenship: if they are engaging in terrorist activities or collaborating with a declared terrorist organisation overseas, if they engage in terrorist activities in Australia but are no longer in Australia, or if they are convicted in Australia of a terrorist offence. No person in Australia will be stripped of their citizenship simply by way of untested suspicions or concerns about their conduct or—heaven forbid—due to political expediency because there is a desire to target a particular person.

Importantly, a person who the minister has determined should be stripped of their citizenship will have the right to appeal the determination—that important separation of powers. Labor believes this is an extremely important safeguard and that it is a fundamental right of all citizens that they be given that judicial protection. The minister will declare which organisations are the terrorist organisations that will be the concern of this legislation. The minister must consider explicit criteria to inform her or his decision. As a further safeguard, any declaration by the minister that an organisation is a terrorist organisation will be disallowable and reviewed by the Intelligence Committee. One of the recommendations of the PJCIS was to explicitly rule out conduct done by way of humanitarian assistance or acts done unintentionally or, even worse, under duress from being caught by section 35 as ‘in the service
of a declared terrorist organisation'. The bill has been amended to implement this recommendation.

There are also protections to ensure that where a dual citizen has his or her Australian citizenship stripped they will not be left stateless. Firstly, this legislation only applies to dual citizens, so the person must have citizenship with another country. Further, any decision about the revocation of Australian citizenship must take into account whether the person is able to access the citizenship rights in the other country of citizenship or nationality, and the extent of their connection to that country. Obviously, this is a practical consideration, because if a person is stripped of their citizenship, they have to be put on a plane, be accepted by the airline and sent to the other country.

There are also important safeguards around children who may be affected by this legislation. We know that children, sadly, can be easily led astray. It is very important that we have safeguards to ensure that we do everything we can to bring these children back on the right path. The PJCIS recommended that the extent that the bill will apply to children be very limited. No part of the bill will apply to children aged less than 10 years, and the provisions around revocation of Australian citizenship will not apply to children under 14 years. Where this provision is being applied to a child, the best interests of the child are a primary consideration. Having been a schoolteacher for 11 years, I know how easily young men can be seduced by love or religion whilst they struggle to find their identity and their role in society.

This bill makes significant amendments to our citizenship legislation. The consequences of this bill ought to have been seriously considered by the government before it was initially drafted and introduced into this chamber in June 2015. Bizarrely, the government left out of the original bill important safeguards—such as safeguards around the application of this bill to children, safeguards to ensure that persons conducting humanitarian assistance or acts done unintentionally or under duress are not inadvertently caught under these provisions, and safeguards to exempt staff members or agents of Australian law enforcement or intelligence agencies from its application. All of these things should have been contemplated by the LNP government before it drafted the bill; they were not. Through Labor scrutiny and the consideration of the committee, these shortfalls have now, largely, been corrected.

The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security made 27 recommendations, and the government has agreed to implement all 27 of those. However, I do flag the serious question raised by the Labor Party about the constitutionality of this legislation and whether it will survive a challenge in the High Court. During the committee scrutiny of this bill, several peak legal bodies, including the Law Council of Australia and the Australian Bar Association, expressed their concerns about the constitutionality of this bill. The concerns were twofold: (a) whether the Constitution grants the Commonwealth power to legislate with respect to citizenship and the conditions under which that grant is held; and (b) whether there are any constitutional limitations that would apply, particularly considering Chapter III, which includes the separation of powers and the implied right to vote. These are serious concerns, and I still have significant anxiety about these issues. Nevertheless, whether this bill is constitutional is essentially a matter for the government and the Attorney-General. Labor has tried to work with the government on this issue and asked for the advice of the Solicitor-General to be made public. Strangely, the government refused this simple request.
This smug government refused to make the Solicitor-General's advice available even to the committee. The only assurance the government has given is a letter from the Attorney-General to the committee, basically stating 'Trust me', confirming the constitutionality of the bill. This from the Attorney-General who said that people had the right to be bigots, introduced the divorce tax and had the arts portfolio stripped from him! Thankfully, yesterday in question time, Prime Minister Turnbull assured the nation that this legislation will withstand a constitutional challenge, but we will see.

Although Labor has not been given the assurance that we requested, given the national security nature of the bill, we will not stand in the way of this legislation on the issue of whether it is constitutional. That is in essence a matter for the government.  

Mrs McNAMARA (Dobell) (12:15): It is with great conviction and sense of purpose that I rise in the House to support this bill. The Australian Citizenship Amendment (Allegiance to Australia) Bill 2015 provides the powers required to deliver what is fundamentally the most important responsibility of government—that is, keeping our nation safe and protecting our citizens. The amendments proposed by this bill implement the commitment made by the government to address the growing challenges posed by citizens holding dual citizenship who betray Australia and its people by participating in terrorist activities. It is the responsibility of this government to ensure terrorists who are dual nationals are prevented from returning to Australia. It is also our responsibility to ensure dual nationals who engage in terrorism on Australian soil can be removed where possible.

Australia stands proud in today's world, recognised for defending the values, rights and obligations which will stand us in good stead for as long as we embrace them. As a result of our rich history, today we stand with other strong democracies to help defend and protect our hard-fought freedoms. People of all backgrounds and religions strengthen our country and only together, united, will our future be as strong as our present and past.

No-one would ever dispute that Australia is truly the lucky country. We as citizens of this wonderful land should never take this great nation of ours for granted. As Australians we are afforded the opportunity to live and grow in a free and open society and to share in the common good, and in return we owe Australia a duty to be good neighbours and good citizens. Australian citizenship has meanings which flow deeper and are more subtle than legal permission to live in this country. It defines an individual's relationship to Australia, their embodiment of national pride, personal responsibility, duty and rights.

Australia is known worldwide for its migrant heritage. We are a nation of immigrants. We are also a nation of citizens. The important topic of national security is one that is mentioned to me time after time in my electorate of Dobell. Over the last few years we have been seeing real and emerging threats to our nation and the safety of the Australian community, unfortunately coming from Australian citizens engaged in terrorism.

The review of Australia's counter-terrorist machinery for a safer Australia identified that the terrorist threat in Australia is rising. Alarmingly, it was identified that the number of foreign fighters is increasing, with around 110 Australians currently known to be fighting in Syria or Iraq. The number of known sympathisers and supporters of extremists is increasing, with about 190 people identified to be providing support to the conflict in Syria and Iraq. The number of potential terrorists is rising. As part of the government's response to countering such threats to national security, the government is amending the Australian Citizenship Act
2007 to broaden the powers relating to cessation of citizenship for those who engage in terrorism and pose a serious threat to Australia.

The people of the New South Wales Central Coast understand the need to keep Australia safe from those who intend to do us harm. They understand the need for tough laws which ensure dual nationals who engage in terrorism activities are punished and pay the ultimate price—the stripping of Australian citizenship. Most importantly, they recognise and appreciate the tough stance taken by the government on this non-negotiable issue.

This bill will update the Australian Citizenship Act 2007 to ensure dual nationals who serve or fight for terrorist groups or engage in terrorism related conduct inspired by terrorist groups lose their Australian citizenship, because quite frankly there is no place for people who engage in these activities in Australian society. Those who are Australian citizens owe their loyalty to Australia, and this applies to those who acquire citizenship automatically through birth in Australia and to those who acquire it through application. Where a person is no longer loyal to Australia and engages in activities to harm Australians or Australian interests, they have severed that bond and repudiated their allegiance to Australia.

The intention of the changes provided by this bill is to protect our community and uphold our values rather than punishing people for terrorist or hostile acts. In his second reading speech on this bill, Hon. Peter Dutton, Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, stated:

To ensure clarity of these necessary changes, a purpose clause has been inserted into the bill. It states that, by these amendments, the parliament recognises that Australian citizenship is a common bond, involving reciprocal rights and obligations, and that citizens may, through certain conduct incompatible with the safety and shared values of the Australian community, demonstrate that they have severed that bond and renounced their allegiance to Australia … The purpose clause uses concepts from the existing preamble in the Citizenship Act.

Currently under the Citizenship Act a conviction for a specified offence is required before citizenship can be revoked. In addition, the power to revoke only arises if the offence was committed prior to the minister giving the approval for the citizenship application or the offence was committed in relation to the person's application to become an Australian citizen. These existing revocation powers are inadequate to address concerns in regard to persons who have acted contrary to their allegiance to Australia through their engagement in terrorism related conduct.

The proposed amendments are intended to provide explicit powers for the cessation of Australian citizenship in specified circumstances where dual citizens who, by acting against the interests of Australia by choosing to engage in terrorism, have by their conduct repudiated their allegiance to Australia. Allegiance is a duty owed by all citizens to their sovereign or state. A citizen's duty of allegiance to Australia is not created by the Citizenship Act but is recognised by it. The concept of allegiance is central to the constitutional term 'alien' and to this bill's reliance upon the aliens power in the Australian Constitution. The High Court has determined that an alien is a person who does not owe allegiance to Australia. By acting in a manner contrary to their allegiance, the person has chosen to step outside of the formal Australian community.

The bill proposes three elements by which a person who is a national or citizen of a country other than Australia will cease to be an Australian citizen. The first element is a new
provision whereby the person renounces their Australian citizenship if the person acts inconsistently with their allegiance to Australia by engaging in specified terrorist related conduct. Specified conduct is engaging in international terrorist activities using explosives or lethal devices; engaging in a terrorist act; providing or receiving training connected with preparation for, engagement in, or assistance in a terrorist act; directing the activities of a terrorist organisation; recruiting for a terrorist organisation; financing a terrorist; and engaging in foreign incursions and recruitment.

The second element is that the person ceases to be an Australian citizen if the person fights for, or is in the service of, a declared terrorist organisation. A declared terrorist organisation is any terrorist organisation as defined by the Criminal Code and declared by the minister to apply. The law currently provides for automatic loss of citizenship where a person serves in the armed forces of a country at war with Australia. This provision has been in force since 1949. This bill expands this section to provide for automatic cessation of citizenship if a person is also a citizen of another country, is overseas and fights on behalf of, or in the service of, a declared terrorist organisation. A declared organisation will be a subset of those which are listed by the Attorney-General for the purposes of terrorism offences under the Criminal Code. The minister will declare organisations that are specifically opposed to Australia and our democratic beliefs, rights and liberties. A declaration by the minister of a declared terrorist organisation is reviewable by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security.

Under the third element, the person ceases to be an Australian citizen if the person is convicted of a specified terrorism offence as prescribed in the Criminal Code. As amended, section 35A provides that the minister can determine a person’s citizenship is lost once they have been convicted in a court of law of committing a relevant specified terrorism or related offence. Loss of citizenship is not automatic upon the conviction. This provision relies on a court having determined criminal guilt. The relevant offences include treason, espionage, terrorism, treachery, sabotage and foreign incursions and recruitment.

The amendments in the bill apply to a person who is an Australian citizen regardless of how the person became an Australian citizen, including a person who became an Australian citizen upon the person’s birth. The measures apply only to dual nationals and will not result in a person becoming stateless. The bill only applies to persons who are nationals or citizens of a country other than Australia—that is, dual citizens—and who would therefore not be rendered stateless if their Australian citizenship were to cease. The bill further provides that a person who loses their citizenship for terrorist related activities which demonstrate a breach of allegiance is not able to reacquire Australian citizenship in the future. This is entirely appropriate because such a person has demonstrated that they are not capable of upholding their commitment to our country and are not worthy of the honour of Australian citizenship. The person can never become an Australian citizen again unless the minister exempts the operation of the relevant cessation provision. The minister is required to give written notice of the automatic cessation of Australian citizenship to such persons as the minister considers appropriate.

These changes meet Australia’s international obligations not to render a person stateless. It is important to note that there is discretion available to the minister to exempt a person, including a child, from the loss of citizenship under the bill in the public interest. This
includes circumstances that would prejudice national security or where the conduct of a dual national is not directly related to their allegiance to warrant them losing citizenship. A child will not automatically lose citizenship based on their parents' conduct under the new measures in the bill. This is consistent with existing provisions regarding loss of citizenship in the act. A person under the age of 18 years could lose citizenship under these provisions if they have engaged in the relevant conduct themselves. If the person is aged under 18 the best interest of the child is a primary consideration.

The amendments in the bill do not limit the application of judicial review. A person who loses their citizenship under these provisions will be able to seek a declaration from a court that they have not in fact lost their citizenship. As I mentioned previously, the amendments in the bill do not limit the application of judicial review as the Federal Court and High Court both have original jurisdiction over such matters. To ensure we are able to govern competently and efficiently, we must be prepared to react to this changing environment and confirm we have adequate legislation in place to protect our great nation and our citizens. We, as a nation, are dealing with a threat which demonstrates no bounds. Time and time again we see the atrocities delivered by terrorist organisations abroad and at home. To us, the actions undertaken by terrorist organisations are unfathomable. They defy every core being of Australian values and principles. When we see the activities of terrorist organisations provided to us by the media, we are in shock and dismay that a human being could be so callous and cruel to another. These are not the actions of an Australian citizen. Dual nationals who engage in terrorism are betraying their allegiance to this country and do not deserve to be Australian citizens. This is predominately a modern form of treason and Australia will not stand for this type of betrayal.

This bill deals with the threat caused by those who have engaged in terrorist related conduct that is contrary to their allegiance to Australia. Let us not for one minute forget these extremists are fighting against the brave men and women of the Australian Defence Force—men and women who are placing their lives on the line to protect Australia’s values and freedom. This bill formally removes a person from the Australian community when they themselves through their own doing have breached their allegiance to Australia. I am proud to support changes to the act that will mean dual nationals who have been convicted of terrorism related offences will lose their Australian citizenship. These provisions do not leave a person stateless and do not exclude the role of the courts. This will enable a person who has lost his or her citizenship to seek legal redress.

The desired outcome of this bill is to ensure the safety and security of Australia and its people and to ensure the community of Australian citizens is limited to those who continue to retain an allegiance to Australia. I know that supporting this bill will resonate soundly with the majority of Central Coast residents, and I commend the bill to the House.

Ms MacTIERNAN (Perth) (12:29): When the Australian Citizenship Amendment (Allegiance to Australia) Bill 2015 was first introduced in this House I was truly appalled, and I made the statement to my community that I would not be able to support this legislation. I now accept that substantial modifications have been made to the legislation and its worst excesses have been dealt with. We have been presented with the option of accepting a package that will go a considerable way to dealing with the profound problems of this bill in its original form, or run the risk of passing a very poor and deleterious piece of legislation.
We have chosen to accept the package, and I compliment the work of the joint standing committee, particularly the work of Anthony Byrne and Mark Dreyfus, in trying to claw back some of the worst excesses of this legislation. But I see it as my responsibility to flag the very deep concerns I still have about the genesis of the legislation and the legislation as it stands in its highly modified form.

What appalled me about this legislation was not the reasons that were given for its introduction. Quite clearly there had been a longstanding provision in the Citizenship Act that if a dual national participated in the armed forces of an enemy alien that was grounds for losing their citizenship. So it is appropriate, given we now have non-state participants such as ISIS, that we amend the legislation to enable that conduct to also be captured. With the rise in terrorism it is also quite understandable that where a dual national has been convicted of a serious terrorism offence we would want to have the capacity to say that they are no longer entitled to their Australian citizenship. Whether or not that is always wise is debatable, but at least those two provisions are understandable.

What was completely and utterly unacceptable to me was the unfettered power that this legislation gave the minister to be judge and jury under the absurd legal fiction that, somehow or other, when you were sitting in your lounge room and you tweeted something or wrote up a Facebook post that may have incited violence, you had thereby automatically revoked your citizenship—that it was the action you took that automatically revoked your citizenship—and all the minister was doing was engaging in an administrative action in order to let you know that you had done this and to point out that you were no longer an Australian citizen. This is absolutely mad stuff! That is still contained in the legislation, but we have put constraints around the exercise of that power that go some way to reining in the worst potential excesses of that ministerial power.

I want to focus on why we decided to go down the path of this legal fiction of self-actuating conduct that leads you—and not the minister—to be stripping yourself of your citizenship. It comes down to the very important principle of the separation of powers. Legislatures and executives have a range of powers for creating and executing policy, but when it comes to the application of the law to a particular citizen, the separation of powers says that the people that are making the determination on the facts and on whether or not those facts constitute a breach of law must be entirely separate from the law makers or the executive. That is a very important principle.

It is true that there has been some debate over time as to the extent to which this doctrine is entrenched within our Constitution. It would be true to say that in the years leading up to the Second World War, perhaps when Australia was less independent of spirit, that we tended to follow an interpretation that was more similar to that of the British, who allow for considerable deviation from this principle of the separation of powers in their legal and judicial system. What made it more complex in Australia was the fact that we had the Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, which was seen to have been an important part of the Australian political landscape. Much of the interpretation of the Constitution as being more British and not requiring the total separation of powers was done to defend this conciliation and arbitration court.

Then, in 1956, we had a landmark case—the Boilermakers’ case—which changed that totally. Finally, the High Court Chief Justice at the time, Justice Dixon, who had long held
this view, was able to get majority support for the proposition that was much more like the tradition that came out of the French and American legal systems, which strongly promoted the separation of powers. He was able to argue and convince the majority of the court that the very structure of our Constitution—chapter I, chapter II and chapter III—provided for the separation of powers. Chapter III sets out in great detail the things that one requires for the exercise of judicial power. We have a whole chapter devoted to how judicial power is to be exercised. Clearly, the Australian Constitution is a constitution that requires a complete separation of the power of the executive and the legislature from that of the judiciary.

It is important to understand this, because when the Citizenship Act was introduced in 1948, we had the older interpretations of the Constitution that were more British in their character. It was probably not such a live debate when that first provision about serving in the force of an enemy alien was there. This is not just a technical thing. I think it is a profoundly important point that we do not allow ministers to go around and be judges and juries on this, and we do not buy these absurd legal fictions that somehow or other the minister is just writing a letter saying, 'Hey, guys, you might not have realised it, but when you did that thing last night, that was a terrorist act, and now you're out as an Australian citizen.'

I compliment the work that was done by the Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security to constrain the range of things the minister could do, requiring ministers in most cases, despite some unfortunate exemptions, to provide reasons, and providing that appeals processes should be entrenched. The absolutely unfettered power that the original iteration of this bill gave the minister has been clawed back.

I have had some conflict with some of my colleagues on this, who say, 'You've got to presume that the government acts in good faith.' I have some German ancestors who came out in the 1870s. When I was in Germany earlier this year, they were saying, 'What is all this stuff about what happened to the German community after the First World War?' I said, 'A few people were interned, but nothing much.' I was surprised to find out about the absolutely appalling process that went on that led to 6,000 German Australians not only being interned during the war but then being forcibly deported after the war. At that stage Germans were in fact the third largest ethnic group in Australia. All of this was a surprise to me, even though I had German ancestry.

Ms Henderson: I think you should put that in context. Why did that happen?

Ms MacTiernan: Why did it happen? We had a war. When we have a war, do we say, 'If you have got an ancestor that comes from a country that we are having a war with, you are automatically an enemy?' We are talking about people who in many instances were second and third generation Australians, who were subjects of Australia, and they were absolutely dumbfounded. They wanted to go and fight for Australia. After the war, after the Treaty of Versailles—after it all finished—these people, often second generation Australians, were deported. The determinations of the minister of the day, dealing with why people of German ancestry were interned, state not that these people were a threat but that the British-born people in the area were not comfortable with them and that it would be really good example to intern them; it would make the British-born people feel much more comfortable in their community. I say this just as an example of what happens when you have unfettered ministerial control.
I support us having the provision to strip of their dual citizenship people who have another nationali

ty and who have in some way behaved appallingly and have not valued those fundamental principles that are important in Australia. But this is never a decision that should be made by a minister. This is always a decision that should be made by the court. I am entirely comfortable with those parts of this legislation that require there to be a proper intervention of the judiciary, a proper examination of the facts, a proper examination of whether or not those facts constitute a breach of law. But I am not comfortable with putting ministers in the position where they can play with this thing that is our most precious birthright—our citizenship—and make political judgements on that.

I hope there is an early High Court challenge to this, because it is not just a technical matter. It is not one of those section 51 matters: have we crossed the boundary of the carve-up of state and federal power? It is not one of those dry provisions. This goes to the fundamental nature of our society and of justice, where we believe that we have to have a separation of powers to ensure that that great force of the state that is there to protect us is not used at the political whim of a minister.

The way this debate has emerged has really been very sad. I am reluctantly supporting this legislation because it constitutes a great improvement on a deeply flawed piece of legislation. I will certainly be supporting anyone who finds themselves on the receiving end of a ministerial decision and who feels that that is something that should be challenged in the court. That is not because I do not believe that we should be able to say, 'If you do not value Australian rights, you lose your citizenship,' but it should be the job—

Mr WOOD (La Trobe) (12:44): I strongly support the Australian Citizenship Amendment (Allegiance to Australia) Bill 2015. For those who do not know, the electorate of La Trobe is in Victoria, in the outer eastern suburbs. We cover the Dandenong Ranges, a beautiful part of the world, and in the south we are very fortunate to have suburbs such as Berwick, Beaconsfield, Narre Warren and Narre Warren South. There is a very large multicultural community in the south of my electorate, particularly in the suburbs of Narre Warren and Narre Warren South.

Sadly, in La Trobe, and surprisingly, we are not immune to the threat of terrorism. We have had arrests in our suburbs, which I will go into a bit more later on. Just up the road, in Endeavour Hills, we had the tragic situation where two police members were stabbed during a terrorist attack. At the same time I acknowledge that, when it comes to legislation such as this, we need to consult widely with all of our multicultural community. I have worked very closely with the Afghan community, in particular, and they have been exceptionally supportive of the government taking action when it comes to the threat of terrorism. Those who escaped Afghanistan to get away from the Taliban, to get away from terrorism, have said to me that the last thing they want to see is anything like this happen in Australia.

Even parents have said to me, at one of my multicultural functions, that they were very concerned that their sons, in particular, were potentially going down the path of getting involved in violent extremism. They were asking for help. This is something which we took on board and we have worked with Dr Anne Aly from Curtin University. We ran the first full myHack program in Victoria, which is a hack-a-thon, where the participants were predominantly Muslim. They are so passionate about protecting Australia and they are so passionate about stopping young people, whether of Muslim or any other religion, from going
down the path of extremism, including those who get involved in white supremacy. This was a way that the Muslim community, young people, in my electorate, came up with ideas to prevent other young people going down the wrong path.

I very much look forward to the winning proposal, which is called 'the formers', which is a website where former extremists and also former victims put up their stories to encourage others, when it comes to extremism, to not go down their path. Victims are able to show other people what it is like to be a victim of terrorism, hate or bigotry—any of those sorts of issues.

This bill concerns something that all members of parliament are very passionate about—citizenship. Australian citizenship is something that must not be taken lightly—with it, come great rights and responsibilities. Some of those rights include the right to vote in free, democratic elections and being able to freely discuss political matters. With rights, come responsibilities and duties owed to being an Australian. Citizenship is a pledge to do many things. Our pledge to citizenship reads—and these get read all over the country each week to new citizens:

From this time forward, I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its peoples, whose democratic beliefs I share, whose rights and liberties I respect and whose laws I will uphold and obey.

It does not say, ‘Don't respect your previous heritage.’ It just says: respect and acknowledge that you are now, jointly, an Australian citizen. Obviously this pledge means that you should not get involved in terrorism activities against Australia or its allies.

As far as I am concerned, those who decide that they no longer want to uphold their right and responsibility of having Australian citizenship, have no right at all to be an Australian citizen. They do not respect the laws and liberties of Australia, nor, it would seem, do they want to abide by, obey or uphold them.

The purpose of this bill is to ensure that those who take up arms against Australia, or those who support it through other financial means who are dual citizens, are stripped of their Australian citizenship and deported. Since the election of the Liberal government, we have heard and seen and read about various Australians heading over to conflicts in Syria and Iraq to take up arms in the death cult, Islamic State or Daesh. They know what they are doing. They have seen the videos. They have decided that this is the path that they want to pursue. At the moment, I believe there are 110 Australians fighting or engaging with terrorist groups in Syria and Iraqi.

Not only have we seen Australians leave to fight overseas, we have had to deal with acts of terrorism on our own borders. Headlines across the nation have shown faces and names of those who have decided to leave Australia to fight. This list is quite extensive. The majority have come from either Victoria or New South Wales. There has been, as I mentioned before, a number of incidents around my electorate and also in the electorate of Holt. I will not go into the details of certain incidents, because they are subject to court cases, but, sadly, I have to say that we have been the focus of terrorist-related activity.

Since 11 September 2001, we have always feared the real threat of terrorism within our community. We saw attacks in London and Madrid. But as the years went on it seemed that many Australians believed we were immune. My background was with the Victoria Police Counter Terrorism Unit, so I knew we were not immune and that it was just going to be a matter of time.
Then came 2014. We saw one of the first attempted attacks on our shores, as I mentioned, at the Endeavour Hills police station. No longer are the police regarded as the protectors; they are now, tragically, the targets, as are those who wear the military uniforms protecting Australia overseas. As a result of this, Victoria Police—and my background is in the Victoria Police—have a policy of not wearing uniforms whilst not on duty, always carrying a firearm, always wearing protective vests and patrolling in pairs or groups of three. The reason for this is that the terrorist threat is very real. In fact, it has been publicly stated that in Australia there are 400 persons of interest who authorities are watching.

I also read today that finally the state Labor government has upgraded security measures at the Endeavour Hills police station and the Narre Warren police station. These police stations look after the residents in my electorate and also those in Holt.

Then we had, on 15 December, the very tragic incident in the Lindt cafe in Sydney, in Martin Place. For those involved, the hostages, that is something they will never forget.

Very sadly, on 2 October this year, we saw the death of Curtis Cheng outside the Parramatta police station. He was what those working for Victoria Police call an unsworn person. Curtis was just going about his work. He had finished off for the day. Tragically, his life was taken. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends. I am very well aware of the dangers the police men and women face. Every day now is a testing day for them.

One of the best ways to deal with offenders is to remove them from society. This is one of the aims of this bill: to remove and prevent the re-entry into Australia of those who wish to commit acts of terrorism, who have taken up arms against Australia and who are dual citizens. If they are travelling over to Syria or Iraq and taking up the cause with Daesh, do we really want these people coming back to Australia? They are now fully trained up to conduct terrorist related activities. They should not come back here.

These people are doing whatever they can to undermine the rights and freedoms of Australians. They are actively working to do harm to those who live in Australia and Australians abroad, and they also pose a threat to almost every aspect of our lives and community. Those who are at war with Australia are not armies of other nations but terrorist organisations. The bill ensures that those who do these things and who are dual citizens do not come back. This is one of the best ways of keeping Australia safe. If we can keep out of Australia those who are willing to take radical action, we are keeping our country safe.

The offences which must be committed before a person loses their dual citizenship are being involved in a terrorist act, training with terrorists, direct activities with terrorists, recruiting for terrorist organisations, financing terrorism or financing terrorists. Obviously, they are very significant offences. Almost all of these Commonwealth offences carry a maximum penalty of life imprisonment. Should these convicted criminals who are dual citizens ever be released from jail, they will be deported, meaning that they will never see another day in Australian society.

Also, it should be noted that these offences will be retrospective. These are recommendations. The amendment bill applies to dual citizens who have already been convicted of a specified offence with a sentence of 10 years or more handed down within the last 10 years. This is important to capture those people already convicted of very serious terrorism offences who have clearly repudiated their allegiance to Australia.
One of the big concerns I am hearing from law enforcement is about correctional facilities. I know that in Barwon Prison in Victoria there are a number of terrorists or people who have been involved in terrorist related activity who are now using their time in jail to recruit other people to their cause. Also, I am hearing great concerns that they are being patched over to an outlaw motorcycle gang, which greatly concerns me.

Once these people who have been involved in terrorism and are dual citizens have been released, as far as I am concerned—and this legislation will ensure that—after serving time in prison, they can no longer stay in Australia. It is very hard to have a person who has gone to prison undertake deradicalisation programs. I understand that there will be attempts in New South Wales next year, and I congratulate those efforts. Some people, though, are too far gone. But hopefully at least they can stop others being converted.

This bill aims to protect Australians from those who decide to leave to fight against Australia or those who attempt to, or conduct, acts of terrorism in our own country, as I mentioned before. This government, including the former Prime Minister of Australia, Tony Abbott, and I know the new Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, have been very focused on protecting Australians. I understand that we always strive to get bipartisan support. The first priority of any government is to protect its citizens. That is what we want to do. That is what the public want us to do. We need to ensure, obviously, that when we have terrorism laws we bring the community with us so they understand this. Can I say that the feeling on the streets when people have seen all these awful terrorist attacks, in particular against police, is that they know too well that there is a need. This also sends a very clear message to those who are thinking of travelling overseas and getting involved in terrorist related activity that, if you do, you will not be welcome back.

I congratulate the government for putting this bill up and thank the opposition for its support. Sadly, some of the opposition members have had to come kicking and screaming, as we have heard before. I know that the member for Melbourne Ports is not one of those members. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr KATTER (Kennedy) (12:59): I rise to speak on the Australian Citizenship Amendment (Allegiance to Australia) Bill 2015.

Those of us who are adherents of the Christian faith are told to love our neighbours. And our neighbouring country is a predominantly—not totally—Muslim country, and we should love those people. For those of you who like reading the 'Good Book' the Good Lord was very specific—he talked about the Good Samaritan. The Jews hated the Samaritans, and today we would call the Samaritans and other people attacking Israel 'Arabs'. He specifically singled the Samaritan out to illustrate his point.

I think one of the finest 'Christians' I have ever known was in fact the Indonesian ambassador. I have never seen a person who works so tirelessly for his fellow man and for his neighbouring country, Australia. He worked for their interests. He is very much a practising and devout adherent of the Islamic faith. I have many people in my electorate who are from Albania. At one stage one of those people was head of tobacco—the biggest industry in Far North Queensland. Another one was head of the Rotary clubs for North Queensland and another one was head of the Queensland Maize Board for North Queensland. This was all at the same time. And a fourth one was head of the sugar industry council up on the tablelands.
So that was three major industries and the second-biggest community service group all led by people of this particular faith.

I would not have known which religion they were, nor would I have the slightest interest in what religion they were. The point I am trying to make is that they were just ordinary, average Australians. Unfortunately, both governments have allowed massive amounts of people to come in from the Middle Eastern countries, which have a horrific record—no rule of law, no democracy and a terrible record of violence. In fact, most of the Middle East is on fire as we speak. I read in the media last week—and I have not checked whether it is correct or not—that not a single prime minister in Pakistan's history has served out their term as prime minister, for example.

I think it was as recent as last year that 200 Christian children—little girls—were kidnapped in the North African countries. If they are going to bring in 130,000 people a year from these countries, are they telling me that none of them are going to be those sorts of people? Well, I am not one who believes that the abominable snowman comes from Bedourie. But to take an attitude of being anti the particular people of that faith seems to me to be so terribly wrong.

My life was saved by two Muslim—one a doctor and one a surgeon. One, in particular, laboured on for 20 hours over his shift in desperately trying to save my life. So I am not likely to knock these people!

Mr McCormack: Hear, hear!

Mr KATTER: Yes. Well, you might have been on the other side—rooting for the other team there!

Mr McCormack: Never!

Mr KATTER: Having said all of those things, I am staggered by the concept that says we should take boat people in this country. These boat people leave Middle Eastern hotspots to come here and we call them 'refugees'! A refugee flees for his life across the border into the neighbouring country. Would to heaven I had the decency and perspicacity to back what was originally a Liberal proposal which then became the ALP's proposal on the 'Malaysian Solution', because they were typical refugees. They were fleeing from Burma, or whatever the hell the name of the country is these days. They were fleeing across the border. Clearly, these people are refugees—there is a racial group and a religious group and they were both fleeing across the border from persecution.

Now, that is a refugee. A refugee is not a person who gets in a boat in Iraq and decides that he will go right around the globe—have a look at a globe—to a place called Australia. That is not a refugee! A refugee is fleeing for his life across the border. I might also add that a refugee is not a person who starts in Pakistan and wants to go to Germany. In both cases they are crossing a dozen or two dozen countries where they would feel at home in every way.

They are countries that have a totalitarian regime. You might say, 'Well, I don't like that.' Well, if every single country throughout that area has that form of government it is a bit hard for me to digest if you say that you do not like it. Whatever the case may be, clearly, a person who goes past 26 countries to get to where they are going across the other side of the world is surely not a refugee. That is not what he is. Call him something else, but he is not a refugee.
People say, 'Revoke their citizenship.' My only criticism of this legislation is that it does not go one tenth of the distance that it should go. If you feel your affiliation to and belief in the cause of this other country and its belief system so much that you are going to risk your life to fight for it and will attempt to kill other people, then clearly there is not a lot of room left for you to believe in the rights of Australians. These groups are called terrorists, and in our country the exact same terrorist groups—ISIS related groups—resulted in a person being shot in Parramatta. A totally innocent employee of the police force was shot. This was in only the last couple of months.

There was the attempt by a 15-year-old to get agreement to decapitate half a dozen or a dozen people, whatever it was, in the Anzac Day processions. This is all in the last few months. Do you think that it is desirable that people who are fighting side by side with these people and have such profound commitment to their belief system should be allowed back in this country? If they are allowed back in this country, I will tell you where I would put them, and it would be behind bars. That is the only way I would allow them back into this country.

Of course, we are allowing them back in this country. With some, we are revoking their citizenship. Well, there is no mechanism here to get them out of our country. In fact, if you revoke their citizenship and you have them here, I think you have really lit the fuse on a time bomb, to be perfectly honest with you. I think what you are doing is really lighting the fuse on the time bomb.

Let me change tack completely. In these countries, there are really decent people, and I have had an insight through working with the Indonesian authorities on the live cattle trade and my very rewarding efforts—probably the most rewarding thing I have ever done in my life—to get the live cattle industry reopened. I have had extensive dealings, and in that country, as in every other Muslim country, they have extremists. There are decent people there, desperately trying to control those extremists, to stay in power and to keep those people away from power. They know that they are extremely dangerous people. You play into their hands if you allow your country to be a breeding ground for ISIS type persons. You play right into their hands. So this country will not be a breeding ground for ISIS. I applaud the government for moving a little tiny way in this direction, and I hope it will not be counterproductive. KAP, our little party, will be strongly backing the government's efforts, and our criticism will lie in the fact that you are going nowhere near far enough.

I want to change tack completely again. We are selling out the moderate and decent leadership in these countries if we show any succour or comfort to the likes of ISIS. Moderate people, such as in Saudi Arabia, are being undermined on a daily basis by these people. When you say, 'This is terribly unfair,' I ask you: does Saudi Arabia take refugees from these areas or people who have been fighting in these areas? No way, Jose. Does Pakistan? No way, Jose. Does Kuwait? No way, Jose. Does the United Arab Emirates take these refugees and these returned fighters? No way, Jose. So, if they do not take them and we bring them out here and give them a nice little kindergarten where they can foment their trouble and send their people back to undermine the people of Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates and our own brothers and neighbours in Indonesia, we are doing a great disservice to those heroic people who are trying to hold the line of civilised action against people who, quite frankly, are anything but civilised.
I might add that some of the things fomenting the ISIS crisis are the same things that make me angry in this country—people like the Shah of Iran, who sold his whole country out to big foreign corporations on a daily basis. Anyone that complained got thrown in jail. That is the sort of thing that has bred and played into the hands of these extremist elements.

Having said all those things, I am going to change tack completely now. I went along to hear a lecture by a very famous man who is head of the biggest and most outstanding economics faculty in Australia, with one Nobel Prize winner and one runner-up: the University of Queensland economics faculty. He is a very famous man, and he said we have had three shames in Australia—three terrible black marks on the soul of our country. One was the way that we treated the First Australians, the second was the way that we treated the men who came home from Vietnam—100,000 of them—and the third was what we did to the dairy farmers of Australia. I was sitting next to another person, and I said, 'He left out two.' One was our involvement in the Boer War, where 26,000 women and children were starved to death as a policy. I do not know any precedent for that in human history. Genghis Khan would kill a lot of people. The great conquering warriors would kill a lot of people, but they did not single out the women and children as a means of combat. I cannot find any precedent for that. Maybe it is there and I have not seen it. So I would include that, and I would include as No. 5 our refusal to take any Jewish people in the thirties.

Hitler announced that he wanted all the Jews to leave the parts of Europe under his control, and no country would take them. There was the famous case—with three movies made about it—of the ship of shame, which went to almost every port in the world, including in Australia. They applied to berth in Australia and were rejected. So there was nowhere for these poor people to go. No-one would take them or allow them to come in. We are being told we have to take boat people. It is a pity someone was not around in the thirties to tell our nation to have the guts, not have the anti-Semitism that was abroad, and take some of those poor Jewish people. After the war we said they could come in. There was no-one to come in. There was no-one left. Six million had been murdered. There were none left. We, of all the countries in the world, were best placed to take those people.

I do not want this shame upon my country again. At the present moment, the Jewish children going to schools in Sydney and Melbourne have armed guards to protect them. I had a meeting with a rabbi in a major city in Australia. I will not mention the name of the city without his permission; I tried to get it before I came today. They spent $20,000 a year trying to clean the graffiti and the smashed glass from the intimidation that is going on against the Jewish people in this country. When you come to this country, you respect the religions of other people. You do not carry your oppression of those poor people, of whom six million were lost in the Second World War under the likes of the Nazis and Fascists. We do not want that sort of rubbish in here, but that oppression is taking place here today against the Jewish people, and it is about time some people in this place had the courage to stand up. This place lacked the courage in the thirties. Let's try to find the courage in 2015.

Mrs GRIGGS (Solomon) (13:14): A few months ago, our colleague the member for Berowra visited the electorate of Solomon as part of the coalition government's consultation process on Australia citizenship. I would like to place on record my thanks to Mr Ruddock for taking the time to come up north, to make sure that my constituents had their voices heard on this very important subject. I often say that anyone who can get themselves to Darwin in the
build-up season is a true friend of the north. So, Mr Ruddock, thank you very much for coming when it was not the dry season.

I also wanted to raise Mr Ruddock's visit to Solomon for a couple of reasons. Firstly, I want to illustrate that the laws before the parliament today are the product of a thorough and genuine consultation process. I understand that sessions similar to the one that was held in Solomon occurred over all parts of the country and that all sections of the community were involved in this whole process. Certainly the sessions in Darwin were well attended by a good cross-section of the community. There were representatives from many of Darwin's multicultural and religious groups at the sessions. There were also several people with no direct or personal involvement in this law, but they had some concerns about some of the scare campaigns that were being put out in the media and so they wanted to make sure that they got their questions answered. The member for Berowra did a great job and he certainly alleviated many of the concerns. So I should thank him again for taking the time to speak to everybody that attended the session. Certainly the feedback that I received after the session was that they felt their concerns were listened to and, even where their views were different, the member for Berowra took the time to listen and work them through.

I also wanted to share this story because the measures we are discussing today should not be controversial measures. The laws before the parliament are amendments to the Australian Citizenship Act 2007. They apply the principle—long accepted and already enshrined in legislation—that, if any Australian citizen breaks the vow that they make in accepting citizenship or if they act against Australia through committing acts of terrorism or joining a terrorist organisation, they will forfeit their citizenship.

As I said from the outset, the bill provisions will only apply to dual nationals. The Commonwealth of Australia will not render anyone stateless. Currently, anyone engaged in combat with the armed forces of the country at war with Australia can forfeit their citizenship. The legislation before us today works within that principle, but applies it to the diverse range of threats that we as a nation now face. A person will forfeit citizenship if they engage in terrorist activities; or if they fight for the armed forces of a nation at war with Australia or on behalf of a terrorist organisation; or if they are convicted of a specified terrorism or related offence by an Australian court. They are the boundaries in which their Australian citizenship will be forfeited. The key theme, the guiding principle that ties these three points together is that we are updating the legislation to reflect the changing nature of the threats to Australia and to other nations.

As I said, let us not forget that it has been long enshrined in law that if you are an Australian citizen and you take up arms against Australia you can forfeit your citizenship. However, the legislation that enables that to happen is set up around the idea that our enemies were the military units of nations we were at war with. So if you serve with the army of a nation at war with Australia you can lose your citizenship. The bill that we are considering here today allows that principle to apply not just to war but to acts of terrorism. It also expands to include service in a specified terrorist organisation.

In considering whether we should pass this legislation to my mind it comes down to two key questions. Firstly, do we agree with the principle long established in law that someone who actively tries to destroy and undermine our community should not be afforded the rights
and privileges of citizenship? Secondly, if we agree with that principle, do we want to update it to deal with the unconventional threats such as the terrorism activities that we face today?

This bill will update existing law to reflect the changing nature of threats that Australia and indeed the world face because the enemies of Australia are not necessarily countries anymore. In 1942, my electorate was bombed by aircraft of the imperial Japanese military. Nowadays, a bomb on Australian soil is far more likely to be concealed in a backpack, or hidden under a car, and delivered by a terrorist rather than dropped from the air.

What we are seeing around the world, particularly in the Middle East and Central Asia, is the emergence of several non-national groups who are forming armies, conducting rebellions, committing acts of terrorism and working against the principles and freedoms that Australia as a nation holds so dear. By way of illustration, let us consider what is currently happening in northern Iraq and Syria. Australian armed forces are in combat against the so-called Islamic State, which is clearly not a state by any measure. As things stand, an Australian citizen holding dual citizenship who travels to that area and fights against Australia will retain their Australian citizenship on a technicality that the Islamic State is not a nation. In the early 1990s, when war was taking place in exactly the same area against the nation of Iraq, an Australian who travelled to serve in the armed forces of Iraq, fighting against Australia and our allies, could have lost their citizenship.

In both situations, the crime is the same. Should we as a nation stand back and allow the person in the first example to return to Australia, live free in the community and enjoy all the rights and benefits of Australian citizenship solely because they were fighting for a terrorist insurgency as opposed to a nation? Again, let me stress, what we are doing here today is applying a principle already in place to non-national threats, including terrorism.

This amendment is merely reflecting that our enemies are not always nations and extending the principle that someone who works against us as a nation is not worthy of protection. I am relieved to see some safeguards within this legislation. I mentioned earlier, but it bears repeating, that we will not be rendering people stateless. I also note that anyone affected by this legislation will have an avenue for judicial review through the Federal Court and the High Court, and that the minister will have power to exempt a person from this legislation where it is in the national interest to do so. When a person chooses to take up Australian citizenship, they take a short, simple oath like this: 'From this time forward, I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people, whose democratic beliefs I share, whose rights and liberties I respect, and whose laws I will uphold and obey.'

Whether someone has taken the oath and chosen to break it or whether someone was born into Australian citizenship as a dual national and has chosen not just to turn their back on this country but to attack it, then we as a nation should have no obligations towards them. The oath which I referred to a moment ago underpins our success and coherence as a nation. We are a peaceful and open society and we value our freedom. To anyone who comes to Australia through the right circumstances and chooses to share those values and live alongside us, we extend a very warm welcome. It is vital that everyone who lives in Australia, whether they were born here or whether they chose this as their home, respects the law of the land.

In conclusion, we will not shelter someone who is attacking us. We will not protect someone who takes up arms against Australia and her allies. And it should not matter whether
they have taken up those arms here or abroad, under the flag of an enemy nation or under the banner of a terrorist organisation. I commend this bill to the House.

Ms ROWLAND (Greenway) (13:27): We are Australian either by birth or by choice and most people would agree that citizenship is a defining feature of someone's identity. For many people, it is who they are and for others, including dual citizens, it is often just one part of a broader cultural make-up. For some, it is less about identity and more about the legal and constitutional guarantees and the freedoms we enjoy as citizens of a free and democratic nation. It obviously means different things to different people but the common thread is that it means something. It is intrinsic and it is important.

One of the great privileges, and I am sure all my colleagues here will agree, of being an elected member of this place is attending our local citizenship ceremonies. You only have to witness the emotion that pours out of these new Australians who have made the decision to become citizens of this land to know that it means something; in fact, it means a lot. That is why when we are dealing with proposals such as this that seek to amend Australian citizenship law, we must proceed in a methodical and thoughtful way.

There is no doubt that terrorism remains a serious threat to Australia's national security and the number of Australians fighting with terrorist groups abroad or supporting them from Australia remains deeply concerning. Labor have always said it is appropriate to update our citizenship laws to deal with the nature of conflict in the 21st century. And it has long been Australian law that a dual citizen who fights with an enemy state against Australia will forfeit their citizenship. In modern times, it is appropriate to extend that principle to those who fight for terrorist groups. So it is therefore disappointing that, like so much of the government's national security agenda, this bill, the Australian Citizenship Amendment (Allegiance to Australia) Bill 2015, has unfortunately been characterised by poor process and, in many cases, cheap politics. And I think it is important that we go over some of the process of how this bill got here.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Craig Kelly): Order! I apologise to the member for Greenway. It being almost 1.30, the debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 43. The debate may be resumed at a later hour.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Taxation

Mr MITCHELL (McEwen—Second Deputy Speaker) (13:29): Cuts to family benefits and an increase to the GST will hit middle- and low-income families in my electorate the hardest. This is hardly what you would call tax reform. But as we have seen, this Abbott-Turnbull government does not have a plan for tax reform but it has a program for cuts to family tax benefits, attacks on universal health care with cuts to the Medicare safety net and cuts to grants for the community services sector. There are cuts everywhere.

The Prime Minister loudly pontificates about increasing the GST and then—surprise, surprise—feigns outrage at being called to account by Labor. Maybe we hit a little bit too close to the bone, knowing that some of his Liberal colleagues are more than a little bit nervous about the public reactions in their own electorates. We have seen what happens when the Prime Minister acts on his thought bubbles. We end up with a third-rate copper network NBN. Is it any surprise, then, that Australians are concerned about the GST?
We get it: the Prime Minister and his frontbench do not care about the Australian people. The Minister for Social Services can hardly bring himself to use the word 'family' unless it is in the title of a bill. He is the real Grinch. With significant cuts across his portfolio and calling people with disabilities 'a burden', what could be more inhumane and Grinch-like than that?

We are up for a discussion on fair tax reform. Fair tax reform means that all options should be considered. It means we stop increasing the cost of living for families who can least afford it. It means that middle- and low-income earners do not bear the brunt of the unfair cuts for the prince of Point Piper's pals.

**Fraud**

Mr O'DOWD (Flynn) (13:31): The scammers are out there again. I warn all people to be aware of scammers. I would like for to everyone to be vigilant when taking phone calls as a new scam has hit Central Queensland and probably other areas around Australia.

The latest is a Centrelink scam. Residents report receiving phone calls from scammers claiming to be Centrelink officers. Scammers advise the residents that they are eligible for a rebate and that they need to send money via a wire transfer—would you believe people actually get sucked in on this?—and that if they do not send the money they will lose their benefits and all of their Centrelink payments will be cut.

To protect yourself, do not give personal information such as credit card or bank card details over the phone unless you trust the source 100 per cent. If you receive a phone call out of the blue from someone claiming to be from a government department who claims that you are entitled to money, simply hang up the phone. If you have any doubts about the identity of any caller who claims to represent a business, organisation or government department, contact the body directly. Do not rely on numbers, email addresses or websites provided by the caller. Find them through an independent source such as a phone book or online search. If you think you have provided your account details to someone who is a bit dodgy, contact your bank or financial institution immediately.

**Ride-sharing Services**

Ms McGOWAN (Indi) (13:32): Today I would like to raise a toast to TOAST—Tolmie Offers a Seat to Town. Tolmie is a small town 30 kilometres north of Mansfield in North-East Victoria. There is no public transport and the community's only option is to travel by car. TOAST is an innovative community transport scheme that links local residents of Tolmie who have a spare seat in their car with residents who require a lift. Last month, TOAST celebrated taking its 200th passenger over three years.

I have been told a story of one resident who, prior to TOAST, regularly slept in a local park to ensure that he could attend an early morning medical appointment. Now linked up with TOAST, he travels on the morning of his appointment, is more connected with his community, has met many new people and regularly attends other community events.

TOAST is the outcome of a robust community development program coordinated by Mansfield Shire Council. I welcome to parliament today two volunteers from Mansfield who are working in my office. I encourage the replication of this initiative into other communities and congratulate Mansfield Shire Council, Rod Squires from Transport Connections, TOAST coordinator Norma Pearce—well done, Norma—and all of the TOAST drivers on the work they have done to address local transport issues and to improve community resilience and
social connectedness. I encourage the government to support local community solutions to transport issues.

**Barker Electorate: Schools**

**Mr PASIN** (Barker) (13:34): I rise to speak about one of the great privileges that comes with being a member of parliament. This week I have had the opportunity to host a number of schools from my electorate of Barker while they visit Parliament House. It is always a privilege, of course, to welcome any constituent to this place, but it is especially rewarding to welcome students.

Throughout the week I have had the pleasure of meeting hundreds of children from across Barker as another generation makes the annual visit to Canberra—the same trip I myself made in 1989. I have been particularly impressed by their knowledge of civics and citizenship—an area I am obviously passionate about.

This week has been one of reflection as well as of learning for those students. I was honoured to mark this year's Remembrance Day at the Australian War Memorial with some of the students. I commend the students of St Anthony's from Millicent and the students of St Martins and of Tenison Woods College from my home town of Mount Gambier for their exemplary conduct at the ceremony. In the face of some pretty poor weather they did themselves proud. I would also like to thank Monash Primary School from the Riverland, Keyneton Primary from the Barossa Valley and Palmer Primary from Palmer for taking the time to catch up with me while they toured the house. It is, of course, a great tonic for homesickness.

To all of the schools, I commend your students for their excellent behaviour and for their engagement. They are a credit to their schools and to the electorate more generally. It is through investing in our children and passing on our democratic traditions that we ensure the future of this nation. If the children of Barker are any indication of what is to come, then the future of this nation— *(Time expired)*

**Infant Formula**

**Mr BANDT** (Melbourne) (13:35): We have a four-month-old baby at home, and it is great. One of the things that I am learning—that we are learning—is that babies are fussy creatures. They have particular preferences from a very early age, and that extends to feeding.

We have not used formula, but I have spoken to a number of people who do. What is becoming apparent is that around the country there are many new parents who are having trouble getting the formula they need to feed their babies. We have seen pictures taken of stacks of tins of formula that were there in the supermarket one moment, but are taken out by one or two people in trolley loads the next. We are also hearing that it is not for personal use for people, but that they are taking it to ship off to other countries to sell at a higher mark-up.

It is tough enough being a new parent. A trip to the shops becomes a production in and of itself. You should not have to add to that the stress of not knowing whether the formula is going to be there or whether you are going to have to do research in advance to find out where you are going to have to travel to get the formula you need. In fact, at the moment, there are online forums where people are 'formula spotting' and letting everyone else know what supermarket they need to travel out to—often suburbs away—to get the particular kind of formula that their baby wants. It should not be like this. Of all the things that we talk about
here in this place, we should make time to discuss ways to ensure that parents get the formula they need. I am pleased that the minister has taken some action and is starting to meet people about this, but do not let this go until we find a solution.

Reid Electorate: Remembrance Day

Mr LAUNDY (Reid) (13:37): On Sunday morning I attended a special Remembrance Day ceremony in Davey Square, Strathfield. Of course Remembrance Day is a solemn and important occasion every year. But this ceremony was special, because it involved the official unveiling of two projects from Reid's Anzac Centenary grants program. The first was the refurbishment of the Davey Square Memorial. Originally located on a corner in Homebush, the memorial was relocated to Davey Square in 1978 and is an integral part of how Strathfield residents commemorate our service men and women, both past and present. Across the road from the memorial now stands a new memorial wall, and on Sunday we unveiled the memorial and rededicated 339 plaques commemorating local Strathfield servicemen who fought in World War I, World War II and the Korean War campaigns. It has been a long journey for these plaques. Originally on display in the now-demolished Homebush-Strathfield RSL, the plaques have been in the safe care of Marlene Doran OAM for years, kept hidden under a bed. On Sunday we had with us relatives of many of the men named on the plaques. Some had travelled across the country to take part in the rededication ceremony. On behalf of all the residents and families, I would like to thank my Anzac committee—Dr Abdurrahman, Allan Chapple, Marlene Doran, Colin Hodges, Alice Kang, Robert Ridge, Bob Turner and Harry Withers—for all their hard work. Without their friendship and support, we could not have achieved the results we have for Reid. To our service men and women: lest we forget.

Family Payments

Ms RYAN (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (13:38): Across kitchen tables in Australia last night, families asked themselves the question: 'What will we go without?' With the cuts to the FTB supplements, 1.5 million families will go without $726 per child, and 1.3 million families will go without an annual supplement of $354 per family, if this government gets its way. In my electorate, that translates to 21,000 families losing $726 per child, and 18,500 families losing $354 per annum. The question at the kitchen table is: 'What will we go without?' The question for this government is: 'Who will go without?' It is really simple. Will the multinationals go without, will the millionaires go without, or will the mums and dads of Australia's go without? That is the question this government needs to ask itself while it is busy having a conversation with itself about tax but it refuses to have a conversation with anyone else. At kitchen tables around this country and in my community, they are asking: 'What will we go without?' and then, 'What will we have to go without when a 15 per cent GST comes in?' This government needs to start thinking about who is going to go without.

Telstra Business Women's Awards

Ms GAMBARO (Brisbane) (13:40): I rise today to congratulate three very successful women from my electorate of Brisbane who were winners in this year's Queensland Telstra Business Women's Awards. Dr Catherine Ball was the major winner, being named the 2015 Telstra Queensland Business Woman of the Year, for her innovative approach to using drones to undertake marine fauna surveys. Dr Ball is based in Brisbane, where she works at an international engineering and environmental consultancy firm. Her work with drones has led
to a number of world firsts in environmental and infrastructure surveying, including the creation of high-resolution, 3-D walkthroughs of remote islands that enable scientists to assess turtle rookeries, for example, without even leaving their desks. Her willingness to do things differently has put her at the forefront of her industry and helped position Australia as a leader in unmanned aerial systems. In addition to the Queensland title, Dr Ball also won the Corporate and Private Award. She was joined on the night by fellow Brisbane electorate winner Belinda Brosnan of HR Junction in Newstead. Belinda took out the Start-Up Award for her demonstration of exceptional leadership values and strong social and community mindedness. And I want to congratulate Katarina Carroll, from the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, whose award was in recognition of both her current position and her previous role leading the Queensland Police Service's G20 security operation.

**Family Payments**

Ms CHESTERS (Bendigo) (13:42): Here we have the government's hypocrisy at its best. At the beginning of the week they were talking about increasing taxes, which will hurt some of the poorest families in our community, and now we are talking about a 15 per cent GST. At the same time, they are wanting to scrap and abolish family tax benefits, and that will cost the same families in our community. It is a $726 a year cut for every child of the 1.5 million families who receive family tax benefit A. For family tax benefit B, it is $354 per family. The government at the same time are saying, 'Let's have a sensible conversation about GST.' What is it going to be? Are you cutting supplements at the same time as increasing GST? People in the regional areas, particularly in my electorate of Bendigo, know that this government does not care about them. Ordinary working families, people who are having to confront these cuts head-on, are also now being told: 'Let's have a sensible conversation about GST.' This is the same government that not that long ago increased the fuel excise tax—another tax, a tax on a tax. This year they are now talking about increasing the GST by an extra five per cent. How much do regional people have to pay for their petrol? Under this government, it continues to increase. Perhaps it is because the Prime Minister does not have to travel far in his electorate because it is one of the smallest electorates in our country.

**Western Australia Threatened Species Forum**

Ms PRICE (Durack) (13:43): I was very pleased to attend the inaugural WA Threatened Species Forum in Geraldton last month. Co-ordinated by the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council, led by CEO Richard McLellan and his great team, the forum put the spotlight and indeed the microscope on threatened animals and plants in the state of WA. The event highlighted new conservation methodologies and recent successes in the plight of threatened fauna and flora to over 190 attendees over the two-day event. Courtesy of the Twitter-friendliness of the conference, #TSforumWA was trending at No. 3 on the Twitter feed that day. There was minimal waste, with little to no paper, as a Guidebook app was used instead of paper programs. As a guest speaker, I spoke about the vast work the Turnbull government is doing in this field, such as the Green Army, which has delivered projects preserving natural beauties in Durack and across Australia; the 20 Million Trees program; the National Landcare Program, which has delivered projects in the wheat belt and across Australia; the creation of the Threatened Species Commissioner, who is currently Greg Andrews; and the government's threatened species strategy. The event was run by the efficient and effective NACC on the day and was brought together by WA's seven natural resource
management groups and the Department of Parks and Wildlife. Well done and thank you for allowing me to be a part of a very special event held in Geraldton in the wonderful electorate of Durack.

**Turnbull Government**

Ms MacTIERNAN (Perth) (13:45): The Prime Minister tells us that he actually understands this whole issue of fairness and he says: Fairer is what it is all about. Fairness has got to be the key priority. But I really ask the Prime Minister to tell us what he thinks is happening across Australia; about the share that wages get as a proportion of the nation's wealth; about the fact that, over the last 20 years, we have seen the growth of the wealth of those top one per cent of our community has grown at a much faster rate than the wealth of anyone else and that we have in our society an escalating disparity in wealth. It is not because there are leaners and lifters. The entrenched advantage that comes not only from the genetics that the Prime Minister likes to talk about but also from the structural elements of our community, the structural elements of reward for effort, is increasingly creating a situation where, if you have got money, you make more money.

So all of the time, each day, he is getting up over and over again and saying: 'Fairness is what it's all about.' You tell us, Mr Prime Minister: what analysis have you done about where we are going in this community; and what are you going to do to turn it around?

**Hume Electorate: Boorowa Touch Football and Netball Carnival**

Mr TAYLOR (Hume) (13:46): People usually notice when I wear a netball bib, but not at Boorowa recently. I was one of thousands in sporting colours at the schools' annual touch footy and netball carnival. The host schools, Boorowa Central School and St Joseph's Primary School, raised $13½ thousand each after costs—a great result for one day of fundraising.

More than 3,000 kids and at least 2,000 supporters from across southern New South Wales and the ACT were at the carnival—now in its 70th year. Now 70 years of running the same sporting carnival is a pretty big achievement. Again, Boorowa showground was absolutely teeming with colour: 390 teams representing 47 schools played round robin touch footy and netball games with the money raised going to support local schools.

The beauty of this tournament is that there are no trophies. The carnival is not about winning; it is about fun, fitness and involvement. It was a delight to meet the kids, and I especially loved cheering on the composite touch footy team from Rye Park, Rugby and Wee Jasper—some of the smallest schools in my electorate.

The event's success and growth is a tribute to the hardworking members of the committee, including Robert Daniels, Julie Harton, Erin Harris, Patty Boulding, Brendan Maynard and many others. The support of Boorowa Council was also tremendous. Congratulations to all of those involved.

**Goods and Services Tax**

Mr HAYES (Fowler—Chief Opposition Whip) (13:48): There is much to be proud of in my community—the colour, the vibrancy, the diversity. After all, it is the most multicultural community in the country but, regrettably, it also has significant pockets of disadvantage.
In my community, there are 17,000 families receiving family tax benefit A. How do you think they are feeling waking up to the notion that this government is going to introduce cuts to family tax benefits that will impact on them and their families?

The average income in my community is a tad over $50,000. They are not rich people. They are not after handouts but they want a hand-up. We are now having a debate in this House about what is likely to be in and out of an expanded goods and services tax.

Extending the tax to fresh food, health and education is going to have a huge and deleterious effect on the people I represent. For that matter, I think most of those electorates represented by people on the other side are also going to be impacted by this. None of them are going to stand up today and talk about increases in the GST and what it means for them, because they intuitively know that the people they represent—as well as the people on this side—are going to be adversely affected by these changes.

**Blakeway, Miss Heather**

Mr VAN MANEN (Forde) (13:49): I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate and boast about one of Forde's outstanding local athletes, Heather Blakeway. Heather is one of PCYC Logan's rhythmic gymnastics and, at the age of 14, the Loganholme teen has already competed overseas in a number of competitions representing Australia.

On September 27, Heather travelled with the Australian rhythmic gymnastics team to represent Australia in the New Zealand national championships. Heather performed four exceptional routines and placed first in all apparatus with a score of 41.85 and first overall in the national championships—a tremendous achievement.

On November 20, Heather will compete in the SANIX rhythmic gymnastics cup tournament in Japan. She will be representing PCYC Logan City and Australia against some of the world's best rhythmic gymnasts.

Upon returning from Japan, Heather will be travelling to the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra to attend the Gymnastics Australia Team Future Camp.

Heather is one of this year's recipients of a Local Sporting Champions grant which has enabled her to represent Australia in Japan and New Zealand. She is an outstanding athlete who has represented the city of Logan and Australia with pride. It is a privilege to be able to support Heather and share her achievements with the House.

In the brief time: go the Socceroos tonight in the world cup qualifier against Kyrgyzstan.

**Goods and Services Tax**

Ms O'NEIL (Hotham) (13:51): I am so glad to have the opportunity this afternoon to make a very clear statement on behalf of the people of Hotham that an increase to the GST, a massive tax hike that will go onto every Australian family, is not the answer to this country's problems.

The Prime Minister has referred to a table where all of the reform opportunities are heaping up, and I have to say that table is going to be buckling under the pressure of all the options before him. We have a Prime Minister who tells us that he is trying to run a debate about reform, yet he is not able to tell us what the objectives of this reform process are.
Despite that, no matter what objectives the Prime Minister seems to think are in the interests of this government, the GST seems to be the answer. Well, it is not the answer no matter how you define Australia's problems.

There are four big reasons for that. First of all, the GST is not necessarily going to be a more efficient tax. The recent tax report commissioned by this government shows that the GST is not any more efficient, essentially, than income tax, so that argument is out. The GST is incredibly unfair. Every piece of modelling that has been done shows that the impost will be on the lowest income households. That is an unfair tax.

The Prime Minister has told us that we should trust him to make this tax change in a fair way. That is a joke.

An opposition member interjecting—

Ms O'NEIL: I understand why my good friend over here is laughing. This is a government that has spent two full years doing everything it can to reduce equality in this country, and the GST is just a part of that plan.

Bowman Electorate: North Stradbroke Island

Mr LAMING (Bowman) (13:52): The rest of Australia will find it inconceivable that state Labor in Queensland is intending to kill off sandmining on North Stradbroke Island. Picture yourself as a family utterly reliant on a mining income. State Labor thinks that you can clean camp sites and make cappuccinos. That is no substitute for the important jobs and skills that sandmining delivers. The year 2019 means four years away. Imagine if I told you that your family's livelihood will be snuffed out by government decision in just four years. There is a compromise policy from the Katter party that will be 2024 and another option for 2027. Have some understanding of the importance of mining. You can chew gum and walk at the same time.

North Stradbroke Island provides vital export dollars for Australia. It employs 50 Indigenous families that live in complex, difficult, remote circumstances and without these jobs are condemned to the lives of other Indigenous communities we see around Australia. Mining is the key to being connected to the real economy. They invest millions of dollars back into that island and the Queensland economy.

But of course Greens preferences are way too important for state Labor, who are going to kill off sandmining for no other reason than that they are doing a dirty deal with the Greens. We want to look after that island and look after those livelihoods. Whether you are an Indigenous or non-Indigenous mining family, you deserve the chance to transition without having your livelihood snuffed out by Queensland Labor.

Family Payments

Goods and Services Tax

Mr CONROY (Charlton) (13:54): I rise to voice my opposition to the government's lazy policy to raise the GST at the same time as they are attacking families through slashing the family tax benefit. The current Treasurer is making the former member for North Sydney look like an economic genius as he engages in magic pudding economics. He has promised this GST rise three times to different groups. He has said it is going to go to the states to fund hospitals and schools. He has said it is going to pay down debt. He has promised to replace
inefficient taxes—and, by the way, the Prime Minister has said that no low- and middle-income person will be worse off. That is logically impossible. You cannot do two of those things, let alone four of those things.

For the Treasurer to argue that he will cut down other taxes while providing compensation for a GST rise means only one thing: further cuts to other government programs. The cuts to the family tax benefit are the tip of the iceberg. This is economic policy at its laziest and most incoherent. It means that all they want to do is take the lazy option of attacking low- and middle-income Australians, attacking pensioners in my Hunter region and attacking families. I say the Labor Party will oppose it. We will be glad to campaign on it because we stand up for low- and middle-income Australia. We stand up for pensioners while those stand on the side of lazy economics and helping multinationals avoid paying their tax. History will prove us right.

Trade with China, Japan and South Korea

Mr WHITELEY (Braddon—Government Whip) (13:55): What a performance that was from a union hack that now occupies the seat on the other side of this chamber. Whilst Australia has a relatively small population, it produces and creates far more than it can actually consume. That is why the free trade agreements are so vital to growing our economy, maintaining our high standards of living and securing Australia’s place in the international trade of the future.

The local businesses in my electorate who are currently exporting and others who are looking to export in the future need to know how they can best capitalise on the free trade agreements that this government has secured with Japan, Korea and China. They need to learn how to navigate the cultural and language issues. That is why we have secured in Braddon a visit from Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Austrade officials to host a seminar next Tuesday, 17 November, starting at 1:30 pm.

Tasmania produces some of the best agricultural produce in the world. Our businesses manufacture some of the world’s most innovative products. We have the know-how and the can-do attitude to succeed, and through this seminar we are ensuring that Tasmanian businesses have the information they need to take full advantage of the new free trade agreements that this government and Minister Andrew Robb have delivered for the economic prosperity of this country.

Goods and Services Tax

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (13:57): One of the most exciting events in my electorate is at the Rocklea markets, where they have the first mango of the season. People come along and bid for the first carton of mangoes. It is a very exciting event, with the proceeds going to charity. Sadly, we have had a suggestion from the policy scouts opposite that they are going to bring in a GST that would apply to those mangoes, that would apply to the bananas sold there, that would apply to the apples, that would apply even to brussels sprouts and make them even more difficult to go down.

We know that there is a diabetes tsunami heading towards Australia. Why a sensible government would put a GST on fresh food and vegetables is beyond me. We know that the NATSEM modelling has showed that GST would particularly hit the low- and middle-income earners—an attack on Australia’s middle class and those who are doing it tough, the people
who are still just recovering from that horrific train wreck of a budget delivered by former Treasurer Joe Hockey back in 2014. But that cruel platform from the 2014 budget is what the current Prime Minister and the acting Prime Minister have based their current policies on.

This GST on fresh fruit and vegetables would be a tragedy for the low- and middle-income Australians, and they should avoid it at all costs.

**Barton Electorate: Being Greek Festival**

**Mr VARVARIS** (Barton) (13:58): Recently the Prime Minister came out to my electorate and attended the Being Greek Festival at Carss Park on Sunday, 25 October. As the name suggests, the festival is about celebrating all things Greek and recognising the many Greek Australians who call Sydney and Australia home. Thousands of people attended this wonderful festival, now in its fourth year, to celebrate the Greek culture. But it is not just a day for the Greek people of Sydney; it is an opportunity for everyone to be Greek for a day and to experience the beautiful Mediterranean cuisine, the elaborate traditional dance, the language which is as dynamic as it is ancient and the culture rich with life and movement. Australia's Greek migrants have been in this country since World War II and firmly established themselves into the social fabric of this nation. The Being Greek Festival recognises the many Greek Australians who have established their homes on this land celebrating their Greek heritage without detriment to our broad Australian values. Barton residents were delighted that the Prime Minister joined them, particularly when he gave a rousing speech and ended it in Greek.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Barton. In accordance with standing order 43, the time for members' statements has concluded.

**MINISTERIAL ARRANGEMENTS**

**Mr TRUSS** (Wide Bay—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development) (14:00): I inform the House that the Prime Minister will be absent from question time today as he is in Jakarta undertaking bilateral meetings with the President of Indonesia. I will answer questions on his behalf. The Minister for Trade and Investment is in Cairns on ministerial business. The Minister for Foreign Affairs will answer questions on his behalf. The Minister for Resources, Energy and Northern Australia is representing the government at the International Mining and Resources Conference in Melbourne. The Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science will answer questions on his behalf.

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

**Goods and Services Tax**

**Mr SHORTEN** (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:00): Mr Speaker, my question is to the Treasurer. This morning the Treasurer's colleague Senator Abetz, in a wide-ranging interview, said:

> Once again the government does need to settle the agenda here as to whether an increase to the GST is or is not on the table.

Does the Treasurer agree with his colleague? Is the GST on the table or not?

**Mr MORRISON** (Cook—Treasurer) (14:01): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. As the Leader of the Opposition knows, as all members of the House know, when you are engaged in a discussion about creating a better tax system, one that actually backs
Australians to get ahead—Australians who are out there working, and I note today's employment figures show there are a lot more of them working, which is fantastic and we welcome that—then you go out there trying to create a better tax system that achieves that. Part of the process in trying to create a better tax system is that you engage the states and territories. The Leader of the Opposition would know that it has been state and territory governments who have put forward this option. This is the option that state and territory governments have put forward to the Commonwealth government to consider how you can have a better tax system in this country. We have been working with the states and territories on the basis of the request for the information that they have put to us.

It is not just state and territory governments who have been putting forward this proposal. I note Geoff Gallop said:

I've been on the record for some time talking about need to increase the GST …

Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition might want to talk to Mr Gallop or Mr Weatherill or Mr Baird or any of the state treasurers and premiers, current or past, who have put forward these proposals. We are considering all options that are put to us on these matters.

The member for Fairfax raised an issue yesterday about other areas of tax, and we welcome people who actually seriously engage in the debate. Those opposite, as always, have learnt nothing in their time in opposition from their appalling years in government. One of the things they have not learnt is how to make sure that their savings are greater than their expenditure commitments, because we know they have $60 billion of commitments out there and only $5 billion worth of revenue and savings to pay for them. They think they can use those savings 12 times over. We will get on with the job of creating jobs, of supporting jobs and of having a plan which supports jobs and growth throughout our economy. I have no idea what the Leader of the Opposition is going to get on with.

Economy

Ms LANDRY (Capricornia) (14:03): Mr Speaker, my question is to the Acting Prime Minister and the Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development. Will the Acting Prime Minister update the House on how government measures are assisting regional Australia and its contribution to the national economy?

Mr TRUSS (Wide Bay—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development) (14:03): I thank the honourable member for her question. There is no doubt at all that when our regions are strong around our nation so is our country. When the regions are doing well, our nation also prospers. It is vitally important that, even in a time when drought is affecting much of inland Australia, we look at the progress and the development and the way in which the government’s policies for regional Australia are already starting to bear fruit.

We have had a record investment in infrastructure across the nation, including substantial expenditure in regional communities. The honourable member for Capricornia and the honourable member for Flynn would be delighted to see examples of that in their own areas, particularly the completion of the Yeppen floodplain project, which will make an enormous difference to the people of Rockhampton, especially when there are times of heavy weather. It is also obvious that other programs, like Roads to Recovery and the Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program, are all delivering vital road work in local communities.
Today's unemployment figures are a demonstration about how these sorts of projects are a practical example of creating opportunity for workers across Australia. The reduced unemployment rate, the creation of a very large number of jobs and the movement forward way above market expectations in employment creation contrasts starkly with what was happening before this government came to office. Around 10 times as many jobs are being created each month as were created in 2013 under Labor. That does demonstrate that positive policies, governments that are optimistic about our nation's future and governments that are putting in place the mechanisms to help build a stronger future build confidence, create jobs and therefore build us a stronger economy.

That is particularly important in northern Australia. Northern Australia produces the majority of our export income; it is 40 per cent of our continent, but only has about five per cent or seven per cent of our nation's population. Those people are punching well above their weight. What we do know is that if we invest in the North, we will get rich rewards. This government is determined to ensure that northern Australia is able to achieve its potential. We are committed to building infrastructure, and we are committed to ensuring that there is investment capital available for the big projects in the North. All of that helps build the confidence that Australians need to invest and save for the future.

**Goods and Services Tax**

Ms COLLINS (Franklin) (14:06): Mr Speaker, my question is to the Minister for Territories, Local Government and Major Projects. Will the minister rule out applying a GST to council rates?

Mr FLETCHER (Bradfield—Minister for Territories, Local Government and Major Projects) (14:07): The old politics rule-in-rule-out game is being played all across the Labor Party. Come into the 21st century; that is my advice to you.

*Opposition members interjecting—*

The SPEAKER: The member for Griffith and the member for Hotham. The member for Chifley, I have asked you to stop interjecting a number of times and we are not even at 10 past two.

**Budget**

Mr CRAIG KELLY (Hughes) (14:07): My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer update the House on the progress the government is making to improve the budget position and how important is a strong budget to economic growth and jobs?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (14:08): I thank the member for Hughes, my colleague from the Shire, for his question. I am very pleased to get a question which is asking about the budget but also about growth and jobs. As the Acting Prime Minister has just said, the unemployment rate in this country is now at 5.9 per cent. That is something that we welcome but, most importantly, we congratulate those Australians who got those jobs, who put themselves out there to get those jobs. We congratulate the businesses who have shown the confidence in our economy to go and put people in those jobs last month, as they have been doing for some time now.
More Australians are getting into work. Some 366,400 extra jobs have been created since this government came to office—315,000 in just the last year alone. That is the highest rate of jobs growth we have seen over a year in 7½ years, since the end of the GFC. As I said, that unemployment rate has gone down to 5.9 per cent and we welcome that. But I say this: we are even more excited about the fact that the youth unemployment rate has fallen to 12.2 per cent—that is, lower than it was at the last election. There are more young people in jobs today as a result of the strong policies of this government. We have seen that figure fall. After peaking in November 2014 at 14½ per cent, it has come down now to 12.2 per cent.

To ensure that you stay on a path for growth and jobs and more jobs, you need to ensure many things. You need a strong national infrastructure plan—a $50-billion national infrastructure plan—and you need a better tax system. But the other thing you need is a strong budget and this government, since it has come to office, has implemented $64 billion in savings measures to get the budget under control, to control expenditure. That is how you manage a budget. You do not do it by putting up taxes; you do it by managing and controlling your expenditure.

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr MORRISON: Those opposite interject on the issue of taxes. Last time we changed the tax system, we cut taxes. We cut income taxes. We cut state taxes. We cut taxes right across the board. I notice when those opposite came to office, they did not put those taxes back. They did not go back because they knew that when you have a tax system change that is done by a government that knows how to support jobs and growth, you do not go back and reverse those things and they never reversed any of them because—even though they would never admit it—the tax system changes of 2000 helped the economy and made for a stronger Australia.

Goods and Services Tax

Ms BIRD (Cunningham) (14:11): My question is to the Minister for Vocational Education. Will the minister rule out increasing TAFE fees with the GST?

Mr HARTSUYKER (Cowper—Minister for Vocational Education and Skills and Deputy Leader of the House) (14:11): I thank the good member for her question. I must say that I am feeling the love. I spent two years in the employment portfolio and I had one question. I have already got my first question just within a couple of months so I am indeed feeling the love from the members opposite.

What I can say is that we are committed to a tax system that is going to take this country forward. We are committed to a tax system that is going to provide a growing economy and it is a growing economy that is going to provide opportunities for Australians to get into work. You can see the fruits of the government's efforts with the fall in the unemployment rate. I do not hear those opposite asking about what the good news is about the fall in the unemployment rate. We only hear them trying to mount a scare campaign on taxes.

We are about a tax system that is going to meet the needs of Australia in the 21st century. They are about looking through the rear-view mirror—

Mr Thistlethwaite interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Kingsford Smith will cease interjecting.
Mr HARTSUYKER: trying to mount a—not so scary—scare campaign. We want an education system that is going to meet our needs into the 21st century.

Ms Bird: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order: relevance. If the minister could go to the education matters—

The SPEAKER: The member will resume her seat. The minister has the call and is in order.

Ms O'Neil interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Hotham will cease interjecting.

Mr HARTSUYKER: We on this side of the House understand the importance of education. We have policies on education that will drive this country forward. We have policies in relation to taxation that will take this country forward. We are having a discussion with the Australian people and we are aiming to come up with a tax system that will be of benefit of all Australians. For those Australians on lower incomes, it will be a tax system that will support those Australians to provide them with the services they need going forward. And for those who are in business and for those who are striving to better themselves, it will be a tax system which will give them the incentive to increase their incomes and assist in the growth of the Australian economy. We on this side of the House are about driving Australia forward; those on the other side of the House are about holding this economy back.

Mental Health

Socceroos

Ms McGOWAN (Indi) (14:14): My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, the report of the National Review of Mental Health Programs and Services was provided to the government in December 2014 and, consequently, you established the Mental Health Expert Reference Group to report back to you by October 2015. Can you please tell that House how this is going and what are the plans that the government has to correct the fundamental structural shortcomings that exist in our mental health service, which particularly have impact for rural and regional Australians?

Ms LEY (Farrer—Minister for Health, Minister for Sport and Minister for Aged Care) (14:14): As Minister for Sport, I want to recognise the strong support in the chamber today for the Socceroos. Best wishes to Ange and the boys for their important game against Kyrgyzstan tonight at GIO Stadium here in Canberra. I will be there and I know many of you will be there in spirit.

I want to thank the member for Indi for her important question and reassure her that, following the National Mental Health Commission's review of mental health services—which certainly outlined a fragmented, a disorganised and, quite frankly, a failing system across Australia—$14 billion has been spent on mental health between the states and the territories but, interestingly, they have not demanded more money, such is the fragmented nature and the inability of that funding to reach the people who need help.

We took on board all of those recommendations. We, as the member said, appointed an expert reference group, led by Kate Carnell, to implement those. That implementation task force has reported to me and I can certainly say that in the next very little while, before the
end of the year if not sooner, I will be announcing what I and this side of the House believe are significant, far-reaching and very important reforms on mental health. I want to highlight some of the sense of the approach we are taking and the things we have picked up from that report: the opportunity for digital engagement, the great advances that have been made in communicating via a self-help app, a digital gateway and counselling online—a lot of young people put their hands up and said that is a preferred method for them. If we know we can intervene early and get the right assistance for that cohort, we can save our resources for the people who need complex care later on in the cycle.

The important thing for consumers who live with mental health is that we listen to them and, as much as possible, allow them to influence the style of care they will get. We will be doing that very strongly. Community-based, localised and regional—this is not about Canberra giving solutions; this is not about Canberra designing a program that everyone then picks up. The Minister for Indigenous Affairs, for example, talked to me about the ability of Indigenous communities to receive urgent suicide help in the lead-up to the wet season, which is a particularly fragile time for many of them. If we look at that local approach, if we look at early intervention, if we manage what many in the sector call a stepped care model, we know we can provide the right help at the right time in the right way.

Trade

Mrs SUDMALIS (Gilmore) (14:17): My question is to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Would the Minister explain how the upcoming APEC meetings will boost jobs and growth in Australia?

Ms JULIE BISHOP (Curtin—Minister for Foreign Affairs) (14:17): I thank the member for Gilmore for her question and I note her strong advocacy for more jobs and for economic growth in her electorate. This weekend I will travel to Manila with the Prime Minister and the Minister for Trade and Investment. We will take part in the annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, known as APEC. The forum will bring together 21 member economies from around the Pacific rim to discuss trade, investment and regulatory cooperation, in the interests of promoting peace and prosperity throughout our region.

The APEC members account for 58 per cent of the world's GDP and, importantly, almost 73 per cent of Australia's trade in goods and services. The member countries include the giant economies of the United States, with whom we have a free trade agreement that was entered into by the Howard government 10 years ago, and China, Japan and Korea. The coalition government has negotiated free trade agreements with those giant economies of North Asia.

The prosperity of the Asia-Pacific nations is inextricably linked with the prosperity of our nation. This is our region. This is where we live. This is where our future lies. Australia has been highly supportive of the Philippines APEC agenda for 2015. This includes enhancing regional economic integration—the more connected we are the more opportunities there are for Australian jobs—and fostering the participation of small and medium businesses and enterprises in regional and global markets. We know that small businesses make up 97 per cent of all businesses in Australia. We are also focusing on investing in education, skills and training across the region. Each of these elements helps create a positive environment for Australian businesses to expand their presence into these huge markets and to make more profitable investments—and, therefore, will lead to more Australian jobs.
Australia is also leading APEC's work across a range of areas that will assist major industry, small and medium enterprises. We are strengthening regional trade and investment in mining equipment, in technology services. We are promoting training in the transport and logistics sector. We are addressing barriers to e-commerce, particularly for small businesses in the region.

We also recognise the need to address gender imbalances in Australia and throughout the Asia-Pacific. We are focusing our attention on helping small to medium enterprises that are operated by women to better connect to export markets and this will be a feature of our work.

The growth of the Asia-Pacific is critical for Australia's economic growth and for our stability. The government is committed to creating the best environment possible for our industries to flourish. This is all part of our positive agenda to create more jobs for Australians, to create more economic growth.

**Liberal Party Leadership**

Ms PLIBERSEK (Sydney—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:21): My question is also to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. This morning, the deputy leader's colleague, the Minister for Immigration, said, 'Obviously the deputy leader in the party owes a special duty of care and a special loyalty to the leader.' Can the Minister explain to the House what sort of loyalty she showed to Brendan Nelson, then Malcolm Turnbull, then Tony Abbott and now Malcolm Turnbull again?

The SPEAKER: The question is out of order. The standing orders are very clear. To have a question in order it has to make a connection with the Minister's responsibilities as the Minister for Foreign Affairs. She is the deputy leader of the Liberal Party, which is not something that she has responsibility for as a minister or in this House. It is very clear. I will hear the member for Watson. If the member for Sydney wants to rephrase the question to make a connection, I will give her that opportunity.

Mr Burke: You will give her the opportunity to rephrase?

The SPEAKER: Yes. The member for Sydney needs to make a connection to the minister's administration, portfolio responsibilities or statements in the House.

**Minister for Foreign Affairs**

Ms JULIE BISHOP (Curtin—Minister for Foreign Affairs) (14:22): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will rephrase. Can the minister explain to the House what the implications are for Australia's relations with other nations of the special loyalty the minister has shown to first Brendan Nelson, then Malcolm Turnbull, then Tony Abbott, then Malcolm Turnbull?

Ms JULIE BISHOP: nevertheless there are no implications for our bilateral, regional or multilateral relations. I might add that the role of deputy is to be the deputy to the Prime Minister or the leader.
Mr Mitchell interjecting—
The SPEAKER: The member for McEwen is warned!
Ms JULIE BISHOP: It is a separate role, elected separately. It is not part of a joint ticket.
Mr Husic interjecting—
The SPEAKER: The member for Chifley is warned!
Ms JULIE BISHOP: I have fulfilled my responsibilities and my duties as the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party since 2007.
Mr Champion interjecting—
The SPEAKER: The member for Wakefield is warned as well. I need to be able to hear the questions and the answers.
An opposition member interjecting—
The SPEAKER: The member for Chifley is warned as well.

Superannuation

Mr WHITELEY (Braddon—Government Whip) (14:23): It will be good to get back onto the serious matters.

Opposition members interjecting—
The SPEAKER: The member for Braddon will ask his question.

Mr WHITELEY: My important question is to the Minister for Small Business and Assistant Treasurer. Will the minister advise the House on how the government is cutting red tape to ensure that people who are terminally ill can access superannuation more easily?

Ms O’Dwyer (Higgins—Minister for Small Business and Assistant Treasurer) (14:24): Thank you very much to the member for Braddon for a very serious and very important question. It should concern every single person in this place that, when we cut regulation and red tape, we are not simply serving to cut regulation and red tape for the sake of it or because it is holding back our economy and holding back innovation. It is also because it serves a very special purpose of making sure that those people who have very profound personal consequences of that red tape can in fact be helped.

The government made a commitment before the last election that it would cut, each and every year, more than a billion dollars worth of red tape and regulation. We have exceeded that commitment. In just on two years, the government has cut more than $4.5 billion worth of unnecessary red tape and regulation. Today in the parliament we brought forward a bill that is going to help terminally ill people access their superannuation so much more easily.

What would normally happen for somebody who is terminally ill who is given a diagnosis from, say, their GP and their oncologist and given less than 24 months to live is that, if they had unclaimed superannuation being held by the Australian Taxation Office, they would need to go through a very long process that would go for about three months. At the end of that process, they would need to pay fees to their superannuation fund in order to access the funds that had been deposited by the Australian Taxation Office. Worse, in circumstances where that terminally ill person had shut down their superannuation account because they wanted to access their funds for their families and for the treatment of their illness, they would need to
create a new superannuation fund in order to transfer the money that was being held by the ATO.

Today we can say in this place that we are getting rid of those steps. Terminally ill people will be able to access their superannuation directly from the Australian Taxation Office, and not one fee and not one charge will be imposed upon them in order to do just that.

Importantly, as well, in this place we are going to make it easier for small businesses to make sure that they are doing the right thing by their employees. At the moment, there is a very severe calculation of the superannuation guarantee charge on employers who might inadvertently make a mistake in their payment of their superannuation guarantee.

Dr Chalmers: You've decreased the fine for bad behaviour.

The SPEAKER: The member for Rankin will cease interjecting.

Ms O'DWYER: It could be because their employees have worked longer hours. Instead of charging the interest over the entire period of time before the Australian Taxation Office discovers it, it will just be for the period of time where that payment has not been made, making it better for small business and better for employees as well.

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr DREYFUS (Isaacs—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (14:27): My question is to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The minister did at least three major media interviews on 15 September this year, the morning after her party brought down their Prime Minister. I refer to a suggestion this afternoon from journalist Peter van Onselen that the minister removed these transcripts from her ministerial website after media questions about her office's involvement in the knifing of the former Prime Minister. What has the minister got to hide?

Ms JULIE BISHOP (Curtin—Minister for Foreign Affairs) (14:27): The shadow Attorney-General is completely misinformed.

A government member: It's out of order!

Government members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members on my right! The Minister for Foreign Affairs will resume her seat. Members on my right will not interject with guidance. I am listening to the questions closely. The question is in order.

Ms JULIE BISHOP: As I was saying, the shadow Attorney-General is completely misinformed. I gave a number of interviews on the morning after the change of leadership of the Liberal Party. On those occasions, the questions were all about Liberal Party internal politics and the change of leader. I was advised by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade that it was inappropriate to put such transcripts—

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members on my left will cease—

Ms JULIE BISHOP: on the website as the minister for foreign affairs and trade. That was a ruling within the department.

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Minister for Foreign Affairs will resume her seat. The member for Watson will resume his seat. I have a matter I am going to deal with. The level of interjections
is far too high, and I do not need interjections on my right when I making a ruling, whether that was the member for Dobell or the member for Solomon.

Mr Conroy interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The minister will resume her seat. On cue the member for Chifley interjects again—no, the member for Charlton, I should say, interjects again. The level of interjections is too high. It is disorderly, and it does this House no justice at all. There are many people interjecting far too often. The member for Charlton can leave under 94(a). The member for Watson had a point of order? No.

Ms JULIE BISHOP: And, Mr Speaker—

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

The member for Charlton then left the chamber.

Ms JULIE BISHOP: This is consistent with the practice of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, to remove from my transcripts as foreign minister—as they have done with previous foreign ministers—any portion of transcripts that relates to internal party politics and not to my role as Minister for Foreign Affairs.

In light of the allegation that I was seeking to hide something, I contacted the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and asked that these transcripts be put on the ministerial website. They have agreed with me to do that. We will review the past practice whereby the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade removes parts of transcripts that relate only to party political matters.

National Security

Mr TEHAN (Wannon) (14:30): My question is to the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection. Will the minister inform the House of action the government is taking to address the growing threat of terrorism and to protect the community from terrorists trying to return to Australia?

Mr DUTTON (Dickson—Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) (14:30): I want to say thank you very much to the member for Wannon. He chairs the intelligence committee in this place—a bipartisan committee and a very important committee indeed.

The government announced earlier this year that we would introduce legislation which would strip dual citizens of their Australian citizenship if they had been involved in a terrorist related activity and if that would not render that person stateless. There are safeguards recommended by the committee, and I commend all of the members of the committee. There were 27 recommendations in total, accepted in all by the government. I believe we have improved the legislation and it is of great benefit to the national security of this country.

As all members in this place know there are over 400 high-priority counterterrorism cases currently being managed by our security agencies. Since September of last year, when the National Terrorism Public Alert Level was raised to high, 26 people have been charged as a result of 10 terrorism related operations. That is more than one-third of all terrorism related charges since 2001.

I think that as all Australians have seen through the events in Sydney and Melbourne, and also from what they have seen in France and elsewhere across the world, the threat of terrorism is not going to diminish in our lifetimes. Governments need to be prepared to deal
with that threat. Whether it is stopping young 14- or 15-year-olds at the border from leaving our shores to go to fight in Syria or Iraq and then eventually to return to our shores even more radicalised, or if it means putting further investments into our agencies—including the Australian Federal Police, the Australian Border Force and the intelligence agencies—then this government is prepared to make that investment.

This legislation goes to trying to give an extra ability to the agencies to identify those people who may have broken their allegiance with this country and who, because of their own actions, have in essence renounced their own citizenship. This is a significant piece of legislation. I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition and my opposite number for their support in relation to this bill. We will continue to work together in the nation’s best interest. No doubt, there will be further collaborations, because the threat will increase and it will be incumbent upon governments to make sure that we put in place measured pieces of legislation which will ensure the safety of our people.

Goods and Services Tax

Mr BOWEN (McMahon) (14:33): My question is to the Treasurer. Brian Abbott of St Clair is 39, single and has no children. He works, but does not earn enough to pay income tax. Brian wrote to me on Tuesday. He wrote, ‘People relying on their savings, not claiming welfare payments and not paying tax are likely to be significantly impacted by a rise in the GST and not compensated for it.’ How would the government compensate people like Brian for increasing the price of everything by jacking the GST up to 15 per cent?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (14:34): I thank the member for Fowler for his question. Sorry! It is not the member for Fowler— it is the member for McMahon! I am getting ahead of myself. Maybe you are!

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer will come to the substance of the question!

Ms Rowland: Tell us about your preselection!

Mr Albanese: You're doing—

The SPEAKER: The member for Greenway will stop interjecting! The member for Grayndler will stop interjecting!

Mr MORRISON: I thank the member for his question and I refer him to the experience when the Howard-Costello government introduced changes to the tax system. The reason I have to refer to that experience is because—

Ms Chesters interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Bendigo is warned!

Mr MORRISON: The government has no such proposal that the opposition is referring to. Those who have raised these issues about the GST are actually state governments and former state Labor premiers. Perhaps the member would like to discuss those issues with some of his colleagues at the state level?

When the tax system was changed back in 2000 there was not one single change: there were many changes. Taxes were cut, peoples’ living standards increased and our economy grew. We actually removed the shackles on people which were holding back their economic
progress. I do not understand why those opposite would not want to engage in a serious discussion about how that can be achieved again—how you can have a better tax system.

Some 15 years ago, that was the last time we were at risk of the average wage earner in this country going into the second-highest tax bracket. It was 15 years ago! And the Howard-Costello government did something about it. They introduced a range of changes to the tax system, cutting taxes across the board at the state and federal levels to leave people who were working, and also people—and I stress, as a result of those changes—who were not working, in a better position.

I ask those opposite who have raised these issues if they could point us to the evidence from the last time there was major tax system change in this country, which occurred under a coalition government, of the compensation that was put in place by the Howard Costello government not operating? When did it not work and not leave people compensated? The only evidence they will find is that in many cases they were actually overcompensated. They were overcompensated!

So those opposite like to live a few myths, and the myth they are living at the moment is that they do not understand that you can change a tax system and that you can do it to help people—to help Australians who are out there right now working, saving and investing, and who are being held back by the high levels of taxes they are paying. We believe that can be fixed. Those opposite do not even want to turn up to the debate.

Cowan Electorate: Broadband

Mr SIMPKINS (Cowan) (14:36): My constituency question is to the Minister for Territories, Local Government and Major Projects, representing the Minister for Communications. Minister, there are many parts and suburbs of Greenwood, Tapping and Pearsall in my electorate of Cowan who do not have broadband access at all. Will the minister update the House on what the government is doing to address the serious problems of internet coverage affecting these suburbs in my electorate?

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members on my left will cease interjecting. I have already warned about the level of interjections. The minister has the call.

Mr FLETCHER (Bradfield—Minister for Territories, Local Government and Major Projects) (14:37): It comes as a pleasant surprise this afternoon. The member is a very strong advocate for the needs of his community when it comes to the National Broadband Network. He is a strong advocate for the needs of his constituents in suburbs like Greenwood, Tapping and Pearsall.

Mr Albanese interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Grayndler will cease interjecting.

Mr FLETCHER: When the coalition came to government in 2013, you may be interested to ask the question: how many premises were receiving a service from the NBN in Western Australia? Was it 34,000? Was it 3,400? Was it 340? It was 34 premises. In 2013 there were 34 premises—

Ms Rowland interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Greenway will cease interjecting.
Mr FLETCHER: in the entire state of Western Australia that were getting a service on the NBN. Since that time, Mr Speaker, I am pleased to tell you that things have completely turned around for Western Australia, for Australia and for the electorate of Cowan. There are now over 60,000 premises in the member's electorate where there is construction underway or where there will be construction underway in the next three years—over 60,000 premises included in the rollout plan.

Mr Morrison interjecting—
Mr Albanese interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer and the member for Grayndler will cease interjecting.

Mr FLETCHER: By 2017, connections to fibre to the node will commence in Greenwood, Tapping and Pearsall, and connections to the HFC in Greenwood will start in 2018. So after a dismal display of nonperformance by this incompetent lot opposite—

Mr Morrison interjecting—
Mr Albanese interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer and the member for Grayndler will cease interjecting.

Mr FLETCHER: the Turnbull government is delivering when it comes to NBN for Australia, for Western Australia and for the member's electorate.

Mr Albanese interjecting—
Ms Rowland interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Grayndler will cease interjecting. The Treasurer will cease interjecting. The member for Greenway I asked a number of times to cease interjecting, and she continued. She is now warned.

Goods and Services Tax

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (14:40): My question is to the Treasurer and goes to the detail of his last answer. A part-time retail worker will earn in the order of $18,000 a year and therefore pay no income tax. Given that there is no longer a wholesale sales tax to abolish and that wages of this order attract no income tax, what mechanisms would be available to the government to compensate workers in this position were they to increase the GST to 15 per cent?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (14:40): I thank the member for his question. Once again, I reconfirm to the House that the government has no such proposal or preferred option as he pretends to suggest there is. So once again I can only refer to the history of when there were changes to the tax system previously, and the various adjustments and compensation measures that were put in place the last time that was done were incredibly effective. I would refer him to that experience of how you change a tax system, because I know those opposite have not had terribly good experience on changing a tax system.

Mr Dreyfus interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Isaacs is warned.

Mr MORRISON: When those opposite tried to change the tax system, it was called the carbon tax. Another one they tried to introduce was, of course, the mining tax—a mining tax
that raised no revenue. This is the level of genius on changing tax systems that we saw from those opposite. But, if I talk about their own carbon tax, we gave the Australian people the ultimate compensation for the carbon tax they put on: we abolished it. But, when they introduced the carbon tax, they put compensation measures in place and we actually kept those compensation measures.

Ms Macklin: Not all of them.

Mr MORRISON: I note the interjection from the shadow minister, who says we did not keep all of them. We got rid of the tax and then we kept a large number of the compensation measures, and the member opposite seems to think that that is a bad deal. This is the same member who decided to take single mothers who were on the parenting payment and, when their child turned six, put them on Newstart.

Ms Macklin interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer will resume his seat. The member for Jagajaga will cease interjecting. Has the Treasurer concluded his answer? The Treasurer has concluded his answer.

Sport

Mr ALEXANDER (Bennelong) (14:42): My constituency question is to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. This weekend my community will celebrate the fifth annual Hyundai Bennelong Cup, welcoming some of the world's top table tennis players to our locality for a sports diplomacy initiative. Will the minister please update the House on the government's sports diplomacy program and how this is delivering benefits to local constituencies like mine in Bennelong?

Ms JULIE BISHOP (Curtin—Minister for Foreign Affairs) (14:43): I thank the member for Bennelong for his question and acknowledge his extraordinary contribution to sports diplomacy over a number of years as a tennis icon and as one of the world's great tennis players, and the role that he has played in using sport to promote better relations between Australia and other countries. I am also delighted that the member asked this question for today I launched the fifth Hyundai Bennelong Cup, which was established by the member for Bennelong—

Mr Albanese interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Grayndler will cease interjecting.

Ms JULIE BISHOP: and brings together table tennis teams from a number of nations, including China, South Korea, Japan and Malaysia. For the first time, New Zealand and Australia play as an Anzac team in the Bennelong Cup, quite fitting for the 100th anniversary of Anzac.

Earlier this year the Australian government launched what we call a sports diplomacy initiative, and this is using our unique capabilities in sport to promote further investment, trade and economic ties and cultural, education and tourism links. Sport plays a unique role in Australia's history. It has helped shape our identity as a nation. It is how we showcase our values, our strengths and our character on the world stage. Some of Australia's sporting heroes have been our very best ambassadors in building bilateral, regional and multilateral relationships. The sports diplomacy agenda is focusing particularly on our region—on the
Indian Ocean and Asia-Pacific. Any members of this House who have visited the Pacific, particularly Papua New Guinea—where Australian sport is a part of their way of life—will know that we can use sport to transcend divides. It transcends language barriers, cultural difference, religious differences and racial differences. We are using our capability and our ability in sport to build stronger relationships.

Indeed, 11 Australian national sporting organisations—many of them will be based in the electorates of members here—are connecting with their counterpart sporting organisation in countries in our region to promote programs to support young people, to support women and girls, to support people from lower socio-economic areas and using sport as a means of positive engagement.

We have put together the Pacific Sports Partnership program. We are spending about $2 million in ensuring that some of these initiatives can get under way immediately. We see sports diplomacy as a positive part of our agenda in developing closer relationships in the region.

I am delighted that the member for Bennelong is using sport to develop stronger relationships with China, South Korea, Japan, Malaysia and, of course, our friends in New Zealand. I congratulate him on this initiative.

**Goods and Services Tax**

**Mr SNOWDON** (Lingiari) (14:46): My question is to the Treasurer. I wonder if the Treasurer can advise us what compensation there would be for any increased and broadened GST to take into account the fact that fuel, groceries and fresh food are a lot more expensive—far more expensive—in remote communities and areas in my electorate than anywhere else in Australia?

**Mr MORRISON** (Cook—Treasurer) (14:46): It is a bit like the Prime Minister said yesterday, 'It's groundhog day' with these questions. I remind those opposite that the government has put forward no such proposal. The government has not outlined any sort of preferred option along the lines that he has suggested, and the government has responded to requests from the states and territories to provide them with responses and information. I refer the member again to the—

**Ms Butler interjecting**—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Griffith is warned!

**Mr SNOWDON:** experience of the Howard and the Costello government when they introduced a change to the tax system, and how they were able to ensure that Australians were better off that the appropriate adjustments were made at that time. That is the lived experience of this country when it comes to when a coalition government makes positive changes to our tax system that ensure people are not being held back. I draw to the attention of the House that 15 years ago, which was the time when those tax system changes were introduced—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Griffith on a point of order.

**Ms Butler:** Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This has nothing to do with Lingiari.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Griffith has no point of order. I remind her she is already warned.

**Mr Mitchell interjecting**—
The SPEAKER: The member for McEwen is now warned! You will not interject when I am making a ruling.

Mr MORRISON: In making that reference to what occurred 15 years ago—which was the last time we had changes to our tax system that left Australians better off in a position where they could go forward with serious changes to the tax system—back then compared to now an average wage earner today is certainly earning two times more than they were 15 years ago. But guess what? They are paying three times more personal income tax. So they are earning twice as much, but they are paying almost three times as much in income tax. This is one of the things that is holding Australians back—Australians who are out there, who are working and who are saving and investing. What we are talking about is trying to change the tax system to leave people in that situation better off.

The average wage earner will go onto the second highest tax bracket next year, and what do we hear from those opposite? Nothing, absolutely nothing. On this side of the House we want to ensure we have a tax system that backs Australians. On that side of the House they just want to whack up taxes without any corresponding decrease in taxes because that is how they think they can address the budget challenge. And we know that is true because the shadow Treasurer has $60 billion of commitments out there and he only has $5 billion of revenue measures and savings measures to pay for them. He has to pay it 12 times over just to get back to a level playing field on where this government is now.

As I reminded the House yesterday, if we had stayed on the same spending trajectory as those opposite from 2012-13, this budget and the forward estimates would be around $80 billion in higher spending. That is their record.

Bowman Electorate: Broadband

Mr LAMING (Bowman) (14:49): My question is to the minister representing the Minister for Communications. With the two koala corridor suburbs of Mount Cotton and Redland Bay due to be connected to fibre-to-the-node by year's end, attention has turned to HFC rollout that will serve eight of the other 12 mainland Bowman suburbs. Could you update us please on the technology that is being considered, on the rollout timetables and on the prospects for HFC in Queensland?

Mr FLETCHER (Bradfield—Minister for Territories, Local Government and Major Projects) (14:50): I am very pleased to get this question from the member for Bowman, who is a fine advocate for his electorate. Of course, I am very pleased that we have so many assiduous advocates on this side of the House who are asking questions about the services that are being delivered over the National Broadband Network, because what has changed is that under the previous government if you asked that question you did not get a very satisfactory answer. When you called the NBN they had one of those interactive voice response systems. Press one for media releases. Press two for photo opportunities. Press three for electorate visits. Press four for Stephen Conroy rolling out fibre. Press five for other election campaign stunts. Press six for Julia Gillard in a high vis vest.

That is what NBN was doing under the previous government but under this government NBN is delivering. The NBN is rolling out and NBN is rolling out in the electorate of Bowman. As the member rightly asks, not only are we rolling out fibre to the node, but we are also rolling out HFC, hybrid fibre coax. These were the networks that Labor was proposing to
trash. They were going to completely destroy these networks that passed over $3 million premises around Australia that are perfectly capable of delivering 100 megabits per second. In fact, there is an upgrade path to one gigabit per second, but Labor’s plan was to trash these networks. We are taking advantage of them. Indeed, in the electorate of Bowman, there are 61,000 premises now in the three-year rollout plan, including both fibre to the node and HFC. In the member’s electorate, construction has already commenced on fibre to the node—over 6,200 premises in the Redland Bay and Carbrook areas—and there are 61,000 premises included in the three-year rollout plan.

So under the previous government, NBN was essentially driven by political considerations, very little actually done. When we came to government, only just over 300,000 premises around the country could connect. It is now over 1.4 million and increasing every week because the Turnbull government is about delivering and the member for Bowman is a very strong advocate for delivering in his electorate.

Goods and Services Tax

Mr BOWEN (McMahon) (14:53): My question is to the Treasurer. Treasurer, if the GST is jacked up to 15 per cent, how will compensation be delivered to self-funded retirees?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (14:53): As I have said on many occasions, the government has no such proposal and has not put forward any preferred option along these lines. I refer the member to my earlier answers and I refer the member to the experience of the Howard-Costello government, when they put in place changes to the tax system which was the foundation stone of the growth and prosperity and the jobs that came as a result of them taking that very strong action.

I note the comments by the former Labor Premier, John Brumby, who said:

The reality is now that in the 15 years that the GST has been in place… we've seen a shift back to reliance on taxes on income, a significant shift.

The former Labor Premier also said this:

So we need to rebalance the system … and take the weight off bracket creep on ordinary earners.

Fifteen years ago, when the government at that time, the Howard-Costello government, actually changed the tax system for the benefit of the Australian people, for the benefit of Australian business, for the benefit of Australians who were working and saving and investing then—and they are still doing that now—back then, around 80 per cent of taxpayers faced a tax rate of 30 per cent or less. That has now fallen to only around one quarter of taxpayers. That is what has been happening. In the 1950s, a taxpayer had to be earning 19 times average weekly earnings before paying the top marginal rate of tax. Now, a taxpayer only needs to be earning 2.3 times the average weekly wage before being on the top marginal rate, with the Medicare levy of 49 per cent. That is what happening in our tax system. People are out there working, and saving and investing every day, and they expect the tax system to back them and they expect the government to back them, and that is what we are doing.

The SPEAKER: Has the Treasurer concluded his answer?

Ms Plibersek interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Sydney will cease interjecting. I have warned her a number of times.
Business

Ms GAMBARO (Brisbane) (14:55): My constituency question is to the Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science. Craig Deveson, CEO of Cloud Manager, has been a tireless advocate of innovation, working in the Brisbane technology start-up industry for many years. His business is just one of the many that have received a $500,000 grant as part of the government's Accelerating Commercialisation program. How do targeted programs like this benefit businesses like Cloud Manager in my electorate and in the broader community?

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science) (14:55): I thank the member for Brisbane for her question about Cloud Manager. I know that she is a great advocate for the innovation agenda that the government is promoting in Australia because of the impact it will have on jobs and growth in Australia. She refers in her question to an excellent program which is part of the Entrepreneurs' Program, started by this government—$100 million a year over the forward estimates, so $400 million or thereabouts.

Cloud Manager is a business that has brought together a number of different kinds of online services that another business can access in the one place rather than having to find them all separately themselves. It increases profit and it saves them money and time. It is a very successful service. So the government is going to try to accelerate that particular innovative business through the Entrepreneurs' Program. I am not surprised at all that the member for Brisbane wants to talk about that because she has been a great advocate for that program, as she is for taking really good ideas in Brisbane and adding to them, using taxpayer support to create more jobs and more growth in areas where we know there will be success for the local economy. This, of course, is part of a wider picture.

The government will spend $9.7 billion in 2015-16 on research and development across all of the government departments. That is all being used to create jobs and growth, new ideas, inventions and research—it might be medical research or the CSIRO—to improve our lives, to add wealth to our economy, to get people out of unemployment and into employment. I am very pleased to be part of the innovation team with the assistant ministers for science and innovation and, in the wider sense, the Minister for Communications and, of course, the Prime Minister, who is the No. 1 enthusiast for innovation, research and development and creating jobs using government support where that is a reliable thing to do.

Also, we will soon have a national innovation and science agenda. That is to be released before Christmas. That will be not only about what government can do but about freeing up what people can do with their own initiative through changes to the tax system that will encourage innovation, that will enable risk, that will help with the commercialisation of research, which will improve the skills and talents available to the economy in this area. As we are the biggest business in the economy with an enormous budget, we can use that procurement process to drive, as an exemplar, the whole economy around the innovation agenda. So I am very pleased to be part of that and I know the member for Brisbane will be back again talking about the great work in her electorate of Brisbane, as Cloud Manager has been proving.

Family Payments

Ms MACKLIN (Jagajaga) (14:59): My question is to the Minister for Social Services. Bronte works part time and is a single mother of three children in Mount Barker in South
Australia. She says: 'I'm really concerned about how my family will cope financially if the proposed family tax benefits cuts come into effect. We are only just floating now.' How could the government possibly compensate Bronte for a 15 per cent GST if it has just cut her family payments by $4,700?

Ms Henderson interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Corangamite will cease interjecting! It is very difficult to hear the question if the member for Corangamite interjects continuously while the member for Jagajaga is asking it.

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Minister for Social Services) (14:59): I thank the member opposite for her question. On a day when members opposite are very keen on having the government rule something in or rule something out, one thing that is very notable is that members opposite at no point in time have ever ruled out changes to the welfare system, nor are they trying to find their own savings in the welfare system—and nor should they do that. They certainly did not rule out, when they were in government, making savings inside the welfare system. It is interesting, with respect to the question that you asked, as to whether or not that was one of the 77,000 single mothers that you yourself moved from the parenting payment onto Newstart.

What it illustrates is that all governments who are serious about trying to plot a path back to surplus must investigate spending inside the welfare budget, which is one-third of the Commonwealth government's budget—in fact, over one-third. It is presently $154 billion a year, which compares very unfavourably to $196 billion worth of income tax which is collected. When you were in government you failed to rule out—and neither should you have ruled out—changes to this system.

Without knowing whether or not this was one of those 77,000 mothers you moved from the parenting support payment onto Newstart, it is a little bit difficult to answer your question. Perhaps I can summarise it this way: it is always very difficult, when you are looking at a group, to judge fairness—

Mr Dreyfus interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Isaacs has been warned!

Mr PORTER: which this debate clearly is largely about—on an individual-by-individual basis. No doubt, when you moved those 77,000 mothers from one payment to the next, you did that on the basis that you considered that to be fair as a workforce participation method. But, of course, inside that group of 77,000 there will always be individuals who have either weaker or stronger capacities for greater workforce engagement.

What we have said is that we are willing to look at savings reasonably and rationally inside the family tax benefit system. We found $4.7 billion worth of those savings, and a very large part of those savings will be reinvested into sweeping reforms to child care. We find ourselves in a situation where 165,000 Australian families—including families where there is a sole income earner and including single-parent families—are crying out for simplified, better, more accessible and affordable child care. Noting, of course, that under your watch—

Ms Chesters interjecting—
The SPEAKER: The member for Bendigo has been warned twice. She will leave under 94(a)!

The member for Bendigo then left the chamber.

Ms Plibersek: But they're teenagers!

Mr PORTER: But what happens before a child is a teenager? We are offering a whole generation of mothers and coupled parents the possibility of better access to simpler, fairer child care—to change for a whole generation of Australians their ability to be enabled and engaged into the workforce. You are standing in the way of that process, because when you look at savings all you can do is help us pay for 14 per cent of necessary child care.

Broadband

Mr IRONS (Swan) (15:02): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Honourable members:

Mr IRONS: My question is to the Minister for Territories, Local Government and Major Projects.

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member will start his question again.

Mr IRONS: Thank you, Mr Speaker. My question is to the Minister for Territories, Local Government and Major Projects. I have received at least 100 letters from my constituents about the poor broadband service in the Ascot exchange. In 2007 the then Labor member wrote to the constituents of Swan and said that they would solve this. They said they would fix it, but in six years they did nothing. They were absolutely useless. What action is the coalition government taking to reverse Labor's inaction and pathetic uselessness, and to help my constituents in the Ascot exchange?

Opposition members: Argument!

The SPEAKER: Before I call the minister—

Mr Albanese: Go down the other end, Paul!

Ms Henderson interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Grayndler is delaying the member for Watson! The member for Corangamite will cease interjecting!

Mr Albanese: I am just trying to—

The SPEAKER: The member for Grayndler will cease interjecting!

Mr Burke: Mr Speaker, there might be a bit of argument in that question.

The SPEAKER: No, the member for Watson. Is this a point of order?

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

The SPEAKER: On what point of order?

Mr Burke: Under the rules for questions—under the standing orders—questions are not allowed to contain argument. That was full of it!

Government members interjecting—
The SPEAKER: The member for Gilmore and the Leader of the House will cease interjecting! I would like to respond to the point of order.

A government member interjecting—

The SPEAKER: And whoever that was can cease interjecting too! I will say to the member for Watson that if I enforced that particular subsection of the standing orders strictly, almost none of the opposition's questions would be in order.

Ms Kate Ellis: You can't be serious!

The SPEAKER: I am deadly serious. If you would like me to start, I will.

Mr FLETCHER (Bradfield—Minister for Territories, Local Government and Major Projects) (15:05): I do want to thank the member for Swan for this question, which really reflects a campaign that he has been assiduously pursuing in the totality of his time here in the parliament in relation to the delivery of broadband in Ascot.

There is, as the member informed the House, a letter on the record from Kim Wilkie MP, the then Labor member for Swan, from September 2007 which says:

Labor's National Broadband Network will solve Ascot's broadband problems.

There it was. There was the promise in 2007. And so, when the new member for Swan—as he then was in 2007—came to the parliament, he understandably pursued the delivery of that promise.

To his great surprise, when the city of Belmont and the Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council put forward a proposal to prioritise the Ascot exchange, it was rejected by the then minister for broadband, Senator Conroy. He rejected out of hand the proposal, when there had been a promise only two years before by the then Labor member for Swan that Ascot would be sorted out.

It has fallen—as it always does—to the coalition to sort out Labor's mess. We are doing that with the NBN all around Australia. We are doing that in the electorate of Swan, where there are 28,000 premises ready for service today. I am sure there are many in the House who recollect that the total number of premises connected in all of Western Australia in 2013, when we came to government, was 34. Yet today—only slightly more than two years later—in just one electorate in Western Australia over 28,000 premises are ready for service. Indeed, when we came to government, Western Australia's NBN rollout was in such disarray that the primary contractor, Syntheo, had pulled out of that market. So we have turned that situation around in a short period of time. Thanks to the advocacy of the member for Swan on behalf of his constituents, some 15,500 homes and businesses in Ascot, Belmont, Cloverdale, Perth, Redcliffe and Rivervale will see construction begin in the first quarter of 2017, and there are 39,160 premises included in the rollout plan through to the third quarter of 2018.

Ms MacTiernan interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Perth will cease interjecting.

Mr FLETCHER: The Turnbull government is delivering on the NBN rollout.

Ms MacTiernan interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Perth is warned!
Mr FLETCHER: We are correcting for the chaotic and incompetent mess we inherited from the other side.

Ms MacTiernan interjecting—

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

The member for Perth then left the chamber.

Mr Truss: I ask that further questions be place on the Notice Paper. Twenty-two—we are doing well!

The SPEAKER: It has been pointed out to me that the question from the member for Swan contained some terms that I may well have said are inappropriate in a question. I point out to the House that, if that is the case, it is because I did not hear them because of the level of interjections. So it does flow both ways when there are interjections from my left and there is a member asking a question further up the back.

DOCUMENTS

Presentation

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science) (15:08): Documents are presented as listed in the schedule circulated to honourable members. Details of the documents will be recorded in the Votes and Proceedings.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Goods and Services Tax

The SPEAKER (15:09): I have received a letter from the honourable member for McMahon proposing that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely:

The Government's plan to hit the household budgets of all Australians by jacking up the GST.

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

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

Mr BOWEN (McMahon) (15:09): Two months ago, the member for Wentworth told the Australian people that he needed to be Prime Minister to provide Australia with economic leadership—economic leadership we were not apparently receiving from the member for Warringah and the former member for North Sydney. He told the Australian people he was going to change things, he was going to turn the economy around. Well, it turns out that economic leadership involves lecturing the Australian people, low- and middle-income earners, that they have to pay more tax. That is what the economic leadership is: lecturing the Australian people, particularly low- and middle-income earners, that they should be doing more for his budget.

He says he wants a national conversation about increasing the GST. It turns out it is a rather one-sided conversation. It could perhaps best be described as a national monologue from the Prime Minister, as opposed to a national conversation, because he lectures, he condescends, he stands at the dispatch box and he explains why low- and middle-income earners should be doing more, but, when you ask him a question, he is quite offended to be asked a question about the detail. We saw it again from the Treasurer today, saying: 'We have
no plans. We have no policy. We have no proposal.’ So it is a national conversation about nothing—a bit like a Seinfeld episode. It is a national conversation about nothing that the Prime Minister and the Treasurer have engineered as part of this new economic leadership for Australia.

But, when the Prime Minister is lecturing us, he does acknowledge at least one fact—that a GST increase would hit those who can least afford it the most. That is what we know and that is what it all comes down to. It is regressive. It hits low-income earners much more than it hits high-income earners. The Prime Minister, in his own special way, said it at the dispatch box earlier in the week. He said:

So the fact is, whether it is goods that are taxed with GST or goods that are free from GST, invariably there is a regressive element in it.

We know that, and that is why we are against it. That is the point—because it affects those who can least afford it the most.

Let us talk about what sort of impact it would have. We know, because of economic modelling from NATSEM, what sort of impact it would have. People in the lowest 20 per cent income bracket will pay seven per cent more, but people in the highest 20 per cent income bracket will pay just three per cent more of their income. That is regressive. There is nothing fair about that. We know that those earning around $26,000, who are in the lowest quintile of income earners, would pay $3,000 extra in costs each and every year. A middle-income earner of around $75,000 would face around $5,200 in extra costs. These are people who cannot be asked, should not be asked, to pay at this level, when the government rejects and argues against tax changes which would be fair and progressive, as it has done consistently for these two years.

The government says, 'Yes, but it's all right because we're going to cut income tax, you see.' They lecture: 'It's okay; we're going to cut tax.' The fact is: the modelling shows that that would actually make the changes the government is proposing even more regressive. That is what the modelling tells us. Two-thirds of households would be worse off. That would be the average impact for the bottom three quintiles, while it would be positive for the top two quintiles. That is what the impact of this government's policies would be.

Of course, the Prime Minister again lectures us—whether it is glasses on or glasses off, whatever the mode of the lecture is at any particular time. 'It's okay because there would be compensation,' he tells us. We have asked the Treasurer today for some of the details, and it is quite clear he does not know what the compensation would look like—what it would look like for self-funded retirees; what it would look like for people in remote areas, who would be particularly impacted; or what it would look like for people who work but work perhaps casually or part time and are not in the personal income tax system. The government have not thought that through.

The one thing we do know is that any compensation delivered through the tax system would be temporary, because what we have is bracket creep. The increase in the GST is permanent. Once the GST is up, it is with us forever. But the personal income tax cuts would be eaten away by bracket creep, and the Australian people know that. That is why the Australian people are so against this Prime Minister's plans.
We also know that the Prime Minister would put up the price of some things compared to others, and there is no compensation package which would not deal with the price signal that that sends. We know the government likes price signals—the Liberals and Nationals like price signals.

They tried to put a price signal on going to the doctor—$7 to go to the doctor. They love price signals when they affect people on lower middle incomes and they are trying it again, except this time, what would their price signals do? They would send a price signal that Australians should eat less fresh food. They would send a price signal that families on a tight budget going to the supermarket want their fresh food to be comparatively more expensive. There are no compensation deals with that when you have got one million Australians with diabetes and families working hard, trying to do their best to get fresh food on the table for their kids—and what does this Prime Minister do? Lectures them on how they should be paying more for it; sending a price signal.

Then we have got a price signal on education. Never has there been a more important time for Australians to be engaging in self-education and better education. Never has there been a more important time for Australians to be getting ahead by going the extra mile with study and getting some additional qualifications. What does the government want to do? The old price signal: make it more expensive. Send the signal that you should not be doing that—exactly the wrong sort of policy, exactly the wrong sort of message to be sending to the Australian people.

And of course health—again, we know that they just want a price signal in health. They have tried so hard. They have worked so hard. They have put so much effort into trying to make health more expensive since the day they were elected. We had the whole Commission of Audit. They had plans to make going to the doctor more expensive. They failed. They failed, because the Australian people and this parliament said no, so they are going to have another go. But this time it is through the tax system via the GST.

The government says they need to deliver personal income tax cuts. That is the best they can do—really? The only way they can deliver personal income tax cuts is to jack up the GST. That is how they are going to deal with bracket creep. It is a signal to the Australian people: 'If ever you want a personal income tax cut, we're going to have to increase the GST to do it.' That is all they have got.

Of course we were told—not that long ago in the greater scheme of things—that the GST would fix everything. Prime Minister Howard and Treasurer Costello stood there and said that the GST would be a growth tax for the states and it would provide the states with the income they need. And they said it would not need to be increased. In fact in order to show the Australian people that they would not increase it, they legislated that every state and territory would have to agree to an increase in the GST. That is in the legislation, but now they say, of course: 'We'll go to an election and we'll increase the GST, if we win that election.' What they will need to do is amend the legislation, if they do not get the agreement of every state and territory. Once that happens, it is open slather: every time the government has got a problem, increase the GST. Change the legislation so they can increase the GST whenever they like, every time they have got a problem. Every time they have got something they want to fund, up goes to GST. That is the situation this Prime Minister wants. That is the situation he is going to engineer.
So the government says that they need to fix these problems. They need to provide personal income tax cuts, to cut the company tax rate, to make up for their $80 billion worth of cuts to health and education, to abolish stamp duty, to abolish payroll tax—sometimes we hear some of them say they have spent the GST money seven or eight times over. At some point, the Prime Minister has got to stop Turnbull's talkathon and absolutely announce to the Australian people what this GST money will do.

When he does, they are not going to like it. When he does, he actually has to come clean with the Australian people and explain that all the things that they have been talking about, they cannot do and the devil is in the detail.

We have got the Treasurer saying, 'It's all right. The tax to GDP ratio won't go up. I'll give you a firm guarantee. We'll only take the same amount of tax. We might take it a bit differently.'

Mr Burke: It's the end of compensation.

Mr BOWEN: There goes the compensation, as the shadow minister for finance points out. If you are a pensioner, a carer or a veteran, you are not often in the personal income tax system and therefore you need some other compensation. If every dollar goes on tax cuts, then there is no compensation for pensioners, no compensation for carers and no compensation for veterans.

So either the Treasurer is wrong, which I suspect he is—

Mr Burke: It often happens.

Mr BOWEN: It often happens—or he is planning something very different to what he promises the Australian people. And this is a Treasurer who says Australia does not have a revenue problem. He says that while he is planning an increase in the GST to jack up revenue. The government says they want a debate. Well, let's have it; let's have a debate and we will have a tax plan for the Australian people to vote on, as you will. Let the Australian people decide. If you want a debate on tax, we cannot think of anything better. We cannot think of anything better than having a debate about tax, because it is a debate where you will have to show your values to the Australian people—your values and prejudices which will say: 'We want to increase tax on lower middle income earners. We want to make Australia's pensioners pay more. We want to see Australian veterans and carers pay more without compensation.' That is what your values tell us. You want a debate: bring it on.

Mr HAWKE (Mitchell—Assistant Minister to the Treasurer) (15:19): You would be a fun guy to have at a party, Shadow Treasurer: things are so bad, bad, bad—everything is so bad. You would be the life of any party, I can tell you. You would not think that on a day when 58,600 people gained employment in this country we would have the shadow Treasurer enter this chamber and lecture us about how bad things are in the Australian economy. You would not think at a time when consumer confidence is on the rise and we see in the consumer confidence figures that consumers in the next month are planning the biggest Christmas spend in seven years. That is what is forecast for the next month.

You would think that the shadow Treasurer would come in here with a plan to explain to the Australian people how they can make it easier to work, save and invest for those Australians who are doing it tough and working hard. But what we heard from the shadow Treasurer is an attack on plans that the government do not have, an attack on policies that we
have not announced and an attack on mythical tax policies that they have created, completely isolated from everything that the Prime Minister has been talking about. It is so misleading that I think it is not fooling ordinary people. It is so misleading to the Australian people that it will not go down well when the shadow Treasurer returns to Fowler or McMahon, or wherever he goes back to, and says, 'This is our plan and this is your plan.'

You said you had a tax plan but you just had 10 minutes, shadow Treasurer, to tell the Australian people what that tax plan is. What did you say about your tax plan? Well, you did not say anything about your tax plan. You did not have one word to say about your tax plan.

What the government has said is: we have a process in place, a white paper process, which is underway currently, where we are putting all things back on the table. We are considering the tax mix, absolutely, and that of course is in response to the fact that people on average wages today are now in the second-highest tax bracket. There is nobody in this chamber, listening to this debate today who would think it is okay that average wage earners are now in the highest tax bracket. It is a critical concern for Australians. It is a critical concern for those Australians working very hard, paying an even higher rate of tax now. That is the one thing you will never hear from the Labor Party. They talk a lot about fairness to those on welfare. They talk a lot about fairness to those on lower incomes. Of course, as the Prime Minister says, any changes to the tax system must be fair. But the Labor Party never talks about fairness to those people who work for a living, fairness to those people on average incomes who are paying more and more of their tax in income tax.

Where is the shadow Treasurer saying this is unfair? It is unfair that average income earners are now in the second highest tax bracket. Why won't the Labor Party just say it? Why won't they acknowledge that something has to be done to address bracket creep, to address the fact that people are working harder and harder for less and less of their own money? That is the principle that any tax system must be constructed on. Australia has the second highest reliance on income tax in the world. We have one of the highest reliances on corporate tax as well. If we do not lower our corporate taxes and become competitive with our international neighbours here in the Asia-Pacific region and around the world—if we have one of the highest corporate tax rates in the world—we will not be able to compete effectively. We will not be able to attract more investment and more jobs or have more prosperity for all Australians.

Yet you will not hear this challenge that confronts Australians crossing the opposition's lips. Instead they criticise any attempt to have a national debate, any constructive process that the government has to bring forward plans.

**Mr Burke:** What about pensioners?

**Mr HAWKE:** The member for Watson mentions pensioners, of course. It was their government that brought in the carbon tax. The shadow Treasurer had a lot to say about pricing signals. We know that, more than any other party in Australian political history, it is the Labor Party that does not understand price signals. Why would you introduce a carbon tax at the world's highest price? It indicates how little you understand price signals. Why would you start a market mechanism with the world's highest price for your carbon tax? How fair was that to pensioners, I say to the member for Watson. How fair was introducing a carbon price at the world's highest price?
When we abolished the carbon tax, we kept those compensation measures, and pensioners are better off with the abolition of the carbon tax.

Ms Henderson interjecting—

Mr HAWKE: The member for Corangamite asks what was fair to small business when you brought in the carbon tax. There was no consideration to the two million small businesses in this country that generate most of the employment, generate most of the growth in employment and keep Australians in jobs. Again there was no thought for small business. It is this government, of course, that brought in the reduction in company tax for small business, and that has from May this year led to growth in employment. Today we saw that 58,600 people have jobs who did not have jobs at the last figures, and I think that is fantastic. It goes to show that, when you do lower taxes, when you do get small business taxes down, if you could get company taxes down a bit, if you could reduce bracket creep and get average wage earners' taxes down and back into a sensible tax bracket, you would generate more jobs, wealth and prosperity. But it is not something that ever comes to mind when the Labor Party discusses tax

Tax is about one thing for the Australian Labor Party. Tax is about revenue. Tax is about taking more from people. It is only to fund ever-increasing government expenditure. They take and take and take from Australians' pockets. It is not the approach of this government, of course.

Mr Bowen: You've still got four minutes to go.

Mr Hawke: Thanks for the heads up on that! It's nice of you to do that! The tax mix here, of course, has been completely disconnected from the government's expenditure.

We have seen that we do have a fiscal challenge ahead of us. The Minister for Social Services is here and he knows that to fund just the increase in the welfare budget that we have coming up—just the gap from where we are today to where we will be in 10 years—requires great growth in government revenue and also a reduction in our expenditures. That is the challenge the government faces. That is why we are having this conversation with the Australian people. That is why all the mixes are on the table. That is why tax reform is a key part of the government's policy agenda. We have to build that growth and opportunity, and we have to reform the tax system to do that. I think there is not an Australian, a small business owner, a big business or a medium company that will not tell you that they need tax reform to do their jobs better to enable them to grow and employ.

We know that, with some of the highest living standards in the world and the greatest competition in the world, we need to face ways to become more competitive and innovative. That is why we will not be distracted—

Mr Bowen: There's no shame in sitting down now!

Mr HAWKE: We won't be distracted by the shadow Treasurer, that's for sure! We won't be distracted by the member for Watson and their 'vuvuzela of negativity', to quote the member for Grayndler. That vuvuzela has been barking very loudly in this chamber in recent weeks.

Every single question about the GST, of course, has missed the mark. Why has it missed the mark? It is because there is no Australian government that would propose changes to the tax system that would not provide for greater fairness for those on low incomes, that would
not provide for greater fairness for those who could not afford it. But what about the fairness for the middle class? What about for those on average incomes? What about fairness for small business? These are the things the Labor Party never considers.

I think the Labor Party and all Australians know that, to meet the challenges and to capitalise on the opportunities, we have to develop a more agile economy. We have to incentivise innovation. We have to renew business processes, improve quality and value for customers and reform the way that government operates. That means dealing with our tax system. It means reforming it in a way that Australians accept.

We are here having a debate about the tax system, but the shadow Treasurer will not outline one single measure that he thinks should be reformed in the Australian tax system. This is a party that has never lowered tax rates in Australian history. You have never brought tax down. You have never returned bracket creep to Australians. You have never said to Australians, 'You are working hard enough.' You have never said, 'You are working and delivering tax for the government; we will lower your tax.' You have never said thank you to those two million small businesses out there who work, save and invest every day to create the prosperity that you take. You only have one message for the Australian people and the business community: 'We want to increase tax. We want to take more out of your pocket and we're going to continue to do nothing about government expenditure.'

In contrast, the Turnbull government is capping government expenditure. We are restraining it and reducing it. Unlike some people in the opposition, we understand the difference between net debt and gross debt. We are not confused about net debt and gross debt. We know what it is. We know how it operates. We know what the income tax-free threshold is. We know it is $18,200.

Mr HAWKE: Do you want me to tell you? I will school you again! I am happy to be the Prime Minister for a second and school you. If I had glasses, I would take them off at this point and I would offer you a lecture. The income-tax-free threshold is $18,200. That is where it sits. Surely you know that by now, shadow Treasurer.

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (15:29): It pains me to interrupt the member for Mitchell. He was on a roll—an absolute roll. I feel pity for them on that side because the government has come up with an argument that says, 'We're having a conversation, but you're only a serious participant in the conversation if you don't have a view.' That is effectively what the government is saying. The problem that those opposite have is that Labor has a very strong view on what happens if you expand the GST. It might upset them that in a conversation participants will often have a different view. On this one, our view is diametrically opposed to the direction that the government clearly wants to go. We will participate in that conversation for one very simple reason: those opposite should not think for a minute that what they are now talking about with the GST is simply a mere extension of what happened under the Howard government.

When the Howard government introduced the GST, yes, we opposed it then and, yes, there was an inflationary impact then. What they are talking about now is way beyond that and far more regressive than what happened then, and for one very simple reason. Look at what was
abolished at the same time the Howard government introduced the GST. There was the abolition of the wholesale sales tax and there was a 7c reduction in the fuel excise. Price pressures were being taken off at the same time as taxation was being overlaid with a GST. It was still inflationary. It was still unfair. We still opposed it. But it has nothing on what they are talking about now.

What they are talking about now is expanding the remit of the GST, expanding the base to areas where it is currently zero and where there is no wholesale sales tax. The full impact of the GST gets added to the price. What happens to people on incomes is that they say, 'We can do the same thing as what happened when the carbon price was introduced in terms of compensation'. Sorry, you cannot. You cannot again triple the tax-free threshold. We took one million people out of the tax system. The member for Mitchell said, 'Oh they did nothing about tax reform for people.' Well, when it is at the bottom end, they just do not count it. They ignore that even at the top end it was Paul Keating who came into office and dealt with the 60 per cent top marginal tax rate when the Liberals gave him that. But at the other end, they will not touch the fact that we had the tripling of the tax-free threshold.

So what does that mean? It means that if you are not part of the payment system, if you do not have children under 13 years of age, if you are in the workforce as a part-timer, and if you earn $18,000 a year, then tax relief means nothing for you. A change in the income tax scale delivers you absolutely nothing. What those opposite then say is, 'We'll get tax reform and we can shift the scales.' Yes, you can, but for part-time workers and people on modest incomes, they will simply feel the full impact of the price increase.

For those in the payment system, the government is saying to them that right now they will cut their payments. The government will go through all the cuts they are talking about at the moment and then introduce a GST and say, 'Hey, we increased your payments', that they had cut only a year before. For people who are not in the payment system, if they are on modest incomes, the room is no longer there for the benefit to be felt for people on low and modest incomes on a tax cut to compensate for a shift in prices. The shift in prices would be more severe, much more severe, than what happened when the GST was first introduced. It would be much more serious than what happened when the GST was first introduced. Added to that, if they want to use the Howard model, look at what happened to the budget. The Commonwealth budget ended up $20 billion worse off after all the compensation was dealt with.

If the government is saying this is about balancing the budget, they can only be saying they will not be doing compensation properly. If they are saying they will do all of the compensation through the tax system, they can only be saying that people on lower incomes are going to be ditched. If they are saying it will all come through in tax cuts and there will be no increase in the net tax take, then they can only be saying there will be nothing done for people in the payment system. When you look at the different proposals that are in front of us, unfairness is there every step of the way. That is why a plan from the Liberals is this transparent.

Mr TAYLOR (Hume) (15:35): I have to say that whilst it is always a great pleasure to speak during an MPI, this one really puzzles me. The tacticians on the Labor Party side must have been a bit tired on Thursday. They were out at the Latika Bourke's party last night, had a few too many drinks and they started talking about a plan that I cannot find anything about. I
cannot find anything about this plan. So, I went to the morning note—the morning note has been a bit thin over the last few weeks, but we are left to run on our own a bit more than perhaps we used to be—and I could not find anything about this plan. There was nothing there! Then I had a look at Google. I typed it in, and I looked for this plan. I could not find it there either. I went through every press release and every interview that we had done in the last two weeks, and there were no plans to raise the GST.

So, who does want to raise the GST? Who does want to raise taxes? I googled this, and I found that a number of premiers want to raise the GST. That is not surprising. Premiers love money for nothing—a little bit of Dire Straits is good for the premiers—because managing your spending is hard. Jay Weatherill supports an increase in the GST, and he wants to apply it to financial services—he wants the money. Andrew Barr supports a rise in the GST—he wants the money as well. Even Mike Baird favours the idea of a GST hike, but I could not find our plan anywhere.

I thought to myself, who else wants to raise taxes? I was confused about what those opposite might want to do, and it struck me that when the Treasurer was speaking earlier he pointed out that those opposite plan to spend $55 billion more than they have. Last time I looked, when you spend $55 billion, you have to tax $55 billion. So I started to think about what sort of tax those opposite might want to go with. Will it be a carbon tax? Will it be a mining tax? Will it be a smoking tax? We have heard about little bit about that this week—they want to have a smoking tax. Will it be a hike to the fuel excise on farmers and miners? Will it be a tax on everyone who has confessed to be Liberal voter? Will it be a tax on those who flush out corrupt union officials? We do not know but $55-billion worth of tax has got a come from somewhere, so we are looking forward to hearing about their plan.

Labor's view of the economy, I think, can be summed up in a wonderful phrase first brought to us by Ronald Reagan: if it moves, tax it; if it keeps moving, regulate it; and if it stops moving, subsidise it. Because that is the kind of high-taxing, high subsidisation government that we can expect from those opposite—if they ever get back to this side of the chamber. On this side of the chamber, we want to grow the economy, we want to create jobs and we want to invest. Central to that is the need to contain taxes. I ask the government to innovate and deliver the sorts of productivity gains, particularly from government, that we have seen in the private sector for many years. Those opposite grew spending by five per cent per annum in their time in government. We are keeping it below two per cent. If spending goes up faster than income, you have to raise taxes and that is exactly what those opposite are proposing.

Most of all, we know that lower taxes will deliver a stronger economy and particularly lower personal income taxes. In the last 10 years, the average weekly earnings have gone up twice but tax paid has gone up three times. That is not good enough. It is time to look at lower taxes, not higher taxes and that is what we are focused on. We have heard from the Treasurer today that the average weekly earner now is going to pay 37 cents in the dollar for tax and that is simply too much. So we are the party of lower taxes. We are the party that can deliver that because we know how to control spending. It is time for those opposite to fess up on their plan for higher taxes and not to ask us about our plan for a stronger economy.

Dr LEIGH (Fraser) (15:40): Before I begin, may I ask the honourable member for Hume to table the 'morning note' to which he referred.
The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Vasta): He is actually not a minister so he will not have to.

Mr Hawke: Mr Acting Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I ask the shadow Treasurer to table a copy of his book as well while he is at it, if he has it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The member for Fraser has the call and will be heard in silence.

Dr LEIGH: Australia faces a number of serious economic challenges right now. We have growth running below trend and recently downgraded by the OECD. Growth has been steadily downgraded in every budget since the first Abbott-Turnbull budget. We have got inequality now running at a 75-year high. We have had a generation in which earnings have risen three times as fast for the top 10th as for the bottom 10th of income earners. We have got housing affordability increasingly pushing out of reach of average Australian households, with young families in Sydney now facing the prospect of median house prices at more than $1 million. These are big challenges for Australia and the GST at 15 per cent would make all of them worse.

Let us take growth. We have just seen Japan raise its consumption tax last year. What happened to that economy? It went into recession, just the same as what happened after Japan last pushed up its consumption tax. What would a GST rise do to inequality? Clearly it would make it worse. Even Tony Shepherd acknowledges that the GST is a heavily regressive tax. What would it do to housing affordability? It would certainly make that worse with the Housing Industry Association numbers suggesting that a 15 per cent GST would add tens of thousands of dollars to the cost of a new home or, it could well add to the cost of every mortgage—if the member for Wannon had his way of putting the GST on financial services.

If a 15 per cent GST is the answer, you are asking the wrong question. To sum up the 15 per cent GST in a single word, that word is 'apophony'. 'Apophony'? I hear you ask. Is that when a blinding flash of positive insight comes to you? No, that is an epiphany. An epiphany is when a clever blinding flash of positive insight comes to you. An 'apophony' is when an idea comes to you that is exactly wrong. And 'apophony' is an idea that strikes you on the head that you think is right but is in fact deeply wrong. That is what those opposite have given us. They have given us an answer to the wrong question for Australia. The GST is no more efficient than an income tax, contrary to what the Prime Minister has been saying. The Prime Minister has been standing at the opposite dispatch box all week saying that the thing about a GST is more efficient than the income tax. But that is not what his Re:Think white paper says. His Re:Think white paper says that the excess burden, dead-weight loss, of raising $5 through an income tax is $1. And the excess burden of raising $5 through a GST is also $1. So the GST, according to the government's own modelling, is no more efficient than income tax.

But it is certainly less equitable. We know from NATSEM modelling, as the shadow Treasurer has pointed out, that if you raise the GST to 15 per cent, it costs the top quintile three per cent of their disposable income, but it costs the bottom quintile seven per cent of their disposable income. We have heard those opposite say that is okay because there will be compensation. There cannot be compensation if the member for Cook is right and raising the GST is going to decrease the total tax burden or at least not increase it. Because if you do not increase the total tax burden, by definition, you are not giving compensation to those on fixed incomes. That means those on fixed incomes should be terrified when they hear the prospect
of a 15 per cent GST because a 15 per cent GST and a lowering of the tax burden means that low- and middle-income earners will be slugged just as they were in the 2014 and 2015 budgets. A 15 per cent GST is an ‘apophony’ and it should be opposed.

Mr BUCHHOLZ (Wright) (15:45): I thank the member for Fraser for a delightful contribution! I appreciate the opportunity to make a contribution to this debate. What we do in this place is encourage those around our country to make a contribution to this debate, and I take the opportunity to encourage Labor to make a sound contribution to this debate.

It has become ever apparent that the Australian Labor Party and the Australian trade union movement, from a distance, are that intertwined that you can no longer differentiate between the two identities. So Australians should not be surprised that, when we enter into a debate about taxation, the techniques of intimidation, thuggery, corruption, coercion—all of the issues that have been spoken about in a royal commission—are their weapons of choice to try to intimidate the Australian public, to try to coerce them into unfounded truths. I welcome the Australian debate. I welcome the opportunity to stand and have the conversation around the fact that—and honourable members probably support this—we have an expenditure problem and not a revenue problem. We need, as a country, to start to address some of our expenditure issues. When we come to a position of consensus through those conversations, we will take our position on taxation to an election, for the Australian public to have the ultimate determination.

This year was to be the year of big ideas from the Australian Labor Party. This is the time in the debate that they should be bringing them out. This is the time that we need to see the big ideas coming forward from Labor. I would love to hear a contribution from the other side, something imaginative about, say, income splitting—having just returned from Canada. Why are we not having a conversation about income splitting and the benefits of trying to offset bracket creep, similar to what the Canadians do? Why are we not having a conversation about the participation rate of women in Canada being much higher than ours? There are some underlying factors to that. We have 1.9 per cent fertility; they have 1.6 per cent. Why are we not having a conversation about super? Why are we not talking about concessional tax rates? Bring those to the table.

We heard from the Treasurer recently about the average wage earner shifting into the second-highest tax bracket. We do not have a complex tax bracket. We have nil tax to $18,200. We have 19c, 32.5c, 37c and 47c tax brackets. It is not a complex system. We will have the majority of our average wage earners in the second-highest tax bracket. That is unacceptable as we move forward in an economy that we are looking to grow.

We are getting on with the job of growing the economy and growing jobs. We heard today, in question time, that 58,600 jobs were created in October—the largest monthly increase in employment since March 2012. So, in response to previous speakers about how we are getting on and growing the economy and can we be trusted, the proof is in our pudding. This brings the total number of jobs created over the past year to 315,000. It is the strongest pace of annual jobs growth since 2010. The youth unemployment rate fell to 12.2 per cent in October, falling more than two percentage points from its peak in November 2014, when it was 14.5 per cent. Yes, it is still too high in my electorate and it is still too high across the country. These jobs are being found in the tourism, hospitality and agricultural sectors.
There is room for a greater debate. I look forward to the epiphany debate to bring back the carbon tax. That is one of Labor's increased taxes—increase the Medicare levy, increase tax on cigarettes, a tax grab on superannuation savings and, of course, the mining tax was a cracker. *(Time expired)*

Mr THISTLETHWAITE (Kingsford Smith) *(15:50)*: Only the Liberal Party could ask Australians to have a serious policy discussion on tax, without one single policy. They have not released a policy on broadening the tax base. They talk about new policies on superannuation, new policies on company tax, but they have not released any. And they accuse us of running a scare campaign. I would like to enlighten those opposite about a few facts regarding this so-called tax policy debate that we are having at the moment.

These individuals have advocated increasing the goods and services tax or broadening its base: Mike Baird, Gladys Berejiklian, Joe Hockey, Dan Tehan, who described it as 'unfinished business', James McGrath, Treasurer Scott Morrison and Andrew Robb. Last time I looked, those individuals had one thing in common: they are all members of the Liberal Party! It is not us. It is not us out there advocating a change to the GST. I might enlighten those opposite: you raised this issue. You brought it back into the political discourse in Australia.

Opposition members interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr THISTLETHWAITE: It is not us that brought this issue back. You have made this an issue. You put the goods and services tax back on the agenda. It was not just backbenchers; it was leaders of your party. It was the Premier of New South Wales. It was the former Prime Minister of Australia that put this issue on the agenda. You are the ones that want to make poor and middle-class Australians pay more tax. You want to increase the GST. That is a fact. It was not us that put this issue on the agenda; it was you.

In fact, the Labor Party has been very clear and consistent with the Australian public for some time now. We took this position to the last election. We are opposed to an increase in the GST. That is Labor's position. Why? Because, when you increase the GST, you increase a regressive tax. You make poor and middle-income families in Australia pay more. That is a fact. The pensioner on a fixed income pays more every time they pay their electricity bill, pays more every time they pay their gas bill, pays more every time they pay their telephone bill. If you increase the GST, the tradie that fills up their ute every week will pay more. They will pay more every time they buy new tools. They will pay more every time they buy new work boots. If you increase the GST, families in Australia will pay more. Every time a mum goes to buy new clothes and shoes for her kids, she will pay more. Every time a mum and dad go to the movies for a night out, they will pay more. Every time they pay for their internet or their mobile phone bill, they will pay more. The GST hurts those in our society who can least afford it.

At the same time that the government are floating this idea that poor people should pay more through the GST, what are they doing to those who are well off in our community? They are giving them a tax break. They have actually given them a tax break. They got rid of the low-income superannuation contribution. You got rid of the minerals resource rent tax. In 2007, your Treasurer, Peter Costello, brought in massive tax concessions for people with more than a million dollars in their superannuation accounts—unfunded, I might add. You
never funded those in the budget, did you? But you brought in those massive tax concessions, so we now have the situation where, for someone who has more than a million dollars in their superannuation account in Australia and earns interest off that balance—they are not drawing down on the balance; they just earn interest off it—say they earn $80,000 interest off that balance per year, have a guess how much tax they pay. Zero! A big fat rissole! Zero! They pay no tax. Do you think that that is fair? Do you think that you want to go and slug the pensioner, the tradie and the family more? Wake up to yourselves.

It was Labor that tried to introduce greater transparency into our taxation system. We introduced a reform that said that the wealthiest companies, which earn more than $100 million each year, should disclose to the Australian public the tax that they pay. They should disclose. They should be open and honest. But what did you do when you came to government? You got rid of it—a law in which big companies disclose the amount of money that they pay in tax. You got rid of it. You want to keep that sort of stuff secret. Apple made $6 billion in local revenue last year, and they paid $80.3 million in tax. You want to let those sorts of people off, and you want to ask pensioners, tradies and families to pay more. You are a disgrace.

**Mr SUKKAR (Deakin) (15:55):** What we are seeing today is a Labor Party who are so bereft of ideas that they have gone for: 'In an emergency, break the glass and find the best scare campaign you can run.' Well, guys, it is not going to work. It is not going to work. We are the party of lower taxes. Your record is so shambolic that nobody will believe a word that comes out of your mouths on tax policy. They are the party which raised the carbon tax when they had promised that they would never introduce a carbon tax, leaving every single home $550 worse off. They are the party that introduced the mining tax. They picked one recommendation out of the Henry tax review, which had about 150 recommendations. The mining tax that they introduced had $16 billion worth of associated spending, whereas it ultimately raised some very miniscule percentage of that spending. So your credibility on tax is absolutely shot.

We on this side of the House have lower taxes ingrained in our DNA. Our history is extraordinarily proud, and nothing will change. When we have undertaken ambitious tax reform, it has been for the benefit of this country. I remember as a young man watching Kim Beazley, the heir of Whitlam, standing out the front with cans of baked beans, arguing against the GST introduction. I think roll-back was the policy for two elections. And then, when the Labor Party finally got back into government in 2007, we never heard a word from them about the GST because every single Labor state Premier and politician is on the drip of the GST now.

If the GST is so bad, take a policy to the next election that you will repeal the GST. No, they all have their heads down now. If the GST is so bad, then absolutely go down that path and see how the Australian people mark you. But I can tell you that this party has lower taxes ingrained in its very fibre.

When we talk about fairness, it also has to be fairness for the middle class of this country, who carry the entire tax burden. It is the middle class who carry this country, pay for our education and pay for our health services. When we talk about fairness on this side of the House, any proposal that we take to the next election, however it may look, will be to benefit
those people and to encourage them to work, encourage them to save and encourage them to invest, because they are the people, ultimately, who this country is built on.

The Labor Party have $60 billion of spending commitments that they have made. Very notably, the shadow foreign minister has promised to reinstate $16 billion of foreign aid. Yet they have $5 billion of savings, so where is that $55 billion going to come from? Some people think that they will be raising taxes. That is a possibility. They might just bung it on the credit card. That is Labor: 'Just put it on the credit card. Just whack a bit more on the credit card; that's okay. We're already borrowing $100 million a day and paying a billion dollars a month in interest. Just bung a bit more on the credit card.' That is because ingrained in Labor's DNA is that they think: 'That's okay; the Liberal Party will be in government, and they'll fix it for us. The Liberals will come back into government; they'll fix it, then we'll just bung it on the credit card again.' Where are you going to find that $55 billion? We are still 12 months away, and we have not even got into a campaign yet. That $55 billion will probably turn into $100 billion by the election. Where is that $100 billion going to come from?

On this side of the House we have a party which has a track record. We matched our words in opposition when we argued against the carbon tax, and we repealed it. We saved households $550 on average a year. At every opportunity the Labor Party argues against the GST, yet they have never, ever uttered a word about the GST in government. We will take a policy to the next election that encourages Australians to work harder and that will not continue to punish people in 10 years' time, when 43 per cent of Australians will be in the top two tax brackets. This is outrageous, and we will deal with that—

Ms Butler interjecting—

Mr SUKKAR: I know you are panicking, but we will have a plan and the Australian people will back it. (Time expired)

Mrs ELLIOT (Richmond) (16:00): The Turnbull government's plan to increase the GST shows just how out of touch they are with Australians, particularly those people living in regional and rural areas. I have made it very clear to my constituents in Richmond on the New South Wales North Coast that I am fighting hard against the Prime Minister's and the National Party's unfair plan to increase the GST to 15 per cent.

The people of regional Australia will be hit hardest by this plan. As I have said often, National Party choices hurt—and their choices really hurt the people of regional and rural Australians. In my area the National Party have already made the choice to cut unfairly the age pension, to cut unfairly family payments, to cut cruelly local jobs and to slash funding for health services. And now what do they want to do? Now they want to increase the GST to 15 per cent.

Since it became clear that this was on the government's agenda—and, indeed on the National Party's agenda as well—I have been inundated with concerns by locals, especially from pensioners and families. Make no mistake about it, Mr Deputy Speaker: a 15 per cent GST will severely hurt the people of the North Coast of New South Wales. There is nothing fair at all about increasing the GST—nothing fair at all.
As we have made it very clear on this side, Labor will not support this increase to the GST. Increasing the tax would inflict the heaviest punishment on those least able to afford it—that is a fact. For the people on the North Coast of New South Wales and right throughout the country it will be very clear at the next election that it is only Labor that opposes raising the GST to 15 per cent, and that it is the National Party and the Liberal Party that actually want to increase the GST to 15 per cent. That will be a very clear choice.

The Prime Minister has confirmed on many occasions that an increase to the GST is definitely on the table. The GST is a regressive and unfair tax that hits everybody, but it hits low- and middle-income families and pensioners the hardest. It hurts those people on fixed incomes the most.

The fact is that the Prime Minister, the Liberals and the Nationals are just so out of touch. They just do not understand that people are already struggling to make ends meet—just to make it through each week and just to get by. I do not think that any of those on other side understand that. Independent analysis shows that increasing the GST will hurt so many families. As I said, it will particularly hurt low- and middle-income families. The independent modelling shows that an increase in the rate of the GST to 15 per cent would require people in the lowest 20 per cent income bracket to pay seven per cent more, whilst people in the highest 20 per cent income bracket would pay just three per cent more of their income. That is just not fair.

Lifting the GST to 15 per cent will slug average households almost $8,800 a year. The average household already pays about $5,800 a year in GST. So, obviously, raising it to 15 per cent would increase that figure by $3,000—a very large amount for so many families. The fact is that the Prime Minister, the Liberals and the Nationals would rather tax hardworking Australians and pensioners than tackle multinational tax avoidance. That is the reality for them.

Increasing the GST would also have a major impact across a whole range of different services. Let's run through some of those basic services which will be impacted. It means that there will be increases in things like health care, dental care, rent, electricity bills, university fees, aged care and child care—the list goes on and on. They will all have increases. Indeed, of particular concern is the increase of 15 per cent tax every time you visit the doctor. Imagine what that would mean, particularly to pensioners? Or a new 15 per cent tax every time you do the shopping—every time you go there? Imagine if it is put on fresh food and what that will mean to families?

The imposition of a GST on visits to the doctor will particularly hit hard in regional areas, and this has been acknowledged by so many health professionals as well. The AMA president, Professor Owler, said:

A GST on health would penalise the poorest and the sickest in the community when they are ill.

That is the reality of increasing the GST.

Other areas of major concern are the potential increases in costs for child care and aged care. We saw in question time this week the government refusing to rule out extending the GST to those areas, and today refusing to rule it out in TAFE fees.

As I have said, we know that the GST is a regressive tax and that it will really hurt those people from lower- and middle-income households. For this reason we on this side of the
House will continue to fight very hard against their unfair plan to increase the GST. It really hits families and pensioners hard. The reality is that raising a family is expensive and that the cost of living keeps going up. That is the reality, and they just do not seem to understand it. It is clear they do not understand it, as they are pursuing this plan to increase in the GST to 15 per cent. But people, particularly in regional areas like mine, really understand it very clearly. What they know is that National Party choices hurt, and that this particular choice of increasing the GST to 15 per cent—the National Party's choice—will really hurt the people of regional Australia.

Mr HOGAN (Page) (16:05): This is really quite a bizarre discussion we are having because, as many people have already mentioned, there is no policy position to increase the GST to 15 per cent. So it makes this all a little farcical. But what it does demonstrate is that on this side of the House we have the politics of ideas and we have the politics of discussion, and on the other side we have the politics of fear. That is what this is about. This is about the politics of ideas versus the politics of fear.

So, what are we talking about? With the politics of ideas we know that we need to have a strong, growing economy. We need jobs growth, we need people to employ people, we need people to be confident and we need, obviously, people to be out there spending—growing jobs and the economy in general. Obviously, as part of the whole discussion we are having, we also need to curtail debt levels. What is often said, and which is very true, is that we do not want to have intergenerational theft by leaving future generations with large debt levels.

On both sides of politics we often talk about the fact that we need to give our kids a good education and that we need to give our kids good health systems. But it is only on this side of politics that we talk about the fact that we do not want to burden our future generations and those same children with debt levels that are going to really harm them and their generation. Only this side of politics talks about that.

We obviously, in this whole discussion and this whole policy mix of trying to grow the economy and trying to have jobs growth, are not going to play a game of ruling things out or in straightaway. That just locks you into a corner and inhibits the whole discussion. But we obviously will take to an election policies that will promote jobs and growth, and obviously we then hopefully will have some more sensible MPIs that will be about fixed policy and planned positions.

The unfortunate thing about this is that this fear campaign not only belittles the Labor Party but belittles and is demeaning to the Australian public. I want to just remind the current Labor Party of some of their champions of the past who have been reformist and have been happy to have big picture conversations. Let's go back to the Hawke and Keating governments. If we had been in government then talking about those things, the current Labor opposition would have opposed everything that the Hawke-Keating governments did. If you were going to be talking about tariff reform, the current populist, fearmongering opposition would be running around saying, 'You can't lower tariffs, because that would lose Australian jobs.' The current Labor opposition would run a fear campaign against privatisation. Let's remember: it was the Labor governments of Hawke and Keating that privatised Qantas and the Commonwealth Bank. The current Labor opposition, if they had been in opposition then, would have run a fear campaign against that. It was the Hawke-Keating governments that brought in HECS, where a university student would pay for some of their degree. You can imagine the current
Labor opposition running a complete fear campaign on that as well, because they are not about reform and the politics of ideas; they are about the politics of fear. As I said, it demeans not only the current Labor Party but the Australian public, because the Australian public want us to have the politics of ideas about growing our economy and growing jobs.

What are we doing on that? We are doing much on that. Not only are we having policy discussions but we have already—as you know, Mr Deputy Speaker—implemented four free trade agreements, which are going to grow our economy and have job growth associated with them. We have much infrastructure spending as well, especially in my electorate. The free trade agreements are helping agricultural producers in my electorate and, indeed, other small businesses that have niche markets, and the infrastructure spending on the Pacific Highway is certainly helping that as well.

We as a country do face challenges. We have revenue write-downs as prices for the commodities we export are falling. We have commitments that are locked in, like the NDIS and others, and we have to have the politics of ideas in here, not the politics of fear being run by the Labor Party.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Vasta): The discussion has concluded.

BILLS

Customs Amendment (China-Australia Free Trade Agreement Implementation) Bill 2015

Customs Tariff Amendment (China-Australia Free Trade Agreement Implementation) Bill 2015

Assent

Message from the Governor-General reported informing the House of assent to the bills.

Health Legislation Amendment (eHealth) Bill 2015

Returned from Senate

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

Social Services Legislation Amendment (More Generous Means Testing for Youth Payments) Bill 2015

Returned from Senate

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

Crimes Legislation Amendment (Harming Australians) Bill 2015

First Reading

Bill received from the Senate and read a first time.

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

COMMITTEES

Public Works Committee

Reference

Dr HENDY (Eden-Monaro—Assistant Minister for Productivity) (16:12): by leave—I 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: Australian Chancery Project Paris, France—Base building refurbishment, International Energy Agency tenancy fit-out.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade proposes to undertake the base building refurbishment and an integrated fit-out of the area leased by the International Energy Agency within the Australian chancery complex in Paris. The Australian chancery in Paris accommodates the permanent missions to France and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Australian delegation to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Built in 1977, the chancery has approximately 11,215 square metres of net lettable area, of which approximately 54 per cent, or 6,100 square metres, is surplus to the Australian government requirements. Of the surplus space, 5,565 square metres has been leased to the International Energy Agency since 1996. The International Energy Agency lease is due to expire in April 2017, and a new lease is being negotiated for a further 12-year term for their future office accommodation needs on commercial market terms.

A precondition of the International Energy Agency's future occupation of the tenancy in the chancery is a refurbishment of base building services and an integrated fit-out of their tenancy to meet their requirements. The proposed works include base building refurbishments and an integrated fit-out of the International Energy Agency leased area to provide efficient, modern and functional accommodation that includes office facilities, an auditorium, conference rooms and improved amenities.

The project is valued at an estimated $27.74 million and includes all costs associated with the fit-out such as builders costs, consultant fees, furniture, fittings and equipment, contingencies and escalation allowance. Subject to parliamentary approval of the project, the fit-out is expected to commence in mid-2016 with completion expected by mid-2018. I commend the motion to the House.

Question agreed to.

BILLs

Australian Citizenship Amendment (Allegiance to Australia) Bill 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed on the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr Danby (Melbourne Ports) (16:15): Way back in 1948, the Australian parliament passed the Nationality and Citizenship Act. A clause, which its authors correctly thought would rarely be used, allowed the immigration minister to cancel Australian citizenship if a person were found to have acquired it fraudulently. In the case of an individual fighting in the army of an enemy of this country, citizenship was automatically cancelled.

We live in a world that has changed unrecognisably over the past 67 years. One of the changes is the fact that, as with other countries, Australia's enemies do not always fight in uniforms of another country's military. Indeed in recent decades we have witnessed the rise of non-state militias fighting—and I appreciate the irony of the bureaucratese—transnational non-international armed conflicts. The way the Syrian civil war has spilled over into northern
Iraq through the spread of Daesh—originally sponsored by Assad to suppress the democratic opposition in Syria—is a textbook example.

In 1948, the drafters of the citizenship law knew Australia was a safe haven where thousands of refugees from war-ravaged lands, and migrants from everywhere on earth, would make a home and build a new future. My own father was amongst many who did just that. Indeed we are a nation of immigrants. There are few here today, including in the vast crowd in the gallery, who cannot trace their ancestors to far-off lands.

Australia remains a place where you can build a safe and prosperous future. That has not changed for the overwhelming majority of immigrants, including thousands who have come here on humanitarian grounds—and including people from the Middle East. Recently, some have been inveigled into a phenomenon I call ‘Facebook jihadism’, inveigled to kill other Australians. This is something that no-one who helped author the 1948 Nationality and Citizenship Act could have predicted. It is on the back of these two fundamental changes to Australia’s reality—that our enemies are not always in the form of regular armies and that a tiny fraction of immigrants will plot to kill their fellow Australians—that the opposition has engaged with the government on this issue and has agreed to some changes of relevant Australian laws.

As the member for Isaacs recounted, the government in its original bill cast the net too widely and, as with other antiterrorist legislation, it had to be sent back to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security for refinement—because there were people whom the bill was not meant to be targeting who might have been caught by it. People convicted, as the member for Isaacs said, for damaging or destroying Commonwealth property, including a post box, might have had their citizenship stripped. People convicted of seducing a person serving in the Queen’s Forces from his or her duty and allegiance—that is a bit obscure—could also have lost their citizenship this way. Likewise, there was a danger that children could have lost their citizenship because of the conduct of their parents.

Originally the draft bill allowed for an Australian citizen resident in Australia but convicted of no crime to lose their citizenship if a security agency issued an adverse finding about them. This provision has now been removed. No-one in Australia will lose their citizenship on the untested suspicion that they are involved in terrorism. Only those individuals who are to be jailed for serious offences with sentences in excess of six years or, retrospectively, those terrible people who have already been sentenced for over ten years; those who have committed an offence in Australia but fled the country before arrest; or those who are fighting in a terrorist force like Daesh can lose their citizenship under this law. The number of proto-terrorists facing Australia has actually dropped in the last few months, as many of them have been killed fighting for their terrorist masters.

What has also been strengthened in this legislation is access to natural justice. It is democracy 101 that everyone affected by these laws has the right to appeal in a court any determination by a minister. Another important addition to the bill is that the National Security Legislation Monitor will be commissioned to review the revocation of citizenship provisions by no later than 1 December 2018. The intelligence and security committee will conduct its own review, which is due exactly 12 months later. I might add that I was involved originally with a then key leader of the opposition in seeing that it was the parliament, not the Attorney-General, that classified terrorist groups. This has always come before the PJCIS at
the recommendation of the Attorney-General, and that is a very good process that we have here in this country. The parliament is involved. It is not just at the whim of a particular minister at the time.

These changes from the original draft were put in place because of the work of the intelligence and security committee. More specifically, it was the work of the Labor members of this committee that significantly refined the scope of the original language so only those who are meant to be affected are so affected. I want to pay my respects to my colleagues Anthony Byrne, the deputy chair of that committee; the shadow Attorney-General, Mark Dreyfus; the shadow immigration minister, Richard Marles; and the opposition leader, Bill Shorten—all of whom have worked tirelessly to improve this legislation so that it both protects the security of the Australian people and does not have legislative effects on dual citizens not involved in terrorism.

Eventually we have seen an amended bill and that nearly all the amendments match the changes recommended by the intelligence committee. This is exactly the process that I predicted on Sky News way back in July at the height of the former Prime Minister's rhetoric which absurdly accused the shadow Attorney-General of being soft on terrorism. The man against whom this desperate and false allegation was made is the very person who has done more than anyone else in this parliament to produce effective legislation that will actually do something about this new multifaceted threat affecting Australia.

The opposition has maintained a sensible, bipartisan approach to national security through two previous tranches of national security legislation, through the passage of the metadata legislation and now through this important citizenship legislation. Throughout we were vociferously opposed by the Greens political party, whom the Liberals in Victoria and New South Wales are now proposing giving preferences to at the next election. We will see about that. Let's come back to that story in further speeches and op-ed articles we will see before the next election.

The opposition's mindset is the traditional Labor paradigm. We have improved this legislation out of sight because we insisted on and fought for and won the right balance between security and individual rights, just as in the metadata debate a few months ago, where we argued for and won a balance between security and privacy. This legislation, I am proud to say, has a real Labor stamp on it.

The evolution of this legislation, like the metadata legislation before it, shows the value of the committee system and the increasing influence of the PJCIS. We do not believe that leaving important issues like this to the hysteria of press commentary, particularly commentary in social media, is the way to deal with these things. Committees might be seen as too slow for the 24/7 news cycle and the Twitterati, but the result is a pragmatic solution that is best for the Australian people—as it is in this case—and it shows that we parliamentarians are doing our job.

In conclusion, I turn to some of the people who will be affected by these laws. Take, for instance, Abdul Benbrika. Here was a man who came to Australia in 1989, originally from Algeria, who overstayed his visa and then fought through the Australian judicial system for the right to stay in this country. He won that right and was granted residence in 1996, followed by citizenship two years later. And what did he do with that citizenship? He plotted to kill his fellow Australians.
That goes to the heart of this legislation. Benbrika is not in danger of losing his citizenship because he described Osama bin Laden as a great man, which he did on national television in August 2005. He is not in danger of losing his citizenship because of petty criminal behaviour, such as when he used at least 10 different mobile phones that were registered under false names and addresses. No, Benbrika is in danger of losing his citizenship under this legislation because, in September 2008, he was found guilty by an Australian court of intentionally being the leader of a terrorist group and being a member of a terrorist organisation. He was jailed for 15 years. Benbrika's group wanted to attack the MCG on grand final day and other sporting centres so as to cause a mass casualty attack. Supreme Court Justice, the great judge, Bernard Bongiorno said, 'Benbrika was still committed to violent jihad, had shown no contrition for his offences and had talked about continuing the group's activities behind bars if its members were jailed.'

There are, I believe, a further 12 other dual citizens in Australian prisons who have been sentenced for terrorism offences to over 10 years jail within the last 10 years and who might lose their citizenship under this law. These are people seriously determined to cause Australia and Australians ill and who, under this legislation, as dual citizens will lose their right to Australian citizenship. They include Mohammad Ali Elomar, who was convicted alongside Benbrika and who is the uncle of Australian jihadi Mohammad Elomar. This ingrate moved from sleazy criminality in Sydney to join Daesh in Syria. He horrified the world with the disgusting abuse of his own sons, pictured on front pages of newspapers all around the world holding up a severed head. What an ingrate for all the rights of citizenship and the benefits of this country given to him. Elomar achieved his goal of death. But there is a merciful but just god and Elomar will see that he will not go to the celestial heights that he hoped for.

Rather than focus on legal sophistry or arcane debates about whether the Lindt Cafe murderer was a terrorist, let us support these laws which will minimise the evil of some depraved dual citizen currently fighting for terrorist organisations in Syria. Fancy the destruction of ancient cities like Palmyra; the blowing up of the millennia-old Temple of Jonah in Nineveh; the desecration of cathedrals; the digging up of the bones of priests; some of the worst crimes described by The New York Times as the 'theology of rape', where the sexual slavery of women is thought of as a good thing by these people; the crucifixions and the other acts of depraved violence such as the slitting of throats of innocent Coptic Christians captured in Libya and forced stand at the coast facing Italy. Their intent to bring death upon all who disagree with them disgusts all Australians.

There are approximately 120 Australians fighting with Daesh, of which up to half are thought to be dual citizens. I know I stand with every Australian who knows that their expectations are being met with this bill, that these foreign fighters have, by their shamefulness, abandoned any claim to dual Australian citizenship. They should and will lose it under this legislation.

Before I commend this bill to the House, I must conclude by saying we have an assurance from the government that this bill and all of its amendments are constitutional. In fact, the Prime Minister said that just yesterday on radio and was very ably cited by the member for Isaacs. It is in the government's court, having given the opposition the assurance that this legislation is constitutional. We understand its purpose and we support its purpose, but the government are responsible for its constitutionality.
Mrs ANDREWS (McPherson—Assistant Minister for Science) (16:27): I am pleased to speak in strong support of the Australian Citizenship Amendment (Allegiance to Australia) Bill 2015, which will help strengthen our ability to counter home-grown terrorism activity and make our community safer. This bill essentially provides for the cessation of Australian citizenship, including that obtained at birth, of a dual national where that person has been engaged in terrorist activities whether here and/or overseas. This, of course, is a very simplified summary and I will go into much more detail on some of the specific aspects of this bill.

I note the outstanding work done by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, chaired by my colleague and friend the member for Wannon. After extensive consideration, the bipartisan committee recommended that this legislation be passed, with finetuning of some aspects of the bill and a number of recommendations regarding reporting and enhancing transparency. I note that in the concluding statement of the report, it was stated:
The Committee supports the policy intention of the Bill to help protect the community from persons who have clearly renounced their allegiance to Australia by engaging in serious terrorism-related acts that harm Australians or Australian interests.

This statement goes to the heart of this legislation and really articulates why there is a strong degree of community support for this bill.

The feedback that I have had from my constituents is very clear—that those who engage in serious terrorism-related activities have, indeed, renounced their allegiance to Australia and, therefore, in the case of dual nationals, we have not only a right but a responsibility to revoke citizenship and deport or refuse re-entry to our country of anyone found to be engaged in such activity.

For many Australians the concept of 'allegiance to our nation' is something we rarely stop to consider. We are, by and large, a nation of fairly relaxed patriots and we live in a society where free speech is valued and where our rights and obligations are certainly not codified. Having a tilt at authority, questioning the government of the day—these are rights that are quintessentially Australian. I would certainly not support any legislation that diminished those rights.

Debate interrupted.

ADJOURNMENT

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott) (16:30): Order! It being 4.30 pm, I propose the question:

That the House do now adjourn.

Taxation

Dr LEIGH (Fraser) (16:30): 'Protecting tax privacy for the uber-rich is a strange thing to take a stand on.' I wish I could claim credit for those words, but that is the title of Lenore Taylor's summary in The Guardian of the events of today. Rather than agree to getting its own multinational tax bill through the parliament, today has seen the government prefer to put the House in opposition to the Senate.
The government's multinational tax bill is a bill about which Labor has always been somewhat sceptical. After all, when one looks at the budget papers, where revenue estimates should be you only see a series of asterisks. But we have supported the government's multinational tax efforts on the basis that bipartisan activity in this area ought to be encouraged. In the same spirit, we would encourage the government to look at Labor's $7.2 billion plan for closing debt deduction loopholes.

Today, rather than seeing its own multinational tax package go into law, the government has chosen to stamp its foot and put the House in opposition to the Senate. It has done that over the issue of tax transparency. Tax transparency has a strong history in this place. In 2013 Labor put in place laws which would see the Australian Taxation Office report the total income, taxable income and tax paid of all companies with revenue over $100 million. The Australian Taxation Office said at the time that this would 'discourage large corporate entities from engaging in aggressive tax avoidance practices'.

The coalition since then has waged a guerrilla war against transparency, in favour of secrecy. Then Assistant Treasurer Josh Frydenberg told the coalition party room of a real concern that wealthy business people would be kidnapped as a result of these laws, leading University of New South Wales accounting lecturer Jeffrey Knapp to call this the 'stupidest excuse for non-disclosure I've ever heard'. Labor asked whether the government had sought security advice to verify a kidnap risk, and it turned out that no advice had been provided by the Federal Police, the Attorney-General's Department or the Australian Taxation Office. Labor then asked the government what representations had been received by the offices of the then Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, and we were told that zero representations had been received favouring a wind back of tax transparency.

When the issue came to the Senate, a submission was received from an organisation known as the Family Office Institute Australia, an organisation which purported to be representative, but in fact it now emerges that it has no members. This practice, known as 'astroturfing' in the United States, has embarrassed the Senate. Senators have acknowledged that they probably should not have accepted a submission from an organisation which has no members.

Labor has been consistently on the side of transparency. I moved a private member's bill in this House calling for tax transparency to start a year ahead of schedule—to start based on the 2012-13 tax data rather than on the 2013-14 tax data. If we are going to have a debate about tax fairness in this country, let us see how much tax is being paid by large firms rather than simply slugging the bottom end of the income distribution. Instead, we have not only seen the Treasurer refuse to accept the Senate amendments to the government's multinational tax bill but we have now also seen him attack the crossbench. In this place the Treasurer said:

… the Senate, on the run and at the last minute, has sought to dramatically amend this bill and to include a raft of peripheral additions.

… … …

This is a very shabby process that cannot be supported and should not be encouraged.

… … …

This is the type of cynical, old politics that Australians are sick of.

That is the Treasurer speaking about the crossbench. The 'raft of peripheral additions' to which he refers is less than a page of amendments. The 'shabby process' to which he refers is
democracy itself. It is the crossbench recognising that tax transparency is in the interests of all Australians.

I pay tribute to the work done by Senators Dastyari, Xenophon and Whish-Wilson in bringing together a set of reasonable amendments which allow a claim to be made to the tax office of commercial confidentiality but ensure that large companies—public and private—are within the transparency net.

**Canning Electorate: Crystal Methamphetamine**

Mr HASTIE (Canning) (16:35): Today marks 30 days since I was sworn in as the federal member for Canning, and I am pleased to inform that House that the Canning Ice Action Plan is well underway. Over the past 30 days I have met with a number of front-line providers servicing my electorate to better understand the impacts of ice on the community and treatment options for those struggling with addiction. These service providers include: Hope Community Services in Armadale; Palmerston Association Inc., who have an office in Mandurah; representatives from Armadale police station and South Metropolitan Community Engagement Unit in Peel; and Peel Youth Medical Service and GP Down South in Mandurah.

I have also met with the principals of Challis Primary School and Cecil Grove high school, who are working together to implement an excellent ‘womb to the workplace’ care plan for students and their families. In addition, I also visited Fresh Start in Subiaco, which sits in the seat of Curtin, but since 2009 has treated 507 residents from Canning, mostly for addiction to amphetamines. I was heartened by their compassion, drive and focus on real, life-changing treatment for the people they serve.

The overwhelming message is that while ice may not be a new problem, it is manifesting itself in ways that service providers and the community are not fully equipped to deal with. They need further government support. The ice problem is particularly bad in Mandurah, a steadily-growing community of approximately 80,000 people, located one hour south of Perth. Currently there are 30,000 needles being exchanged per month through the Mandurah Needle and Syringe Exchange Program run by Palmerston Association—that is, 360,000 hits per year in the Mandurah area that we know about. On top of this figure, local authorities in the area have informed me that the needle disposal units located in public rest rooms are being broken into by users looking for syringes. And, as usage increases, so do crime and the associated health problems that come with the use of dirty needles. Youth unemployment sits at approximately 17 per cent in Mandurah, and the profile of the people who are committing these crimes is trending towards young people seeking to finance a drug habit. Sadly, local medical services live this reality every day in my electorate. Tragically, we are now seeing intergenerational drug use and addiction in Canning and we desperately need to break the cycle.

Ice use in Canning is a real problem that requires real solutions. There are good people already hard at work on this problem. As part of my post-election Canning Ice Action Plan, I recently invited the Minister for Justice, the Hon. Michael Keenan MP, to the first meeting of the Canning Ice Action Group, and there he gave an update on the National Ice Taskforce. The action group consists of representatives from local government, medical services and community organisations. The taskforce members are experts in their field and passionate about doing whatever is possible to help the community tackle ice. The Canning Ice Action Group had an open discussion about the impact ice is having on our community, what
services are currently in place to tackle this problem and what needs to change so that they can deliver more effective assistance. Importantly, as their federal member of parliament, I was able to identify opportunities for where the Commonwealth can provide additional support to enhance already effective services in Canning. There is a need for affordable family services, more appropriate detox programs, more on-the-ground resources for rehabilitation providers, and early prevention programs in schools and community organisations. One of the most important parts of the rehabilitation process is the counselling process. The one-to-one relationship between those seeking to break their drug addiction and a counsellor is critical. We need to build our pool of community counsellors so that those determined to break free of drug addiction can enter into a genuine relationship of accountability, support and friendship.

The Canning Ice Action Group is eagerly awaiting the government's action plan that will flow from recommendations of the National Ice Taskforce. With the government's exceptional performance in the law-and-order portfolio, I am hoping to see a focus on health, education and community services to help people break their addiction. The next step in the Canning Ice Action Plan will be to hold a community forum within the electorate to give the constituents of my electorate an opportunity to share their concerns and ideas. Ultimately, the concepts that are formed through both professional and community engagement will be reported back to my state and federal colleagues for comment and further action. In conclusion, the Canning Ice Action Plan—30 days after my swearing-in—is well underway, and I look forward to progressing this further.

Driverless Cars

Ms MacTIERNAN (Perth) (16:40): Last week in Adelaide I felt very privileged to be able to get a preview of the game-changing technology of autonomous vehicles, at the International Driverless Cars Conference. This technology will change the shape, the sounds and, profoundly, the livability of our cities. It is going to enable us to reduce the number of vehicles we require on our roads to deliver the mobility we need. It will significantly improve road safety. The fact is that 1.3 million people die on the roads around the world each year from car crashes. That is an alarming figure, and this technology has amazing capacity to reduce that problem. It will enhance the quality of life for those that cannot drive—for our increasingly aged population, for our young people. It will enable us to double the transport task on existing roads, so, where there are 2,000 cars per lane per hour, this technology will enable us to double that throughput, getting much better value for our dollar and our road investment. It may totally change the model of car ownership. It will challenge notions of what are public and private transport and it will change the planning for mass transit.

This is not something for future generations. This is not something that is not going to be here for another 15, 20 or 30 years. The basis of this technology is with us here and now, and we enjoyed participating in the first trial of an automated vehicle on a public road in the Southern Hemisphere. At this point, I want to congratulate Jay Weatherill and his government in South Australia for seizing the day and trying to make sure that Australia gets in on the ground floor of this new technology, so that we are not, once again, left with just being technology takers but take this opportunity to be technology makers. We saw the big trial with Volvo but we also saw Tesla cars there and the Navya minibus shuttle, all performing very
well. There was one incident where, unfortunately, an inflatable kangaroo was injured! But over and above that it all went extremely well.

In the few minutes that remain, I want to talk about some of the things that we need to do at a federal level. First up, we have to make sure that we protect the bandwidth that is going to be needed to enable these vehicles to communicate with each other. To move into a fully automated system, we are going to need these vehicles to be able to communicate with each other, and vehicles fitted with that intervehicle communication technology will be coming on the market as early as 2017. So we need to make sure that we have the proper bandwidth. The 5.9 gigahertz spectrum is the one that is probably the best suited in Australia. There is commercial pressure to erode what has been set aside, but we have really got to lock that in for this purpose. We also need to move on the GPS. We need to ensure that our current level of accuracy which is only about 10 metres, comes down at least to one metre. Hopefully, we can support Geoscience Australia, who have actually developed the technology to enable us to get it down to a mere three centimetres and leapfrog the capacity of the rest of the world. I urge us all to accept that this technology is here and now. We all need to move very, very quickly to ensure that we have got the infrastructure to enable us to utilise this.

Salter, Mr Philip John

Mr LAUNDY (Reid) (16:44): Today I rise to tell a great Australian story, one which unfortunately ended far too prematurely. Last weekend this country lost a great man, husband, father, grandfather, entrepreneur, philanthropist and friend, Philip John Salter.

Philip was born on 29 September 1951 in Rodd Point and was the second child of Tom and Mary Salter. Phil ended up with five brothers and sisters, and the family home was always busy. In 1975, he met the love of his life, Christine Westhoff, and a year later they were married.

In the following years, like his parents before him, Phil and Christine had six beautiful children and, once again, like his parents before him, their house was always busy. I can verify that firsthand from the many times I have visited the Salter house.

From the day Phil was born, until the day we lost him, family was always the most important thing in his life. He was a family man first and foremost, from start to finish. Phil was also a proud old boy of St Patricks College, Strathfield, and it was there he met his lifelong mate and eventual business partner, Peter Mattick.

In 1979, Phil and Peter, along with Phil's father Tom, backed themselves and started a business in Regents Park. They named the business Salmat—"Sal' from Salter and 'Mat' from Mattick. From those humble beginnings they grew that business to one that now operates in four countries and, at its height, employed 7,000 people.

Phil and Peter stepped down from their joint managing directorship of Salmat in 2009 and focused together, as always, on their private business interests. These interests were varied, but Phil's passion became farming. He was a keen farmer with his Doughboy Angus brand of cattle and a strong believer in putting back into the land. Whenever he was heading to one of the farms, he preferred to take as many people as his car could fit. That way you had no choice but to listen to Johnny Cash and Johnny Cash only—and of course Phil's accompanying synopsis of what made Johnny Cash so great.
Phil and Peter were keen supporters of sports, particularly rugby and athletics. They sponsored up-and-coming kids, whole clubs—and even codes, if that what was needed at the time—both privately and through Salmat. Phil was a particularly proud supporter of Indigenous sporting teams and frequently came through with gear, transport and accommodation when and where it was needed.

Over the past few years, Phil fought valiantly to stave off cancer—a fight he would ultimately lose; however, he never lost his sense of humour. On the way back from looking at a property only a few months ago when the cancer was starting to really bite, he asked his colleagues if he thought the site may convert to residential. When the answer came back 'maybe in 20 years or so', he quipped, 'I'll be 83!' and everyone started laughing.

Along with his humour, he was a great and willing raconteur who always held the crowd. He loved telling stories that related to his dad Tom and he could always work one of his dad's sayings into most situations that left the crowd in raptures.

The school motto of St Pat's at Strathfield is: Luceat Lux Vestra, which means let your light shine. As a fellow old boy, I know how seriously the Christian Brothers took teaching us what this meant. If there was ever an example of someone who let their light shine, it was Phil.

I would like to pass on my family's heartfelt condolences to Phil's wife Christine; his mother Mary; his children, Daniel, Andrew, Anna, Dominic, Richard and Juliet; his son- and daughters-in-law, Alexander, Emily and Amelia; his grandchildren, Henry, Charlie, Matilda, Portia, Sebastian, William and Edward; and his siblings, Michael, Kathy-Anne, Carl, and Jane.

Being of Irish descent, I thought it would be appropriate to conclude this tribute to the life of Phil Salter with an Irish blessing. Phil:

May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind always be at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
and rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again—
Mate—
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.
Rest in peace, Phil.

**Turnbull Government**

**Mr GILES** (Scullin) (16:49): The Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull talks about moving on from old politics. He talks about serious policy conversations. He talks about bipartisanship. And, as we have all experienced in recent weeks at great length, the Prime Minister talks.

Unfortunately for Australia, that is all it is. He does not present any policies, just more expansive slogans, more articulately presented, than his predecessor. Nowhere is this more harmful than in respect of our treatment of those seeking asylum. They need and we need a different, more respectful debate commensurate with the scale of the global problem we should be trying to help solve.
The Turnbull government is out of step with not only its own country but also what is happening internationally. I think in particular of the leadership of Angela Merkel under real crisis conditions. Humanitarians worldwide were left dumbfounded and alarmed when the former Prime Minister, Mr Abbott, delivered a speech in London recently suggesting world leaders should follow his approach to asylum—extraordinary hubris and lack of self-awareness, given the scale of present challenges in Europe.

Fortunately, this advice has been dismissed just about everywhere but Australia. The Age today reminds me that the man who delivered this lecture as PM complained on this country's behalf—but not at its request—that we were 'sick of being lectured by the United Nations'.

Many Australians are actually sick of the fact that the world has good grounds on which to lecture us. So now we see dozens of countries criticise the Australian government at the United Nations human rights forum. And how does the government react to this criticism? The member for Berowra said it had been a positive performance for Australia and that we were well received. The minister for immigration called the process a farce. Rather than spending a moment looking at his own government's policies and their human consequences, he simply blamed the United Nations—the messenger. Once again, the coalition government is incapable of dealing with scrutiny, much less criticism.

Far from being the exemplar of human rights that Australia has been and must be again, that response is not a surprise though. After all, this is from the minister who makes jokes about the impact of climate change on Pacific Island nations. This is the minister who has consistently played the most despicable kind of politics with people's lives. We have seen him refuse transfer to a pregnant asylum seeker suffering from diabetes and kidney issues who needed to go to an Australian hospital. Particularly troublingly, we have seen his inhumane treatment of the asylum seeker known as Abyan.

The minister for immigration calls widespread international criticism and condemnation of Australia's human rights record a farce. I say the farce has been that he is more interested in commenting on Labor's approach than doing his job. He should be more concerned about what is happening under a veil of secrecy to vulnerable people who have sought our help under his oversight and about how those found to be refugees can be resettled. These should be his focus and they should be the subject of proper scrutiny.

In the meantime, of course, the Labor Party has had a real debate on this issue. The coalition—the party in government—have stood in the way of a similarly informed debate in the wider community. Labor's debate did not see all the proposals I put forward adopted but it has produced a platform that I am very proud to support. I want and we need to see it implemented. It sets out a decent framework that is concerned with protection and anchored in transparency.

A Labor government will reverse the coalition's attempts to undermine international law. We will double Australia's annual humanitarian intake. Labor will get children out of detention and abolish temporary protection visas, which have been proven to cause mental harm. And, as we now push the Turnbull government to ensure people who have sought asylum in Australia are afforded the benefit of the international human rights obligations we have committed to and that this is subject to proper independent oversight, we will ensure when we are in government that these standards are met.
Fundamentally, if the Turnbull government is really serious about this new politics, let's first see a preparedness to take responsibility for their actions in this regard. Let's also see the government and its leadership enable a genuine debate in this place and in the community, absent rhetoric, absent hubris, absent triumphalism that is misplaced in a world where there are 60 million people forcibly displaced—a real debate about the great moral and practical challenges posed by the forced movement of millions around the world.

Let us accept that the policy challenge is complex and vast, but the domestic politics need not be. Let's have a serious policy conversation in this place. Vulnerable people around the world deserve it; so do the Australian people.

**Small Business**

*Mr GOODENOUGH* (Moore) (16:54): The business community in my electorate will be celebrating the achievements of local entrepreneurs over the coming week with both the Wanneroo Business Association and the Joondalup Business Association holding their respective annual business awards nights.

Small businesses account for 96 per cent of all Australian businesses, employing 4.5 million people and producing $330 billion of Australia's gross domestic product. Our region can be described as an emerging economic powerhouse. In the June 2015 quarter the unemployment rate in the City of Joondalup was 2.9 per cent, less than half that of the national average of 6 per cent. Our gross regional product was $5.88 billion in 2014, growing 6.2 per cent since 2013.

In 2013-14 the City of Joondalup contributed 3.6 per cent of Western Australia's total employment. Similarly, in that year total tourism and hospitality sales in the City of Joondalup amounted to $850.7 million. The total value added was $371 million. Retail trade is the largest employer in our region, generating 9,270 local jobs, whilst the construction industry had the largest output by industry, generating $3.19 billion in 2013-14. We have a highly educated workforce, with 35.5 per cent of our local labour force holding tertiary qualifications.

As someone from a business and commercial background who has been involved with the Wanneroo and Joondalup business communities for nearly 20 years, I am always looking for practical and meaningful ways to assist small business through advocacy in government. One key strategy involves increasing market access for Australian exporters to boost revenue from the supply of goods and services into emerging economies with significant populations of increasingly affluent consumers with purchasing power. In effect, this allows demand driven economic growth to occur and is being actively achieved through a series of free trade agreements successfully being implemented, with Korea, Japan, China and the latest, the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement, adding to the existing agreements already in place. By building upon our strong diplomatic ties and contacts we are able to promote the trade and investment necessary to boost local businesses.

Recognising the importance of transport and logistics in maintaining efficient supply chains for businesses in our region, the federal government has this year invested heavily in upgrading the local road infrastructure, with $209.1 million in federal funding towards the northern extension of the Mitchell Freeway and associated construction of Neerabup Road to Wanneroo Road providing a logistics link via the newly realigned Flynn Drive to the
Neerabup industrial area. This will establish Neerabup as an important economic hub with capacity for the creation of up to 20,000 new jobs. Further south, the federal government has also contributed $67.2 million towards the $108 million upgrade of the Reid Highway, which includes widening between Marmion Avenue and Erindale Road and grade separation at the Malaga Drive intersection.

The federal government is also working with states and territories to promote deregulation across all levels of government. Many regulatory instruments fall within the area of responsibility of state and local governments, so it is essential that all levels of government cooperate to reduce red tape. The time frame to process applications for planning and development approvals must improve if we are to attract investment and deliver a higher standard of living. Deregulation reforms are much needed to promote greater productivity, make our exports more competitive and attract investment to Australia.

Investment by government in telecommunications infrastructure through the National Broadband Network rollout over the next three years will help build the digital economy by opening up the information superhighway, connecting people with access to information, services, and networks on a global scale.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): Order! It being 5 pm, the debate is interrupted.

House adjourned at 17:00

NOTICES

The following notices were given:

Ms McGowan: to move:

That this House:
(1) notes that:
   (a) the report of the National Review of Mental Health Programmes and Services (‘the Review’) was delivered to the Government on 1 December 2014; and
   (b) the Review:
      (i) reveals a wide gap between the wellbeing and mental health of Indigenous Australians to other Australians, in particular, the death from suicide being twice that of non-Indigenous Australians; and
      (ii) made recommendations across five areas which are aimed at transforming the mental health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; and
   (2) calls on the Government to:
      (a) make Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health a national priority; and
      (b) introduce an additional COAG Closing the Gap target specifically for mental health.

Mr Perrett: to move:

That this House:
(1) recognises that 14 November is World Diabetes Day;
(2) acknowledges that:
   (a) there are 1.1 million diagnosed cases of diabetes in Australia and they are rising by 100,000 a year;
(b) Diabetes Australia estimates that:
   (i) diabetes currently costs the Australian economy around $14.6 billion per annum; and
   (ii) the cost of diabetes to the Australian economy is forecast to increase to $30 billion by 2025;
(c) Australia needs a stronger response to the challenge of diabetes;
(d) there is evidence that:
   (i) the onset of type 2 diabetes can be successfully prevented; and
   (ii) serious complications and hospitalisations from diabetes can be prevented; and
(3) commits to working towards reducing the impact of diabetes on the lives of Australians.
Thursday, 12 November 2015

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Landry) took the chair at 9:30.

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Calwell Electorate: Broadmeadows Sporting Club

Ms VAMVAKINOU (Calwell) (09:30): This past week has been a very big week in my electorate. Of course 11 November, yesterday, marked the 40th anniversary of the sacking of the Whitlam government, and I got the opportunity to be reminded of the dramatic momentum of that tumultuous period when I attended the 40th anniversary of the opening of the Broadmeadows Sporting Club last Sunday afternoon. Sunset Boulevard Jacana is the site of the Broadmeadows Sporting Club. Set in the Jacana Valley and surrounded by sprawling wetlands, Broadmeadows Sporting Club is an iconic presence in our local community. The club is a non-profit organisation. It runs sporting and social events and sponsors local community groups, and its longstanding service and committee have seen the club successfully service the Jacana-Broadmeadows area and the surrounding suburbs for the last four decades. It also enjoys a very special footnote in Australian political history, for it was here on 10 November 1975 that the then Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, came to lay the foundation stone for the club. This event in Broadmeadows was to be the last official function conducted by Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. He would later of course return to Canberra where, on 11 November 1975, he would be sacked by Governor-General John Kerr. This memorable piece of history has forever linked the club with Prime Minister Whitlam and the 1975 constitutional crisis of the dismissal.

The club's place in history is matched of course only by its longstanding service to the community in an area that has traditionally suffered from a lack of social infrastructure and with the reputation as a rough and disadvantaged part of Melbourne's north. By providing the community hub for the neighbourhood, the sporting club has brought enjoyment, social connection, recreation and community spirit to the outer urban working-class suburbs in the north-western region of Melbourne. It has supported local sports activities for decades and it donates to local sporting clubs, including the Jacana Football Club and the Broadmeadows Sub-District Cricket Club. It sponsors many community events, such as the Hume City Council Carols by Candlelight and Auskick, and most recently the club sponsored an initiative to research the connection between sport participation and academic achievement in our local Broadmeadows schools. The club estimates that it has donated in excess of $1 million to local community groups and events in the past years. It was therefore very fitting that the foundation stone of the club was placed by former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, who was known as a champion of the working class and of migrant Australia. I want to quote club vice-president, Len Barry, who says, 'The club's board of directors has always had the view that we should return to the community as much as is possible.'

I want to congratulate Len Barry and his committee and I want to congratulate everyone who serves at the Broadmeadows Sporting Club.
Bradfield Electorate: San Run for Life

Mr FLETCHER (Bradfield—Minister for Territories, Local Government and Major Projects) (09:33): The Sydney Adventist Hospital at Wahroonga is a much loved and respected institution in my electorate of Bradfield, fondly known as 'the San'. It is the largest private hospital in New South Wales and each year its dedicated staff care for over 56,000 inpatients, 10,000 emergency patients and 135,000 outpatients.

This week the San is holding the San Run for Life, which is a five-kilometre or 10-kilometre fun run, to raise money for the San Foundation and specifically to support the hospital's new integrated cancer centre, ensuring that the centre has the world-class equipment required to provide high-quality treatment. Some $20 million is required to complete this centre. Some $13 million has already been raised, and I want to pay tribute to those individuals and companies which have donated so generously to raise that very impressive sum. The new centre is part of the San's major redevelopment which was officially opened last year by former Prime Minister Tony Abbott. At a cost of $200 million, this redevelopment was completely privately funded. It includes a new maternity ward, a women's health and children's unit, a new 34-bed intensive care unit and capacity for an additional 35,000 admissions per year.

The San fun run was formerly held every year, but during the construction phase it unfortunately had to go into abeyance, as the route runs through the hospital campus. Happily, however, this year the San Run for Life has recommenced and there has been very strong community response. The participants in the San fun run are going to include several of my state colleagues—the member for Ku-ring-gai, Alister Henskens; the member for Hornsby, Matt Kean; the member for Davidson, Jonathan O'Dea; and the event patron and former member for Ku-ring-gai and New South Wales Premier, Barry O'Farrell—as well as former San chief executive Dr Leon Clark, who was a prime mover in the redevelopment of the San, and hundreds if not thousands of local residents and community members.

There has been some big talk in the local media from some of my colleagues about the times they intend to run, and I commend them for their boldness. For myself, I will be pleased just to participate. I make absolutely no assurances as to the time that I will achieve. But I am very pleased to have the chance to participate in the San Run for Life, joining with many local residents and supporters of the San. This is a tremendously important community event. It is an opportunity to engage in some community fitness and participation, as well as to support a tremendously important institution: the Sydney Adventist Hospital at Wahroonga.

Blair Electorate: RAAF Base Amberley

Mr NEUMANN (Blair) (09:36): For the last 75 years, the city of Ipswich in my electorate of Blair has been home to RAAF Base Amberley. Over those years, the base has grown to become one of the nation's largest, employing some 5½ thousand uniformed and civilian personnel. Ipswich is a proud Defence city. RAAF Base Amberley is as much a part of our history as coalmining, railways and even rugby league. The base is essential to our local economy. The men and women who serve on it enrich our community.

On 4 November, I was honoured to speak with some of those serving Defence personnel as we welcomed the eighth C17A Globemaster aircraft into service with No. 36 Squadron at Amberley. The C17, as is it commonly called, has become a familiar sight over Ipswich city.
We recognise its rumble and we cannot avoid an upward glance when it is overhead. The C17 program has received strong support from Commonwealth governments of both political persuasions. The first four aircraft were acquired by the Howard government. The former Labor government added another two to the fleet. The current government added aircrafts seven and eight.

While the C17 has been in RAAF service for less than a decade, it has still proved its value time and time again. The aircraft's primary role is military, allowing the swift deployment of Australian troops, supplies, vehicles and heavy equipment throughout the world. It can carry an Oberon tank, three Bushmasters or over 130 personnel. It has shone in its role in supporting coalition forces in Afghanistan, UN peacekeepers in South Sudan and our military personnel across the Middle East.

The aircraft has excelled in another role since entering service, as it has spearheaded Australia's response to local and international disasters. Indeed it is one of Australia's greatest ambassadors. At home, the people of Ipswich remember the C17s in action during the 2011 Queensland floods. When rising waters threatened Amberley, the aircraft briefly relocated to New South Wales. From there they delivered vital supplies to flood affected communities across Queensland. Weeks later, the C17s evacuated patients from Cairns Hospital as Cyclone Yasi approached, returning with 200 tonnes of supplies when the cyclone passed. Beyond our shores, the C17s delivered Australian aid to Wellington during the earthquake, to Japan following earthquakes and tsunamis, to Fiji, Samoa and the Philippines. Recently the C17s have played a significant and solemn role in the repatriation of victims of the Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 disaster.

When called on, there is no doubt the aircraft crew and ground staff of No. 36 Squadron have responded with their renowned diligence and professionalism. I thank Air Vice Marshal Gavin Turnbull for graciously guiding me around the aircraft. When he mentioned that he spent a couple of years as a student at Ipswich State High School, we decided to claim him as local.

Tasmania: Tourism

**Mr HUTCHINSON (Lyons)** *(09:39)*: Indeed, there are new records being set in tourism in Tasmania. In the year ended June 2014, tourism contributed over $1 billion—or four per cent—to Tasmania's economy: 15,000 direct jobs and 22½ thousand indirect jobs in our state. In 2014-15, international visitors to Tasmania were up 22 per cent to 198,000, with China being the largest of those markets. So it was that on Friday, 6 November, at the Wrest Point facility, the Tasmanian Tourism Award winners were announced for this year.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority on winning both the Major Tourist Attractions and the Cultural Tourism awards. Stephen Large and his team do a fantastic job at that iconic facility. I also congratulate Rob Pennicott from Bruny Island Cruises for winning best tourist attraction. For the Major Festivals and Events award, I congratulate the MyState Australian Wooden Boat Festival 2015. For the Festivals and Events award, I congratulate the Falls Music and Arts Festival in my electorate of Lyons at Marion Bay on the beautiful south-east coast. I congratulate Rob Sherrard and the Tasmanian Walking Company for winning the Ecotourism and Adventure Tourism awards as well as the Qantas Award for Excellence in Sustainable Tourism. I congratulate Dennis and Tina Lucas and Cruisin' Motorhomes for winning the Specialised Tourism Services award. I
congratulate the Tasmanian Travel and Information Centre for winning the Visitor Information Services award. I congratulate the Old Woolstore Apartment Hotel in Hobart for winning the Business Event Venue and Deluxe Accommodation awards.

For the Major Tour and Transport Operators award, I congratulate Par Avion Wilderness Tours; Shannon Wells, indeed, is a passionate and entrepreneurial Tasmanian. For the Tour and Transport Operators award, I congratulate the Bruny Island Long Weekend. For the Destination Marketing award, I congratulate Chris Griffin and the team at #RideNorthTas. For the Tourism, Restaurants and Catering Services award as well as the Tourism Wineries, Distilleries and Breweries award, I congratulate Josef Chromy Wines. Particular congratulations go to Curringa Farm Tours and Accommodation for winning the Hosted Accommodation award. They also won the China Market Export Development Award, an inaugural award, so congratulations Tim and Jane Parsons from Hamilton. For the Unique Accommodation award, I congratulate the Avalon City Retreat. For the Self-Contained Accommodation award, I congratulate the Avalon Coastal Retreat at Swansea on the east coast. I congratulate the Sandpiper Ocean Cottages at Bicheno for winning the Standard Accommodation award. I congratulate Saffire Freycinet for winning the Luxury Accommodation award. I congratulate Pumphouse Point for winning the Gustav Award for New Tourism Businesses.

Scullin Electorate

Mr GILES (Scullin) (09:42): I spent last Friday in the company of dozens of Scullin electorate's youngest and newest citizens in a Welcoming the Babies event at the Galada Community Centre in Epping North, in the heart of some of the growth areas that make up the Scullin electorate's suburbs, like Epping North itself, like Wollert and like South Morang—suburbs that have been experiencing a baby boom and suburbs full of young families. It was terrific to share what is an exciting time with all of these families and some other interested community members, but also to recognise that, while having a child, particularly a first child, is a great occasion of joy for parents and those who care for them, it is also often a challenging time.

This event was brought together, through the good work of staff and volunteers in my office and many community representatives, to ensure that all new parents, particularly those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, have an opportunity to engage with their neighbours to share the experience of parenting and to make sure that they are connected with all of the community resources that are available to them, such as the library services, support from the local breastfeeding association, support from hardship programs, because we know that quite often income goes down and expenses definitely go up when people have children. I was appreciative, particularly, of the representatives of Yarra Valley Water. Healthcare organisations like Northern Health and Plenty Valley Community Health were there to provide support and to ensure that people linked up into maternal and child health. We saw the playgroup and early childhood coordinators from the Whittlesea council there to ensure that socialisation as well as childcare needs are appropriately met. Victoria police were also present to look at the challenges of safety, particularly in terms of cars and car seats. It was a great opportunity to bring the community together to share the joy of children arriving, as well as to share in the stories that make up the diverse communities of Melbourne's north.
As well as building resilience for families and supporting our resilient families, I think events like these play a very significant role in building communities. It was appropriate this event took place in Epping North on a new estate, because often one of the challenges in these new areas is to enable people to build firm relationships with their neighbours as the community grows. It was a real privilege for me, as a local member, to see this take place. I thank the parents, the grandparents, the carers and friends who brought along their babies to share their joy with me and other members of the community. I thank all the stallholders and community organisations who came together to support parents at such a wonderful time in their lives. I also take this opportunity to thank the staff in the Scullin electorate office, particularly Sally Delaney, and all the community volunteers who did so much to welcome the Scullin babies.

Northern Australia Investment Forum

Mrs GRIGGS (Solomon) (09:45): I rise to update the House on the very successful Northern Australia Investment Forum held earlier this week in Darwin. I note your keen interest in Northern Australia too, Deputy Speaker Landry. I would to place on record my thanks to the incredibly hardworking minister for trade, Andrew Robb, for his leadership and vision, because that was paramount in the success of this forum.

The forum brought together business leaders from Australia and overseas who were interested in pursuing investments in Northern Australia. It was an opportunity to showcase a suite of investment-ready projects across Northern Australia in fields such as agriculture, food processing, aquaculture, smart-technology-based resource extraction, remote renewable energy, world-leading tropical medical research and high-end ecotourism.

There were 300 Australian and international delegates at the forum, which included 85 executives from major international investors, market-leading firms and their Australian subsidiaries—they all took part in this very important forum. A number of delegates commented to me how the forum far exceeded their expectations. They were delighted at the connections and the opportunities that were being provided to them. For me, I was excited at the response to the Northern Territory. I was thrilled at the way the Territory was being seen by investors. We were able to showcase our sophistication—while maintaining our Territory uniqueness—and our untapped opportunities.

There was no doubt from any of the attendees that Northern Australia has untapped promise, abundant resources and talented can-do people—like you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am proud that this government will support investors as they develop tomorrow's solutions. As part of our commitment to unlock the north’s potential, we have announced the release of a public consultation paper on the $5 billion Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility, the $8.5 million Australian Tropical Medicine Commercialisation Grants program, and a business-friendly guide to land tenure and title systems in Northern Australia. At the conclusion of the forum, investors were clear why Northern Australia is a great place to invest and to conduct business, as well as about the many investment opportunities in Northern Australia. They had an insight into how the policy settings established by the Northern Australia white paper will make doing business in Northern Australia much easier. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the minister for Northern Australia, Josh Frydenberg, for his attendance, his support and his push to develop Northern Australia.(Time expired)
Australian Bureau of Statistics: Household Expenditure Survey

Ms MacTIERNAN (Perth) (09:48): The Australian Bureau of Statistics household expenditure survey is a vitally important tool for understanding exactly how and where Australians are spending their money. It is therefore an important frame for guiding government policy. But it is impossible to deny that the six-yearly survey currently underway imposes a significant burden on participants. They are required to provide extensive personal information, including detailed financial records in face-to-face interviews. They are also required to keep a diary for a week, recording every single item they purchase and every service they pay for in great detail. The diary guide tells participants not just to write down 'haircut', but it must be 'boy's haircut' or 'girl's haircut', and not just that they have purchased fruit, but actually itemise whether it is a banana or an apple et cetera. If a household has been selected, participation in the survey is compulsory. A constituent has come to me with her concerns about the demands of the survey. She wrote:

Whilst I support the census and understand the need to collect data, I find this survey is demanding very personal information which is sensitive to me. It imposes a considerable burden of time and effort. Since being approached to do this survey, I have felt stressed and anxious and I feel my personal space has been invaded. I cannot relax in my home in case an unknown person turns up at my door requesting information and time.

But as she had been selected, there was very little we could do to help besides allay some of her concerns about the privacy and the security of the data collected.

If we are going to make the surveys of this depth compulsory, we should consider some modest financial compensation for those completing them. It would be an acknowledgement of the burden the survey places on people and would go a long way to making the participants less hostile to the process and it could even improve the quality of the data collected. In the last household survey, 2009-10, 26.4 per cent of the 13,500 households approached were listed as non-respondents. They either did not complete the survey, refused to participate or ignored key questions. I believe that offering compensation would encourage better participation and make the participants more inclined to accurately provide the level of detail to make this a coherent and successful survey.

Australian-Azerbaijani Parliamentary Friendship Group

Mr SIMPKINS (Cowan) (09:51): I am the chairman of the Australian-Azerbaijan Parliamentary Friendship Group and, as such, I will raise issues in the parliament regarding matters to do with Azerbaijan. In 1992 and 1993, Armenia illegally seized sovereign territory of Azerbaijan. This includes the region of Nagorno-Karabakh, but also a district called Kalbajar. As a result of the attack and the seizure of that territory by Armenia, 350,000 ethnic Azerbaijani were pushed from Armenia into Azerbaijan, and over 750,000 Azerbaijani were forced out of their homes and became internally displaced persons in other parts of Azerbaijan. Therefore, over one million Azerbaijanis have been kept from their land, their property and the graves of their ancestors for over 20 years.

The United Nations has recognised that the occupation was illegal and does not recognise the political entity that Armenia has tried to establish. A number of United Nations resolutions refer to the illegal occupation. The essential point is that neither does Australia recognise the so-called Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh. Given history and our position on Nagorno-Karabakh and the other occupied territories, I would like to draw the parliament's
attention to the treatment of three Azerbaijani civilians by Armenia. In July 2014, three Azerbaijani citizens, native to the now occupied areas, had been visiting their native lands when they were taken prisoner by Armenian forces. The three men were Dilgam Askerov from the occupied Kalbajar district, Shahbaz Guliyev from the occupied Terter district and Hasan Hasanov from the occupied Jebrail district of Azerbaijan. They were detected in the village of Shaplar in the Kalbajar district of Azerbaijan; that was the hometown of Dilgam Askerov. Hasan Hasanov was killed and the circumstances are not known. His body was not returned either to Azerbaijan or to his relatives, which makes it impossible to draw conclusions about how he died and whether he was tortured.

The ICRC has intervened and started talks with Armenia in order to seek the return of Hasanov's remains, but that has not been successful. I understand that the exact whereabouts of Dilgam Askerov and Shahbaz Guliyev and their health conditions are unknown. There are many inconsistencies in the different accounts of the Armenian sources. The convictions of Askerov and Guliyev for being a saboteur group and having murdered people is inconsistent with the history of these men; the accounts against them are not credible. I would ask that the foreign minister raise the matter with Armenia. Obviously the return of the occupied territory to Azerbaijan should occur, but I also believe that Armenia should return Hasanov's remains and release Askerov and Guliyev.

**Fremantle Electorate**

Ms PARKE (Fremantle) (09:54): I would like to take this opportunity to mention a few important achievements and events in my electorate. On Sunday, 25 October Fremantle celebrated one of the most distinctive occasions on its calendar with the Blessing of the Fleet parade. The Blessing of the Fleet was first introduced to Fremantle by Italian migrant fishermen in 1948, and it has become an important annual event for the port city, combining culture and history in a day of reflection and celebration. After a service at St Patrick's Basilica, the annual procession travels through the city streets to the fishing boat harbour, where the blessing seeks prosperous and, above all, safe conditions for the fishing season ahead.

The Blessing of the Fleet parade occurs in the middle of Fremantle's fortnight-long arts festival, which is now in its 110th year, making it Australia's longest-running cultural program. The festival itself opens out into a range of specific programs including the Norfolk Lanes Youth Festival, the Wardarnji Aboriginal Cultural Festival, the children's festival and Fest-a-con—a kind of sustainability focused anti-conference which continues the Fremantle community tradition of pioneering new ideas and practices.

This brings me to another example of environmental awareness and the practice of sustainability in my electorate. I am glad to take this opportunity to acknowledge the fantastic achievement of Hilton Primary School in being announced last Friday night as the winner of the Waste Wise school of the year at the Waste Authority's prestigious Infinity Awards. This recognition is a reward for the entire school community—all 140 students, parents, teachers and support staff—and reflects the dedicated effort made to implement a range of activities, programs and new infrastructure aimed at enabling students to become ambassadors for the environment and their community. Through the Waste Wise program students at Hilton Primary School have learnt about plastic-free July; constructed a worm farm; participated in regular Rubbish Rangers litter collection drives; recycled batteries, toothbrushes and mobile

**FEDERATION CHAMBER**
phones; and conducted waste-free lunches each Tuesday. At a recent Junkadelic workshop children made instruments and costumes from recycled objects and other materials, and then the entire school paraded their wares as an entry in the Fremantle Festival parade.

With the goal of eliminating the need for plastic wrap altogether, students have taken an educational role at local market stalls by showing people how to make their own beeswax sandwich wraps. Every Wednesday students have worked alongside community members in the Hilton Harvest Community Garden, adjacent to the school grounds, as part of the Buds 'n' Blooms intergenerational gardening program. This enables kids to understand and enjoy the benefits of home gardening and of fresh fruit and vegetables in particular. Next year the school will remove juice boxes from the lunch order menus in a further effort to reduce waste and increase health. I congratulate Hilton Primary School, one of the smaller schools in my electorate, for their inspirational leadership and hard work in earning this award, and I commend their thoughtful, inclusive and holistic approach to education.

Remembrance Day

Armenia

Mr ALEXANDER (Bennelong) (09:57): Yesterday we commemorated Remembrance Day, marking both the day the guns fell silent on the Western Front in 1918 and also further recognition of the Anzac Centenary. It has been 100 years since our brave soldiers, together with their New Zealand mates, stormed the beaches of Gallipoli in modern-day Turkey. We know that this was the saddest day in our history, but through their deaths we experienced the birth of our nation's consciousness. We had good reason for engaging with the former Ottoman Empire in war, and history has shown that eight years following the Gallipoli campaign this empire stood no more. The nation that grew out of the ashes is, of course, the modern-day Republic of Turkey. This is a country with whom we have successfully moved from the dark past, just as we have with other former military combatants Japan and Germany. We now recognise with honesty the sacrifices of those who came before us and stand together in honouring their memories from both sides.

Yet we do not let that dark history impact on our modern-day relationships. It is therefore incumbent on us to also recognise a further element of that dark moment in history—and that is, the eyewitness accounts of those same Anzac soldiers of the persecution and eventual genocide of the Armenian people by the former Ottoman Empire. The best estimates put the number of deaths at 1.5 million people, with the start date falling on 24 April 1915—one day prior to the landing of our Anzac troops, and most likely in a premeditated direct response to this incursion out of the fear the Armenian Christian minority would collaborate with the Allied forces. This 'Great Crime' started with the execution of the intellectuals and community leaders and was followed by the massacre of the men and the deportation of women, children and the elderly on death marches through the Syrian desert.

Our own history, and that of the birth of our nation's consciousness, is therefore directly tied up with the historical fact that this was the systematic extermination and genocide of the Armenian people. I note the contrast between our relationship with the former Ottoman Empire and the modern-day Republic of Turkey, because these are two different nations. We should, therefore, not avoid recognising the historical truth of the Armenian genocide—of the crimes committed by the former empire 100 years ago—out of fear that it will impact our relations with modern-day Turkey. To do so serves to exacerbate the distress felt by the
descendants of those who survived, many of whom have started new lives in our great, free nation. To them, I say: yesterday, today and tomorrow—lest we forget.

Charitable Organisations

Mr MITCHELL (McEwen—Second Deputy Speaker) (10:00): I rise to express concern on behalf of the not-for-profit community service organisations in the electorate of McEwen regarding the atrocious and appalling mismanagement of the allocation of grant funding by the Department of Social Services. Australia’s charities and the not-for-profit sector are the backbone of Australia’s community life. Thousands of volunteer groups are amongst these groups and contribute around $200 billion to the Australian economy. Earlier this year, the Abbott-Turnbull government savagely cut $270 million from discretionary grant funding, with no warning of the impending and disastrous change. There was no consultation with the not-for-profits and other community service organisations, who are some of the department’s key stakeholders.

To make matters worse—which is becoming the hallmark of this government—changes to the application and assessment process for grants were rushed in. Again, there was no consultation with affected stakeholders, but it left a trail of uncertainty and chaos in its wake. There were 5,500 community service organisations who applied for funding in the 2014-15 grants round. These organisations were competing against each other for access to funding of $800 million. Based on the application process, the department estimated that the total amount of funding being sought by these organisations was $3.9 billion. Clearly there is a shortfall in funding community organisations. The community service sector are vital, and they are finding themselves almost squeezed out of existence.

Who do people turn to when they are at their most vulnerable? It is these organisations that provide vital services, such as emergency accommodation, financial counselling and family relationships services—including providing refuge for women and children escaping domestic violence. The Craigieburn Salvation Army and Lentara UnitingCare have spoken out about how the grant cuts have hurt the community. The Salvation Army’s funding has been cut by 33 per cent and Lentara’s has been cut by 30 per cent. Captain Brookshaw of the Craigieburn Salvation Army was quoted in the local Leader as saying that the Abbott-Turnbull government is:

… winding back a lot of support they give to not-for-profits that we can pass on to support people,” …
“With the government trying to roll back … I think we’re in danger of forgetting people in need.
“There are people with such complex issues — it’s not (as simple as) throwing money into work for the dole.
Those that are low income and those that are struggling — Christmas is just as meaningful to them as anyone else.”

As we do get closer to Christmas, when families come together and celebrate, when a lot of things in our community get just that little bit more expensive—things like petrol in the holidays, for example—we need to think about the people in our communities that are doing it tough and rally to support those in need.

Labor has called on the Auditor-General to investigate the government’s mismanagement of community grants so that the Department of Social Services can try and rebuild trust with the community services sector. This is likely to be a long-running saga, as the current
Minister for Social Services continues to act like the Grinch that stole Christmas with his savage cuts across the portfolio. (Time expired)

**Anzac Centenary**

Ms SCOTT (Lindsay) (10:03): This weekend, I had the enormous pleasure of accompanying the Coo-ee marchers as they passed through both Penrith and St Mary's. The Coo-ee enlistment march was re-enacted 100 years after the original march and was supported by the federal government through the Anzac Centenary Local Grants Program. One hundred years ago, around this time, news was filtering back that the Gallipoli campaign was an absolute disaster. Two brothers from Gilgandra, about 40 miles west of Dubbo, decided they would do something about it. Dick Hitchen, a butcher, and William 'Captain Bill' Hitchen, a plumber, decided that they would walk the 320 miles to Sydney, encouraging people to enlist.

The re-enactment was funded by the Centenary of Anzac grants for the Lindsay electorate, and other projects including the restoration of the World War I honour boards at Wollemi College and the cenotaph in Victoria Park in St Marys. I met the Coo-ee marchers with re-enactment march president Bill Bywater at the historic Lennox Bridge during a handover from the member for Macquarie, Louise Markus. With the marchers we rounded the corner into the Sydney Basin, stopping off at the Emu Plains schoolhouse for a nice glass of lemonade. Later there was a memorial service at Memory Park with a mayoral dinner. The following morning in St Marys I bid the marchers safe passage through Martin Place for Remembrance Day. I would like to note that it was quite an honour to share the Coo-ee poem with councillor Tricia Hitchen, whose husband's family are related to the Hitchen family, who started the Coo-ee march 100 years ago—a nice link between Penrith and Gilgandra.

Sadly the stories of many of the original enlisters are lost to time, but we were able to pay special attention to Sam Luke, whose family joined us in St Marys. We were honoured to know that his family have not forgotten him and it was great to meet Dorothy Seale on Sunday morning. Sam, like so many young men who joined, went to war as part of the 4th Australian Pioneer Battalion. He was killed in action on 21 April 1917 whilst fighting in France. In Penrith the march was joined by Allan Easterbrook, who became a private with the 13th infantry battalion; Selby Megarry, who would also become a private serving with the 13th infantry battalion; and WA Sutton, who unfortunately and sadly we know very little about. I would like to thank the Coo-ee marchers who let me join them not only from Lennox Bridge down to Emu Plains but also for the 10 kilometres on Sunday morning from Penrith up to St Marys. I would also like to thank the committee for their hard work that put all of this together, in particular St Marys and Penrith RSLs, Tony Fryer and Mick McConnell.

**Hurn, Mr Brian OAM**

Mr CHAMPION (Wakefield) (10:06): It is my sad duty to inform the House of the passing away of both Brian Hurn, who was the mayor of the Barossa Council, and another notable identity in the mid-north, Reg Rawady. Brian 'Bunga' Hurn was a great cricketer and footballer. The ABC and other news organisations have talked about just how great a test cricketer he was, and he was a great footballer as well. Of course I knew him once his sporting career was over, so I only really knew about the exploits of both his son, William,
who played 135 games for Central District, and his grandson, Shannon, who plays for and
captains the West Coast Eagles. They both inherited Brian's nickname of Bunga, the origins
of which are unknown—apparently they derive from Brian's salad days during his youth.

I knew Brian as the mayor of the Barossa and we did many good things together. He
obviously did more good things than I did in his time as the mayor of Barossa, just through
his length of service both as a councillor and as mayor. I always appreciated his wise counsel
and I always appreciated his kind words whenever we were at community events. We got on
very well. I once gave him a set of House of Representatives cufflinks, and I know he
collected cufflinks and he was very happy to receive them. I have very fond memories of
opening the Gawler to Tanunda bike path with him. It was a moment of great celebration for
the community and that bike path probably should have a statue of Brian on it somewhere,
because he really was a great citizen of the Barossa Valley. We mourn his passing.

Reg Rawady was a deli owner in Kapunda. He came from Lebanon and, like so many
immigrants in this country, somehow found himself in Kapunda in the mid-north and he
opened up a great continental deli. He was a great citizen and a great character and I have
very fond memories of Reg, of him running the deli in Kapunda, in the main street. We all
used to go there and do our shopping. It was really a mixed business in the true sense of the
word. He gave greatly to Kapunda, my home town, not just through his role as a businessman
but also through the local theatre. We can remember the productions that he put on all through
my youth, through the high school and the various theatre companies in the town. So we do
mourn Reg's passing. He did great service to the town of Kapunda, and I know there is a great
deal of mourning going on in Kapunda but also a great deal of celebration for his great life.

**Dobell Electorate: The Entrance Leagues Club**

*Mrs McNAMARA (Dobell) (10:10):* Members here in this House will recognise the
important contribution made to our community by local registered clubs. In my electorate of
Dobell, The Entrance Leagues Club represents the great Australia spirit of pursuing a dream
and not giving up despite numerous roadblocks and hurdles. The Entrance Leagues Club was
a mere thought floated around by a few committee members and supporters of The Entrance
Tigers Football Club back in the 1970s, but the idea had merit and quickly gained traction.
Nonetheless, it tested the commitment and resilience of those involved as they experienced
some positive progress and frustrating hurdles over the first 12 years.

Indeed, The Entrance Leagues Club, which now boasts a membership of over 15,000, had
humble and difficult beginnings, and it was only because of the tenacity of a few founding
members that it stands the proud and successful club that it is today. In 1982, at the
incorporation of the company and the beginning of the constitution, there were only 427
members. Land that was attached to the Bay Village complex had been earmarked for the
club, but it took another six years of loan rejections and extensive fundraising before the New
South Wales government offered a 30-year lease on the land in 1988.

But it was not until 1990, over a decade after the concept of the registered club was
conceived, that plans were drawn and the bold decision to proceed was made despite limited
finance. In true Australian spirit, the entire community banded together to make this dream a
reality. With limited funds, the building works went ahead, with generous support from other
clubs, the local construction industry, volunteer labour from footballers and supporters, and
the Gold and Business Life membership contributions. The club's construction saw an
outpouring of community engagement: the supply of excavation equipment, bobcat operations, pest treatments, plumbing and drainage, concrete pump hire, installation of beer lines and supply of brickwork. The list is long and distinguished.

All the while, membership was steadily growing as the dream of a club, the future home of the Tigers, was ever present in the mind of the local community. In 1993, The Entrance Leagues Club finally experienced its first year of trading. It was a great success, with all financial and trading targets either met or exceeded, and it was only fitting that The Entrance Tigers secured the first grade premiership victory, which was celebrated in style at their very own home club.

Since that first year of trading, despite challenging restrictions on gaming provision, a downturn in the economy and increased competition, The Entrance Leagues Club has powered ahead, pushing through challenges and continuing to grow and expand both the premises and membership. The club has consistently supported the community, providing a variety of junior and senior sporting sponsorships as well as financial support to a great many community organisations on the Central Coast.

I regret that, due to the shortness of time, I am unable to personally mention everyone who has contributed to the club, but recently I met with David Hart, the president of the club. It is true he has a passionate love for the club. Congratulations to the club.

Goods and Services Tax

Mrs ELLIOT (Richmond) (10:13): I rise today to speak in opposition to the government’s plan to increase the GST. I have made it very clear to my constituents in Richmond that I am fighting hard against the Prime Minister’s and the National Party’s unfair plan to increase the GST to 15 per cent. As I have often said, National Party choices hurt, and in my region in northern New South Wales the National Party have already made the choice to unfairly cut the age pension, cut family payments, cut local jobs and cut local health services. Now they want to increase the GST to 15 per cent.

Mr Hogan: Not true.

Mrs ELLIOT: Make no mistake about it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Southcott): The member for Page will cease interjecting.

Mrs ELLIOT: A 15 per cent GST will severely hurt locals. There is nothing fair about increasing the GST—nothing fair at all. Labor will not support an increase in the GST, because increasing the tax would inflict the heaviest punishment on those least able to afford it. For the people on the North Coast of New South Wales, it will be very clear at the next election: it is only Labor that opposes raising the GST to 15 per cent, and it is the National Party that want to increase the GST to 15 per cent. The Prime Minister has confirmed on many occasions that an increase to the GST is on the table.

The GST is a regressive and unfair tax that hits everybody, but it hits low- and middle-income earners, especially pensioners, the hardest. The fact is the Prime Minister, the Liberals and the Nationals are all just out of touch and do not understand that people are already struggling to make ends meet, pay the bills and just get by week after week.

Independent analysis shows that increasing the GST will hurt so many locals across our community, particularly those low- and middle-income earners and especially pensioners.
This independent modelling shows that an increase in the rate of GST to 15 per cent would require people in the lowest 20 per cent of income brackets to pay seven per cent more, whilst people in the highest 20 per cent of income brackets would pay just three per cent more of their income. That is not fair.

Lifting the GST to 15 per cent will slug average households almost $8,800 a year. The average household already pays about $5,800 a year in GST, so raising it to 15 per cent would increase that figure by $3,000, a really large amount for so many families. The fact is that the Prime Minister and the Nationals would rather tax hardworking Australians and pensioners than tackle multinational tax avoidance. Increasing the GST would also have a major impact across another range of areas as well. We look at issues like fresh food and health care, aged care and child care. An increase in all of those would make so many services unaffordable for so many.

For this reason, I will continue to fight hard for the people of the North Coast against the Prime Minister and the National Party’s unfair plan to increase the GST to 15 per cent, because locals know that National Party choices hurt, and a GST at 15 per cent would really hurt the people of the North Coast of New South Wales.

Page Electorate: Tabulam Public School
Hale, Ms Elsie

Mr HOGAN (Page) (10:16): The Tabulam Public School was the first school on the Far North Coast to compete in the New South Wales MILO T20 Blast cricket finals recently in Sydney. The school was invited to attend after Cricket New South Wales MILO scouts witnessed the talent on offer at the local T20 competition. All of the students that participated represented the school with honour and pride throughout the event.

The MILO T20 Blast is a modified version of cricket for kids that do not get the opportunity to play a lot of cricket. Bing Williams and Rico Avery were fantastic leaders on the day, with Rico receiving two votes for the best and fairest for game 2. The day was full of highlights for the children, none more so than Tamia Hickling being the only player during the matches to hit a MILO sponsor sign; therefore winning a prize. During each game there are coaching stations set up to encourage the kids to learn new skills. Michael Zervos performed well in the high-catch event. Students that attended the event were Louise Flockhart, Abby Martin, Tamia Hickling, Haylee White, Michael Zervos, Shaniqwah Tighe, Bing Williams and Rico Avery. I also thank the support staff, Eloise James and Carmel McGrady, who looked after the students.

Reaching a century, reaching 100 years of age, is a milestone not many people get to celebrate, but this week Elsie Hale did just that. There is nothing wrong with the health of this centenarian, who reached her 100th birthday on Monday, citing the occasional sore foot as her only ailment and perhaps a nightly nip of brandy as the secret of her good health. 'My foot is probably just some arthritis; otherwise, I have no sickness,' the happy-go-lucky resident at Dougherty Villa said. 'Even my doctor said there is nothing wrong with me. He said he doesn't know what I'm going to die from,' she laughed.

Elsie began her long life in Southgate, where she was delivered by the local bush nurse. Elsie attended the Upper Copmanhurst Public School, leaving at age 14. She then went on to work at the Davies General Store at Copmanhurst as a housekeeper and cook for the family.
before heading to Ramornie Station. Elsie remained in that position until she was married at age 26 to George Waghorn. The couple were married in November 1941 at St Matthew's in Bent Street, South Grafton. The couple had three children, Fay, Pam and Ivy.

Elsie then in the fifties met Tom Hale. She married Tom and had three more children, Gayle, Garry and Ann, living in various locations around the North Coast before settling in Bonalbo, where they lived for the next 60 years. There, Elsie worked at the local hospital as a cook for seven years until she retired from paid work at around age 65.

Gambling

Mr WILKIE (Denison) (10:19): In a secret negotiation in 2003, the Tasmanian government gifted the Federal Group a monopoly licence to operate poker machines in Tasmania. Since then, poker machines have cost Tasmanian gamblers more than a billion dollars. In fact, in the first month of this financial year alone, over $2 million was lost on the pokies just in the Glenorchy area.

This monopoly agreement expires in 2018 and the Tasmanian government is obviously interested in rolling over and extending it. This must not be allowed to happen because, if we are going to have poker machines in Tasmania, any new licence must be decided by an open tender and must include stringent harm-minimisation measures such as $1 maximum bets and mandatory precommitment.

What is really galling about all of this is the way the Federal Group is prepared to blackmail the Tasmanian community to get their way. Indeed, they have already said they might abandon $100 million worth of development in the state if the licence does not get extended. Thank God, David Walsh from MONA has acted courageously and refuses to build his proposed micro, high-roller casino if it means any extension to the Federal Group licence.

On a national level, Liberal and Labor receive enormous donations from the poker machine industry, and that is obvious from the policy decisions we end up with. For instance, the Liberal-National coalition overturned the modest reforms achieved in the previous parliament and they have announced an inquiry into online and sports betting that is more about protecting Australian gambling interests than helping problem gamblers.

The Labor Party is just as bad, seeing as they were very happy to talk about poker machine reform when in government but, ultimately, progressed only minimalist reforms and were then quite happy to help the Abbott government overturn them after the 2013 election. Not only does the Labor Party receive enormous donations from the industry but they also even own their own machines here in Canberra. In fact, just yesterday The Canberra Times reported that Labor Party-owned pokies venues made a $25 million profit this past year.

The poker machine industry preys on the most vulnerable and will stop at nothing to get what they want. Frankly, they think nothing of the harm they cause or the lives they destroy along the way. So shame on Liberal and Labor for kowtowing to the pokies industry. Shame on state governments for refusing to take any meaningful steps to help poker machine problem gamblers. And shame on the industry for bullying, lying and destroying lives to get their way. Shame on the lot of them.
the heart and lifts the spirits, like a visit to a school. Nothing. On 27 October, I attended the Pakenham Campus Junior School of Beaconhills College as it celebrated the official opening of its new extension. Headmaster Tony Sheumack said the project had been primarily a local community effort, led by builder Greg Noonan, architects 3D Design and a great team of local professional tradespeople. The school building was a piece of artwork. The cost of $2.8 million, provided by Beaconhills College was topped up with a grant of $850,000 federal government. The proud head of the Junior School, Peter Hockey, said that:

While the wealth of a country was reflected in its educational facilities, the heart of a country was reflected by those inside.

The ceremony included a blessing by assistant bishop the Right Reverend Paul White from the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne and prayer by my friend, Pakenham Uniting Church minister Reverend Ann Simons. I must not forget to mention the beautiful choral performance by junior school choir. The standout was a 10-metre long pirate ship playground that brought the inner child out of many guests, including myself and Jason Wood, who enjoyed the occasion of climbing all over that pirate ship. I love boats.

The development of this modern state of the art school with its beautiful surrounds is a credit to the community and, as I pointed out to those present, we should never forget to honour those who came before them and who had helped make the facilities possible. I have high expectations for the students in the electorate of McMillan that runs from the snow to the sea. I believe that a very exciting future awaits them all. This school is my favourite school.

From there it was off to St Kieran's Catholic Primary School at Moe to make a very special presentation to a year 2 student, Xavier Battista. Xavier did not know he was about to be awarded a NAIDOC Medal of Excellence for his artwork in this year's NAIDOC week competition. This was a very prestigious award with only 20 given out Australia wide. The look of shock and the thrill on Xavier's face was a delight to see as was the pride that mum Samantha and dad Danny had for their son. Well done, Xavier. The school was beautifully presented and, as usual, sang the school song with gusto. To the principal, Joanne Johnson, and teachers, I congratulate your work at St Kieran's. This is also my favourite school.

The next stop was to Warragul North Primary School. At 12.30 I was there to join with the students to sing Count Us In, which is the song that is sung right across Australia at the same time by every school. Yes, this is also my favourite school.

Canberra Electorate: Lanyon High School

Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (10:25): It is a great pleasure today to talk about a terrific school initiative that I was involved in a little while back called the Giving Project. Year 9 students at Lanyon High School were asked to design a project to share with the school community as part of a learning expo. The students worked in small groups, guided by a teacher or mentor, to design a project that focused on ways to give back to the community—hence the name, the Giving Project. At the end of September, the students presented their projects to their parents, to their carers, to their teachers, to their peers and to the broader school community at an expo-like event in their school hall. While presenting their projects, the students talked about all they had learned through the experience—the highs and the lows, the failures and successes. It was a terrific event. I really enjoyed walking around and speaking to each of the students, learning about their projects, how they could help the community and how they had benefited from taking part in this community Giving Project.
The projects were extremely diverse, from ways to clean up local parks to volunteering at primary schools or fundraising for various causes and local organisations. The students did a brilliant job. One group of young women—Alex Barnes, Jaime Paternoster and Molly Waters—raised funds and awareness for multiple sclerosis. Three young men—Oli Blunden, Alex McIntosh and Jayden Saysana—raised funds and awareness for testicular cancer. Lucy Schmidt took part in the Heart Foundation's doorknock appeal. One group of students was raising awareness about eating disorders, another group mental health. The range of issues that were covered in this expo was extraordinary. What was wonderful was that each of the students had a little table and they had decorated the tables like it was a trade expo. They had lollies out there to entice people to come and talk to them about their projects, they had little handouts for people to take away, they had representations, photos and all sorts of images of the process of the Giving Project.

I want to congratulate all of the students who were involved—Rebecca Radanovich, Alysha Wigram, Samantha Wood, Lucy Sturgeon, Zac Watson, Anton Wilding, Jess Newing, Kristina Senjic, Veronyka Zanatta, Luke Barnwell, Jordan Costa, Connor Farmer, Paul Vels, Will Ward, Justin Ford, Daniel Kennedy, Mackenzie Smith, Pelagie Todd, Emily Madrid, Georgia Tongs, Shannin Gallagher, Atul Prasad, Jack Smart, Alex Coggan, Aidan Collins, Jack Monaghan, Mikayla Day, Riley Harvey, Shinae Sellars, Lachlan Bryce, Taylor Gilchrist, Josh Milezarek and Jave Symms. It is terrific to see our young people engaging in their wider community, engaging in altruistic activity and thinking of others. The students not only got a great deal out of it but also want to continue their community involvement.

Corangamite Electorate: Television Reception

Ms HENDERSON (Corangamite) (10:28): It is pleasure to rise on behalf of the residents of Apollo Bay and Skenes Creek to celebrate the wonderful news announced by the Minister for Territories, Local Government and Major Projects yesterday that there will be a new microwave link installed, as well as a frequency change initiated by the broadcasters broadcasting into Apollo Bay and Skenes Creek. Frankly, the issues with free-to-air television reception have been terrible and this community has been putting up with all sorts of issues for far too long.

The Australian Communications and Media Authority earlier this year held a community meeting, which I attended, and they discussed a range of possible solutions. They have conducted a range of tests in relation to the TV reception. The solution has been a bit slow, but I am very pleased that, through the assistance of the territories minister and also the Minister for Communications, ACMA have now come up with a solution. It is great news. During the summer months, with the issues with inversion, it is particularly challenging, but these changes will be able to be implemented by early next year.

So I hope that for people living along the Great Ocean Road this will demonstrate that we as a government are listening. I do acknowledge that there are other issues. There are residents who have contacted me from places like Lorne, Barwon Heads, Ocean Grove and even some parts of Geelong, where they are really struggling with TV reception. We will take each and every problem on, because free-to-air television reception is a right of every single Australian.

I am also very pleased that, as part of the comprehensive communications infrastructure that we are investing in for these communities, in the second quarter of 2016 the NBN—at
last!—will be rolled out: fixed-line NBN in Apollo Bay and Marengo. And, in the first quarter of 2017, NBN fixed wireless will be rolled out in Apollo Bay and also, principally, in Skenes Creek. We acknowledge that, after so many years of failure by the previous government to get the NBN out, we are rolling it out, and we are very proud of that.

In addition, we are also providing a mobile base station in Apollo Bay through our Mobile Black Spots Program, which has now been increased to $160 million in total. Again, this is in contrast to the previous government, under which not one cent was spent in fixing mobile phone black spots. We are very proud of what we are doing to invest in communications infrastructure and to stand up for the people of Apollo Bay and Skenes Creek.

Port Phillip City Council

Mr DANBY (Melbourne Ports) (10:31): The Port Phillip City Council is at it again. Not content with destroying Fitzroy Street, it has now turned its attention to Acland Street with another half-thought-out plan. The council is proposing to close off the Barkly Street end and remove parking spaces along this street. It is the council's belief that, by stopping cars and widening footpaths, there will be an influx of pedestrians. I am not against pedestrian malls but, as we have seen in Fitzroy Street, the road to hell is paved with good intentions.

Two years ago Yarra Trams, together with the council, ruined Fitzroy Street, virtually closing it for six months to elevate several hundred metres of track, which prevents people doing U-turns and leaves deserted parking off Fitzroy Street. A once vibrant and thriving strip of shops and cafes is now a ghost town during the day and a sleazy, sometimes dangerous dive at night. Wasting further hundreds of thousands of dollars, the council now is blocking traffic with the installation of ill-fated, narrow garden strips next to this elevated tram track.

Surely the last few years of the Port Phillip City Council have been the most profligate in local history, as many landmarks, like the local Point Ormond Beacon, lie ruined for months and recreational bike riders and pedestrians in Elwood are assaulted verbally, and sometimes physically, by martinetts employed to supervise outside commercial events imposed on the foreshore and agreed to by the Port Phillip Council.

First, it is clear that the Port Phillip Council needs more time to listen to the voices of local business and traders along Acland Street. The Acland Street Village Business Association is against the total closure and has commissioned an alternative that will not cost jobs or business. The association president, Palma Smith, says the council proposal would grind access to a halt. I feel, given its failures to date, the Port Phillip City Council's doctrine should be 'do no harm'.

The second issue is the ad hoc nature, it appears, of council planning. A month or two ago, they floated the idea of the St Kilda Triangle space being used for the National Gallery of Victoria's third campus. This may be a good idea. I am always in favour of the local arts in our community, but these major plans for the triangle need to be incorporated in an overarching plan for the entire area instead of a patchwork of half-baked fixes that ruin the area, as they have in Fitzroy Street and prospectively in Acland Street.

Many will question whether this council is the worst ever in the history of the city since its forced amalgamation by the Kennett government. With the new system of three-by-three council wards that has been installed for the next election, we must see that the state
government insists that, as in all other councils, postal voting is allowed, as barely 40 per cent of voters have elected some of the current councillors.

**Trade**

Mr PIT (Hinkler) (10:34): On Friday 4 December, Austrade will hold an information seminar in my electorate to explain the details of the free trade agreements this government has signed with some of our largest trading partners. Hinkler businesses will find out how they can take advantage of the FTAs in place with China, Japan and South Korea. The interactive session will give Hinkler businesses an opportunity to speak directly to officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Austrade and other government agencies. I strongly encourage local people involved in advanced manufacturing, agriculture, fishing, food and beverage, and tourism and hospitality to attend. The free seminar will be held between 11 am and 2 pm in the auditorium of TAFE Queensland East Coast Bundaberg campus on Walker Street. Registration commences at 10.30 am. The event will suit not only those who already export but also those considering expanding export opportunities. The key thing about these agreements for the people in my electorate is that they will lead to jobs that are sorely needed in my region. When businesses have the confidence to expand it is they that create new jobs. We on this side of the House understand that it is business that creates jobs, not government.

There is not enough time here today to detail the benefits of each of the agreements we have signed, so I use the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement as an example. Under the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement, 95 per cent of Australian goods exported will be tariff-free. This includes the abolition of tariffs on our clean, green, premium agricultural products as well as on a range of Australian manufactured goods such as pharmaceutical products, car engines, plastic products and processed food. China is Australia's largest agricultural and fisheries export market, worth $9 billion in 2013-14—$9 billion—up from $5 billion in 2010-11. China's demand for high-quality agricultural and food products is growing rapidly. Until now, the absence of a bilateral FTA with China has meant that Australian producers and exporters have faced significant tariffs on agricultural products, putting them at a competitive disadvantage compared to countries like New Zealand and Chile. Examples of progressive tariff eliminations include the elimination of the 10 to 25 per cent tariff on macadamia nuts; the elimination of the 10 to 30 per cent tariff on all non-citrus fruit within four years; elimination of the 10 to 13 per cent tariff on all fresh vegetables within four years; elimination of the 14 per cent tariff on crabs, oysters, scallops and mussels within four years; elimination of the up to eight per cent tariff on prawns within four years; and tariffs of up to 65 per cent on alcoholic beverages and spirits will be eliminated within four years. There will also be progressive elimination of tariffs on fruit juices, canned fruit, biscuits and cakes, honey products, pasta and chocolate. The China-Australia Free Trade Agreement will also increase two-way investment and reduce import costs. For example, the removal of the five per cent tariff on Chinese manufactured exports is expected to make electronics and whitegoods cheaper for all Australians.

I hope to see many Hinkler businesses and owners at the seminar. This is our opportunity for agricultural producers and for people in regional Australia. For the businesses and the people I represent, this is their chance. This is a chance for them to expand, to find export markets, to increase their business productivity, to make more money and to employ more
Australians—particularly the youth of my region, who desperately need those jobs. I congratulate the government on negotiating such a successful agreement, particularly Minister Andrew Robb, and I thank you for the opportunity.

Cunningham Electorate: Broadband

Ms BIRD (Cunningham) (10:38): Members may recall that I recently spoke of the internet issues being experienced by many of the constituents in the northern suburbs of the Illawarra. In particular, I reported to the House a community group called 2508+ Disconnected, which was organised by the Mackenzie family of Stanwell Park and the Oliver family of Helensburgh and which runs a very active Facebook site.

Before I start, I would like to acknowledge that since my last report the inclusion of postcode area 2508 in the three-year new NBN rollout plan has been announced. The inclusion of this area is warmly welcomed by the locals and me, particularly given the ongoing issues that they are having with substandard internet services—although I would point out that they will be getting the rollout that includes copper to the house. With significant rain experienced in our area recently, the Facebook site of this campaign team has been inundated with people experiencing extensive dropouts and problems with their service because of the well-known problems that occur when water meets copper. It is a bit bemusing as to why nbn co is going to replace poor quality copper with new copper, when they could just lay fibre in that process. Anyway, at least they are now on the program.

I have assured representatives of the community that I will continue to monitor the progress of the project. However, given that the works will not commence for another two years, the residents have real concerns about addressing the serious problems they are experiencing with service provision in the meantime. They are often experiencing very poor services, with download speeds typically less than one megabit per second and upload speeds below 0.2 megabits per second, around 30 per cent of what is commonly referred to as acceptable internet speed. The services in the region are slow, they are subject to frequent dropouts and indeed they are completely unusable during periods of wet weather. In fact one member of the campaign recently reported on the Facebook site that Telstra had advised her service was in the bottom eight per cent of the country—that is, 92 per cent of services across Australia had better quality service than she was getting. This is constraining small business productivity in the area. It is making it difficult for students to get basic school and university assignments done. There are many home based business owners working in this area who find it impossible to manage and run their businesses. Indeed the local Coalcliff Surf Life Saving Club has no connection, which means that they find it very difficult to provide the community service.

The campaign will continue. I will continue to support them in their calls on Telstra to lift their game, get on board with the issues that people are facing and find solutions, because in the time to the rollout to the NBN they need their service improved. (Time expired)

Migration Act 1958

Mr HOWARTH (Petrie) (10:41): Last financial year alone the Australian government cancelled the visas of 580 foreign criminals and refused 135 visas for applicants with a criminal history. This was thanks to the December 2014 amendments to the Migration Act 1958 which made it mandatory that a visa be cancelled if a person does not pass the character...
test. The changes to the bill mean that if someone who is visiting Australia on a visa is sentenced to a term of imprisonment of 12 months or more they automatically fail the character test and it is cancelled. We have also strengthened the character test to include child sex offences, including child pornography, and we have lowered the threshold of evidence required to show that a person who is a member of a criminal group or terrorist organisation does not pass the character test.

This was an important bill for my electorate and communities all around Australia. It is about keeping our local communities safe. People who are Australian citizens are safe from criminal elements. We know what these criminals are capable of. Just this week we have seen the destruction of government property by criminals on Christmas Island. I want to stress that these criminals are not forcibly detained on Christmas Island, in the sense that they have the right to an appeals process, and they can go home straightaway, right now. I also want to confirm that nobody is jailed for 12 months for shoplifting or for speeding. As the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection has said, these people are in detention for serious crimes. The message is that if you are going to play up and you are not an Australian citizen then you will most likely be sent home.

In The Courier-Mail yesterday there was a good article which outlined some of what these people have been convicted of. It says:

The Courier-Mail can reveal today some of the members have serious criminal histories, have threatened to kill people, used weapons in their crimes and sold drugs on commercial scale. One Facebook post the month before the stand-off said they were running amok on the island. I do not know how they get to use Facebook when they are in a detention centre. The minister also outlined that there are 27 people who have been convicted of assault, five people who have been convicted of child sex offences, four are there for drug offences, nine are there for grievous bodily harm, two are there for manslaughter—the list goes on and on—nine people for theft, robbery, break and enter. So I say to people living in my electorate and around this nation: if you are not an Australian citizen and you play up, you will be going home. (Time expired)

Thank a Paramedic Day

Mr HAYES (Fowler—Chief Opposition Whip) (10:44): Thursday last week was Thank a Paramedic Day, a time for people across New South Wales to take a moment to recognise the important work that paramedics play in our community.

First held in 2008, Thank a Paramedic Day was launched to give the community the opportunity to formally thank paramedics and other ambulance operational staff for the jobs that they do on behalf of our community. Few people can go home and say, 'I saved someone's life today,' yet paramedics do it 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Last year, New South Wales paramedics took 1.1 million emergency and non-emergency response calls. That is an average of one incident every 26 seconds; the highest volume of calls to any emergency service. In the community of Liverpool and Fairfield, which I have the honour to represent, paramedics provide a front-line health service, including emergency prehospital care and transport, medical retrievals and also, importantly, rescue services.
The work which they undertake is often unpredictable and in dangerous situations. In fact, paramedics have one of the riskiest jobs in the country. They are seven times more likely to be seriously injured than all other occupations, and are twice more likely to be injured than a police officer. In 2012, Michael Wilson, a New South Wales paramedic, tragically lost his life in a helicopter rescue mission trying to rescue two people at the base of the Carrington Falls in Sydney. This 41-year-old, and father of three, made the ultimate sacrifice in doing what he did for a living—looking after people. Michael's death is evident of the risks and challenges that paramedics face in doing what is necessary to save lives. It is also a salient reminder of the protections and safeguards that paramedics need.

My brother Gerard, a paramedic himself, is the secretary of the New South Wales Health Services Union and represents over 32,000 members across the state in the health and community services sector. The union has been advocating for stronger protection measures for paramedics, who currently do not have the same safeguards as police officers despite the risks and injury statistics. As a community, we must do all that we can to provide adequate protection to paramedics, not only to ensure their safety at work but also for the peace of mind of their families, given the dangerous line of work they undertake. Therefore, I would like to thank ambulance officers and paramedics for their invaluable contribution in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our community, and also to have regard to their families for their continuous support for their loved ones at work.

**Banks Electorate: Community Groups**

Mr COLEMAN (Banks) (10:47): I wanted to inform the House this morning of a number of important community groups in my electorate and visits that I have recently undertaken. Last Friday, I attended the Mortdale RSL sub-branch's Remembrance Day luncheon. I would like to thank the president, John Delaney, and all members of the sub-branch who each year put on a very well-organised event in commemoration of Remembrance Day.

The sub-branch is also the host of the Southern Sydney service, which was held at Mortdale last Sunday, where sub-branches from right around the southern region of Sydney come to pay their respects to the fallen on Remembrance Day. I do thank Mr Delaney and everyone involved in the Mortdale RSL sub-branch for everything they do for our community.

I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of the Picnic Point Bowling and Social Club, an important part of the community in the Bankstown area. Recently, I met with Steve McNamara, the treasurer, and John Atkinson, the president, and discussed a range of issues of importance to this local club. One of the issues that the club is looking at is providing greater wheelchair access to the facility, and that is certainly something that I would be keen to assist the club with.

It is an extensive layout, with a number of Greens, and it is a really well-attended and well-patronised club over there in Panania. To John Atkinson and Steve McNamara: thank you for taking the time for our discussion and I do look forward to further discussions in the future.

I also visited the Probus Club of Georges River-Riverwood recently, where I met with the members who were present and addressed the group. The group meets at Club Rivers, of course, which is ably led by its president, Michael Free. The president of the Georges River-Riverwood Probus branch is Joy Dixon, and at the meeting we learned about a range of
activities happening within the Probus club. There is a very well-patronised walking group which a number of the members spoke about fondly. Indeed, the friendship and fellowship that is provided through membership of the club was something that numerous members spoke about very warmly. I very much enjoyed the visit. Probus clubs are a critical part of our community, and I thank the Georges River-Riverwood branch for all of their efforts.

**Shortland Electorate: Community Forums**

*Ms HALL* (Shortland—Opposition Whip) (10:50): One of the activities I do within the Shortland electorate is to hold forums on a variety of issues to provide information while having a lot of fun at the same time. These are social events where people get to know each other. Over the year we have had in excess of 1,000 people attend these forums—we have had breast cancer forums, ovarian cancer forums and also a cancer awareness forum, all of which were very successful and raised a lot of money that was donated to the various groups for research into cancer.

I also hold seniors forums where information is presented by a number of presenters during the day. I have held four seniors forums this year. Recently I held the Charlestown seniors forum, and I would like to thank Central Charlestown Leagues Club for making their premises available to us and for the great support they gave us. I would also like to thank the wonderful guest speakers we had: Warwick Gilbertson from Turnbull Hill Lawyers, who gave a fantastic presentation; and Stephen McAlister, who is employed by Lake Macquarie City Council. I might add that I asked the mayor of Lake Macquarie City Council, Jodie Harrison, to introduce Stephen, and she did so. Then we had Linda Brindle from Hearing Australia, whose presentation was particularly popular, with seniors lining up afterwards to have hearing assessments. I really hope that the government does not privatise Hearing Australia, because it plays a valuable role in the community.

After lunch—of course there was continuous tea, coffee and biscuits—we had Robyn McLean from Centrelink. I think Robyn has spoken at every seniors forum I have had this year, and she demystifies Centrelink for everybody who is present. The wonderful Deb Moore from the Heart Foundation got everybody moving and exercising, and Alan Dick spoke about U3A. Each of these speakers was fantastic, and as well as that we had a number of information tables available for seniors. Thank you to everybody who was involved.

**Ryan Electorate: Scientists and Researchers**

*Mrs PRENTICE* (Ryan) (10:53): I have spoken many times in this place about the outstanding scientists and researchers based in my electorate of Ryan. We have some remarkable minds—from Professor Ian Frazer and his vaccine to treat cervical cancer to Professor Maree Smith and her recent success with chronic pain treatment. I could not be more proud to announce that yesterday Professor Perry Bartlett, the founding director of the Queensland Brain Institute, was awarded the 2015 CSL Florey Medal. Not only has Professor Bartlett transformed our understanding of the brain by challenging the opinion that adult brains were fixed and unchangeable but also he has also established the institute that focuses completely on neurological research.

The CSL Florey Medal is one of Australia's most prestigious science awards. Established in 1998 by the Australian Institute of Policy and Science, the medal is named in honour of Australian Nobel Prize-winning scientist Sir Howard Florey, who developed the use of
penicillin. It is part of the Tall Poppy Campaign which aims to recognise and promote scientific and intellectual excellence in Australia and significant achievements in biomedical science and/or human health advancement.

Over the past 30 years, Professor Bartlett has made a series of groundbreaking discoveries in neuroscience. His discovery of the presence of stem cells in the adult brain has given people with brain injuries and diseases—and their families—significant hope for future treatment. Professor Bartlett began his research into the brain in the late 1970s. In 1982 he predicted the presence of stem cells in the brain. Ten years later he was able to prove that theory when he found stem cells in mice embryos and then in adult mice. Almost another decade after that he was able to isolate the stem cells in the adult brain and prove that the brain is an ever-changing organ.

His establishment of the Queensland Brain Institute in 2003 has been crucial to some significant neurological discoveries in recent years. Starting out in 2003 with just 10 researchers, the institute now has more than 500 staff and hosts a new generation of innovative neuroscientists, including Professor Jurgen Gotz, who has recently had a breakthrough in non-invasive ultrasound technology which shows promise in the treatment of Alzheimer's. The Queensland Brain Institute's Centre for Ageing Dementia Research is the first facility in Australia focused solely on the prevention and treatment of dementia. Most recently, Professor Bartlett has used exercise to reverse effects of dementia and recover memories in mice. Next year he will start human trials on people with dementia to see if exercise has the same effect on our brains. Professor Bartlett is hopeful these discoveries will lead to potential treatments for dementia and possibly even for depression. Professor Bartlett is truly deserving of this honour. Since its inception in 1998, only nine other scientists have been honoured with this award, including Professor Ian Frazer. Congratulations, Professor Perry Bartlett.

**Holt Electorate: Anzac Centenary Local Grants Program**

Mr **BYRNE** (Holt) (10:56): Today I want to talk about Remembrance Day in my constituency and, more importantly, the Anzac Centenary grants that commemorate the centenary of the First World War. A number of specific projects within my electorate which were supported by these grants are quite outstanding. We had an amazing group of Anzac Centenary grant projects in 2015. These include the Anzac Centenary Fine Art Show held in July 2015 and the stunning *1915 Gallipoli 2015* quilt triptych—which has actually been showcased at the Australian War Memorial.

I was very honoured to participate in the festival presentation and dedication ceremony for the *1915 Gallipoli 2015* quilt triptych at the Cranbourne RSL in September this year. It is a brilliant work of art. It has 4,888 small square pieces that commemorate the centenary of the Gallipoli landings from three aspects. It was created by a very talented group of women in the Cranbourne combined patchworkers group. It really is world class. Often we will come to this place and say, 'This is the best thing in Australia,' or whatever—but this really is world-class work that has been done by a group of women in my constituency. It was funny that, after this triptych was formally presented to the RSL, there was almost a bidding war over who would get their hands on it. As I said, it has been displayed at the War Memorial. To all of those women who participated in that project: I am incredibly proud of the work you did. Not only was it an appropriate depiction—exactly what we are looking for so that people in the future
are able to understand what it meant to be there serving on that front line at that terrible time in history—but it commemorated those events in just the right way.

I would also like to congratulate Calvin Bell and members of Provenance Artists Inc. for organising the paintings for the Holt Anzac Day Centenary Fine Art Show held, as I said, in July—34 paintings from 24 leading local artists. There was one particular painting exhibited that was noticed by the Turkish Vice Consul, Mr Ersel Ozdemir. He was particularly moved by the Gabriele Jenkins painting, *Compassion in War*—so moved in fact that we presented it to him and to the Turkish consulate after the event. It now hangs in the Turkish consulate. These were two outstanding projects appropriately commemorating the Centenary of Anzac. I am proud of my constituency for the work they do.

**Santos, Ms Danielle**

**Mr MATHESON (Macarthur) (11:00):** I rise today to talk about a brilliant young lady in my electorate of Macarthur who is about to embark on a four-week UN Youth Australia's Young Diplomats tour along with 15 other students from around Australia. Eighteen-year-old Danielle Santos of Mount Annan is one of 15 fortunate students who were selected out of 315 applicants from across Australia to visit nine countries in Europe.

Over four weeks and nine countries Danielle and her peers will meet and engage with key players in international diplomacy, from UN representatives, European politicians, diplomats, embassies and leading thinkers to NGOs and grassroots organisations. The group will also have the opportunity to immerse themselves in European culture, as well as visit monuments to World War II, such as Auschwitz in Germany, to gain a greater understanding of the evolution of international diplomacy in the 20th and 21st centuries. Danielle will explore the sites which shaped the world as we know it. She will chart the birth of modern democracy, the rise of the nation-state and the evolution of diplomacy to the current day. From the French Revolution to the fall of the Berlin Wall, Danielle and her peers will become acquainted with the big ideas and challenges that our world leaders have grappled with over the past 400 years.

Danielle has been attending UN youth events since 2013 and, by being part of this wonderful organisation, she has been able to grow her knowledge about the nature of international diplomacy. Not only will Danielle get to experience all that Europe has to offer; she will also be given the opportunity to develop her skills in public speaking, negotiating, debating and problem solving. For the two years that Danielle has been attending UN youth events she has competed in the state finals of the Premier's debating competition and was selected for the New South Wales delegation to Hobart in July this year. Danielle, at such a young age, is an upstanding member of the Macarthur community, for which she received the 2014 Junior Volunteer Macarthur Award.

Danielle has been involved in the Parliament House women's leadership seminar. She was a volunteer at the 2014 Macarthur Cystic Fibrosis Swimathon and the Global Young Leaders Conference in America, involved in the Starlight Room at Westmead Children's Hospital, and a guest speaker at the Macarthur Youth Mental Health Forum. Danielle is truly engaged and committed to the Macarthur community, those in need and the most vulnerable in our community. Danielle has given up her time to volunteer for so many worthy organisations to ensure that the needs and rights of local young people in Macarthur are upheld.
I sincerely wish Danielle all the very best during her travels in Europe and all future endeavours. I wish her well and look forward to seeing what challenge she decides to take on next. Danielle is a brilliant young person who certainly has a great future. At such a young age she has made a significant contribution to the community in which she lives.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Henderson): In accordance with standing order 193, the time for members' constituency statements has concluded.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr MATHESON (Macarthur) (11:02): I move:

That the Federation Chamber do now adjourn.

Mental Health

Ms CLAYDON (Newcastle) (11:02): Every year it is estimated that 3.6 million people in Australia will experience mental health problems, with 7.3 million adult Australians experiencing a mental health issue at some point in their lives. Every year more than 65,000 Australians will attempt suicide, with more than 2,500 dying from suicide. These statistics paint a shocking picture. They also, however, make a very strong case for government to make mental health a national priority.

Unfortunately, the mental health and suicide prevention sector in Australia has been in what can only be described as a holding pattern for the last two years. In late 2013 a review was undertaken of mental health services and programs in Australia, and in December 2014 the National Mental Health Commission recommended a major overhaul of the mental health system in Australia. They rightly concluded that, despite significant public investment in the mental health system and the dedication and skills of the individuals and organisations engaged in the sector, a shift in focus was absolutely necessary. The commission called for a shift from a crisis-driven system reliant on acute care to a focus on community-based services, primary health care, prevention and early intervention. As the report put it, the mental health system can and must be better at catching people before they fall. To date, the government is yet to act on the report or any of its 25 recommendations. The mental health and suicide prevention sector has been calling for urgent reform and action. With funding for some programs due to expire in June 2016, they need decisions made and they need a move to reform in line with the commission's recommendations as soon as possible.

While mental health and suicide is a national issue, it is felt acutely at the local level. The commission's recommendations for reform identified the opportunity to address this with a coordinated approach at the regional level. My electorate of Newcastle would be an ideal location for a place-based initiative for regional Australia. We have the patient need for a reformed service-delivery model but also a great capacity on the ground to do things differently. We already act as a tertiary healthcare hub for regional and rural New South Wales, and the new Primary Health Network based in Newcastle services a region stretching from the Central Coast in the south to Tenterfield in the north, and west to Moree Plains and Narrabri.

Newcastle itself can expect to have 30,000 residents experience mental illness in the next 12 months, with over 5,000 of them experiencing serious mental illness that requires coordinated care. We also have rates of suicide and attempted suicide that are above the state average in New South Wales, causing great impacts on families, communities and, indeed, the
service providers, who are doing the best they can with limited resources. But we also have some of Australia's leading mental health experts, researchers and service providers. I know that health services, emergency services, NGOs, the Primary Health Network and local councils have been working behind the scenes with the Hunter Institute of Mental Health—themselves a leading national organisation working in suicide prevention—to lay the groundwork for a regional approach. This is in line with the recommendations of the Mental Health Commission's report that call for sustainable, comprehensive, whole-of-community approaches to suicide prevention.

What my region and others around Australia really need is a national government that is prepared to lead and commit adequate resources to implement the changes required. The Minister for Health says that the government's response is coming soon. While we wait, a creaking system that is already under enormous pressure is expected to operate as best it can. Every day that responsibility for mental health reform is put off is another day that people living with mental illness, those that care for them and those who work in the sector are being let down by this government. We need the government to step up to the task, show national leadership and implement the National Mental Health Commission's recommendations. Labor knows this is a national priority and we have already outlined some of our plans for providing better support for people with a mental illness. It is time the government did the same.

Diabetes

Mr WILSON (O'Connor) (11:08): I would like to begin today by reminding everyone that tomorrow is Diabetes Australia's 18th Walk to Work Day. Most of us will be back in our electorates, so let us make a point of encouraging our staff to take a stroll for their physical, social and mental wellbeing. This Saturday, 14 November, is World Diabetes Day. The theme for this year is 'act today to change tomorrow,' highlighting the importance of healthy eating in the prevention and management of type 2 diabetes.

We all know the risk of contracting type 2 diabetes can be minimised by healthy food choices and an active lifestyle, but, unfortunately, type 1 insulin-dependent diabetes, an autoimmune disease of the pancreas, is neither preventable nor curable. Diagnosis can be made at birth, but it is most commonly made in childhood. Type 1 diabetes requires lifelong medical treatment, and many will suffer from complications such as kidney and heart diseases, nerve damage and eye disorders prematurely. Type 1 diabetes is managed by regular monitoring of blood glucose levels and injections of insulin at a dosage and frequency tailored to the individual.

In my electorate of O'Connor, 8,500 people are registered on the National Diabetes Services Scheme, making up 4.5 per cent of the electorate population. Over 700 of these suffer from type 1 diabetes, many of them children and young adults. This is an age group that may eat erratically, have dietary indiscretions that their parents are unaware of and have less predictable exercise regimes. A mere birthday party, sports day or sleepover can send blood glucose levels into chaos.

I have met many parents in my electorate extolling the virtues of continuous glucose monitoring, or CGMs, and advocating for them to be included in the NDSS. For those unfamiliar with CGMs, a tiny sensor is inserted under the skin and replaced every six days. A transmitter then relays blood glucose readings to a receiver or a pump that gives off an alarm when blood glucose levels are abnormal. Some pumps can suspend the insulin infusion rate if
glucose levels are too low and resume when glucose levels normalise. Newer pumps under trial can respond to high blood glucose by increasing the infusion rate of insulin. A CGM system costs between $1,000 and $2,500 to buy and sensors cost approximately $75 to $100.

The government currently provides subsidies under an insulin pump program of up to $1.5 million per year and most private health insurers will cover the cost of pumps but not CGMs or sensors. In my electorate, I have been made aware of some extreme cases of need for the subsidisation of CGMs and sensors.

The Wasmann family of Darkan have three boys with type 1 diabetes. Despite having one new CGM and two older versions, the cost of sensors prohibits the use of CGMs on all three children all of the time. The youngest wears his CGM 100 per cent of the time but sensors are used for up to 10 days rather than the recommended six. This spares sensors for the older boys to use when they go to birthday parties, sleepovers or sporting events. The Wasmann boys will ultimately leave home for further schooling and university opportunities not available in a regional area.

This is a real concern for the future and it leads me to the story of another constituent and resident of Katanning, my home town, Susan Hope-Blythe, who is a strong advocate for the inclusion of CGMs on the NDSS. Susan and her husband Stephen bought a CGM for their daughter Lauren, so she could take up a prestigious scholarship at St Hilda’s Anglican Girls School in Perth. This CGM allows Lauren to play sport, go on camps and lead as normal a life as other girls her age. Most importantly, it gives her family and the school the peace of mind that Lauren will be safe from the life-threatening situation called hypoglycaemia, where the blood glucose plummets and coma and death can ensue.

In 2011, a boarder at Santa Maria College in Perth, Laura Gray, suffered a hypoglycaemic crisis while asleep, and was found dead in her bed. Individuals like Laura are known as hypoglycaemic unaware. They do not realise their levels are low until it is too late. CGMs in these cases save lives. They do the job no amount of pin-pricking can do, detecting hypoglycaemia in a patient who is asleep.

Another O’Connor family, the Slaters from Esperance, have a daughter who is hypoglycaemic unaware and a heavy sleeper. Rebecca does not wake up when her device alarm goes off. Up until now, the family has been unable to afford a CGM that incorporates suspension and resuming of insulin infusions. In the last six months, Rebecca has been included in a CGM trial that has resulted in a long-term normalisation of her glucose levels. This will reduce her chances of the complications which would cost the health system dearly into the future.

Tomorrow, Minister Ley will announce a new National Diabetes Strategy for 2016 to 2020. I know she has listened to the stories of families like these mentioned and is sympathetic to their situation. The minister is committed to finding a way for new technologies for monitoring and treating type 1 diabetes to become more accessible. I look forward to a future where children and young adults with type 1 diabetes can live a long healthy life just like their unaffected counterparts.

Myanmar General Election 2015

Ms CHESTERS (Bendigo) (11:13): It is with great honour and pride that I stand before the parliament to share my reflections and observations from my participation in the Australian embassies election observation mission to Myanmar for their election on Sunday. I
was one of three parliamentarians who not only represented this House and the Australian parliament but also were part of a broader Australian embassy team who were tasked with the mission with 1,000 other international observers to observe the process of the Myanmar election. It is probably best to start with an election day story. While it is heart-warming and exciting, it is at the same time quite heartbreaking to reflect upon what has happened in that country and the long journey that is ahead of them.

Election day in Myanmar started early. It was six o'clock in the morning when the polls opened. We arrived as part of our observation team at 5 am, before the sun was up, and the crowds were already starting to gather. The local people wore their best. They put on the best outfits that they had, in some cases their only outfits, to turn up to vote in the first election—the first truly free election—in over 25 years. As the polling officials busied themselves in getting ready, the party agents—what we would refer to as ‘party scrutineers’—started to arrive. The headmistress, who was the polling manager, was ordering people about. From that first moment, you could see the influence that the Australian Electoral Commission, our own commission, had had in partnering with their Union Election Commission to ensure that the transparency measures were in place.

What role did the Australian Electoral Commission play in Myanmar's most important of days? What some people may not be aware of is that $1 million in aid funding was provided. Our Electoral Commission helped them develop the training manual for polling clerks. Some of our procedures were in place, like the security of the ballots, marking the names off the rolls, voting slips, and party agents and scrutineers having a role in the process. All of these measures were introduced for the first time to ensure genuine transparency. At six o'clock on the dot, when the polling manager in a very proud voice declared that the polls were open, there was a cheer—a cheer from the local people that the day had come. Whilst they did not celebrate as people did in a couple of the big capital cities that we saw, for many of them it was victory enough to be able to be there and to vote, to see the military on the outside and not on the inside. They greeted us so warmly and thanked us in broken English for being there and for allowing them the opportunity to have a free vote. It is true to say that it was not a truly fair vote. There is still a lot to do in the country in terms of the voting culture. There are the challenges of ensuring that there are fair elections and of tackling some of the irregularities that existed on the day, which is why the transparency measures were so important.

Other contributions that the Australian government made through AusAID included $3 million for the International Foundation for Electoral Systems to strengthen the technical capabilities and operational effectiveness of the Myanmar Union Election Commission. This funding was critical in helping them with the most basic of necessities for an election, and that is the voting roll. This is a country that has not had a voting roll for over 25 years and had to build one from scratch, and this is why we had some irregularities on election day. In the next election it will be improved again. The path forward for this country, with the remarkable results that it achieved, will be long. Australia will need to continue to partner with this country to ensure that its path towards democracy is achieved.

I would like to acknowledge the other parliamentarians who went with me: Senator Scott Ludlam and Senator Dean Smith. On the journey home, the three of us were reflecting on the proud moments that we had in being part of this election and, more importantly, on the
importance of our government, our community, not thinking that this is the end of the journey for Myanmar. We will continue to partner with them going forward.

Family Court

Mr CRAIG KELLY (Hughes) (11:18): This morning I would like to talk about a rort—a rort that is going on in the federal family courts of Australia. It is a rort that involves excessive fees, price gouging and virtual extortion; it is nothing other than a scam. I am not going to name names today, but I put those on notice involved in this rort. If necessary, I will name names in this parliament. In a truly competitive market, I have no objection to anyone charging what the market will bear. In our free market, capitalist society, they are entitled to charge as much as the customer will pay. But where we have a situation where a court orders a single expert to do what is called a 'report' or an 'analysis', the court is granting them a monopoly. These people cannot exploit that monopoly to price gouge and charge excessive fees. This is an area which should have government regulation where we set and regulate the fees if the court did give them a monopoly.

I would like to give you an example of one of the current practices. I have a Family Court order in front of me, and it states that the participants in the Family Court, the husband or the father and the mother, should attend a particular Mr X on a certain date for a further single expert report. It goes on that the cost of Mr X's report will be borne equally by the parties and that they will pay the sum of $8,000 each. So Mr X is entitled to a sum of $16,000. When it was asked how this is calculated, it worked out at a fee of $700 per hour. This is for a psychiatrist. If I look at the Australian Psychological Society's national schedule of recommended fees—the recommended fee schedule in place from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016—it sets out the recommended level of fees for an hour of consultation at $238. So, because the courts are giving this particular individual a monopoly position—

Proceedings suspended from 11:21 to 11:34

Mr CRAIG KELLY: I will continue where I left off. I was giving an example of the current practice of this rort whereby a scheduled fee by the professional association is around $230 an hour but in this case, because the person involved has a court-ordered monopoly, they are able to charge what they like. They are charging 200 per cent above the court ordered fee—a charge, including GST, of up to $700 an hour. I have no objection if in a fair, free and open market they want to charge $7,000 an hour, but where the court orders a participant in the court proceedings specifically has a monopoly and charges such an excessive fee—a 200 per cent uplift, a $500 per hour uplift—it is nothing other than a rort. We should have legislation that sets a schedule of fees for these expert witnesses if they are to be given a court ordered monopoly. The situation is very similar to what I remember in a Chevy Chase movie. Chevy Chase crashed his car and had to get his car repaired. He took his car to the repairer and asked, 'How much will it cost to get repaired?' and the repairer said, 'How much is in your wallet?' This is the same situation that we have going on in our Family Court today, and it is unacceptable.

Secondly, I have great concerns over some of the secrecy provisions in the Family Court. I would like to quote Mr J Robert Oppenheimer from the 1950s. He said:
We do not believe any group of men adequate enough or wise enough to operate without scrutiny or without criticism … We know that the wages of secrecy are corruption. We know that in secrecy error, undetected, will flourish and subvert.

We need to end a few practices in our Family Court. We need to end the practice of secrecy. We need to shine a light on the practices that are currently going on in our Family Court. If we are going to continue to have the practice of single experts, a practice which I am greatly concerned about, we must have a schedule of professional fees they can charge which must be reasonable. Regarding the current practice—these current rorts—I am putting these people on notice that they are being watched. This parliament is going to shine a light on their activities.

National Broadband Network

Ms ROWLAND (Greenway) (11:37): I rise today to discuss the Abbott-Turnbull government's bungling of the National Broadband Network, particularly its multitechnology mix, MTM—or, as it is commonly referred to, Malcolm Turnbull's Mess. I think it is important that we revisit what has occurred with regard to the NBN under this government and, more importantly, the very real detrimental impact that it is having on residents and small businesses in my electorate. In April 2013 the now Prime Minister said he would build his version of the NBN for $29.5 billion. At the time he said his forecasts were conservative. In December 2013 he said his NBN would now cost $41 billion. At the time he said his forecasts were conservative and achievable. On 24 August 2015 he admitted that his NBN would now cost up to $56 billion, virtually double his original cost estimate.

But it is not only costs; look at delivery times. In April 2013 the now Prime Minister said that his NBN would reach every home in Australia by the end of 2016, but in December 2013 he admitted that this would not happen until the end of 2020. In his two years as the communications minister the now Prime Minister did not connect a single paying customer to his fibre-to-the-node network. According to Akamai Technologies, during the now Prime Minister's time as communications minister Australia slid in the global broadband rankings from 30th to 47th on peak connection speed. In April 2013 the now Prime Minister said that Australians with the worst broadband would get priority in the rollout, but in August 2015 he admitted that as of June 2018 about half a million premises he identified as having the worst broadband would still be waiting to get the NBN. In April 2013 the Prime Minister said that his version of the NBN would be more affordable, but at a time when housing affordability is at its worst this government introduced new charges to connect the NBN to new homes. The Urban Development Institute of Australia said about these charges:

… it is highly inequitable to expect new home buyers to pay potentially thousands of dollars in additional fees to connect to the NBN, when existing households will receive the network for free.

In opposition the Prime Minister indicated that his fibre-on-demand policy, where optic fibre would be provided to those who needed more bandwidth than copper could provide, would cost about $2,250. When the policy was released in 2014, it was revealed that the cost would be up to 'tens of thousands of dollars'—a most serious issue in areas such as mine with large greenfields developments.

You can see this is a Prime Minister who is big on talk, but absolutely hopeless on delivery when it comes to his National Broadband Network—an abject failure. And this is not just a theoretical argument; it has real world consequence and real world impacts on the individual and small businesses I represent who are crying out for high-quality broadband and who have
been badly misled by this government. I will go through a few. Gary from Kings Langley said:

I'm not confident that the delivery of the NBN will benefit the people as this government hopes. For example: I have cable, which I believe is HFC. I also believe it's using DOCSIS 1. This technology can provide 48Mbps. Until recently I typically managed 8 to 20Mbps. However now I barely manage 1Mbps. So slow in the evening both FaceTime and Skype often exhibit poor performance or outage.

Joseph from Glenwood said:

I'm required to travel to Manila to attend workshops with my team every two months and not having a reliable internet connection is painful when I have trouble Skyping with my family.

Stephen from Kings Langley said:

As with a lot of Kings Langley residents we are limited even on ADSL2 lines as we are at the maximum length of the copper lines. With the ADSL technology, the further you are away from the exchange on a copper line, the slower the signal gets. The majority of Kings Langley is supplied from the Blacktown exchange, some 4kms away, so even with ADSL2 plans we can only achieve a bit better than standard speeds. With children in mid teens to late teens a faster service for home would be beneficial with further education past school.

This has been the lived experience of my constituents and many others around the country under this Malcolm Turnbull mess. This is what all those policy mistakes and broken promises translate to on the ground.

I am pleased to see Mike Quigley, the former CEO of nbn co, has finally decided to personally contradict the rubbish that was thrown at him by the Prime Minister, who has demonstrated a nasty habit of slandering people he does not agree with when it comes to this issue. Mike Quigley did not miss. He was absolutely spot on in surgically taking apart every single false argument that this Prime Minister has put on his NBN and exposing how hopeless it.

Robertson Electorate: Gosford City

Mrs WICKS (Robertson) (11:42): I am fighting to see a strong heart beat in the heart of the Central Coast—Gosford City. I am fighting for a business heart, so that businesses in Gosford can grow, thrive, compete, prosper and employ even more local people in more local jobs. I am fighting for an economic heart, so that instead of seeing shop windows boarded up we can see new businesses embed themselves into our city. I am fighting for an infrastructure heart, so that after decades of neglect we can see cranes in the sky over Gosford and new buildings we can be proud of 20 years from now. And I am absolutely fighting for a cultural heart. Gosford needs a cultural heart as much as it needs jobs, opportunity and innovation.

I have been fighting for these things and delivering on the commitments that we made in our growth plan for the Central Coast ever since I was elected. This includes 600 new jobs for Gosford—double our original commitment—in a purpose-built Commonwealth agency centre of excellence. It also includes a $7 million investment in a childcare and learning hub, known as Kibbleplex; safer local streets with more CCTV cameras; better local roads; working on a plan for a world-class medical research school and institute; and $10 million to upgrade Somersby Industrial Park.

I have also been fighting for funding for a performing arts centre, because Gosford needs a cultural heart. A cultural heart helps our economic heartbeat. An economic assessment provided by Gosford City Council and Regional Development Australia, as part of my formal
support for this project, advises that the performing arts centre would create 146 jobs after
collection and attract more than 123,000 visitors in its first year and more than 207,000 by
its fifth year. This is estimated to deliver a net benefit for our region of approximately $85.6
million flowing from a performing arts centre.

At the last election the coalition said they would give consideration to funding this project,
provided matched commitments from state and local governments are made. Since then I have
been able to welcome the state government's funding commitment and Gosford City Council's
continued support, while I continue to fight for the remainder of the funding on behalf of my
community. Yet despite this, our cultural heart is in danger of having no heartbeat, as our
civic leaders now seem unable to finalise a plan on where to build the performing arts centre
in Gosford. This would be an iconic piece of civic infrastructure that Gosford has been crying
out for for nearly 50 years—a 50-year fight, it would seem, by Gosford City Council to own a
piece of land: the Gosford Public School site near the Gosford waterfront.

I actually found a reference to this history in an article in the old Gosford Star, from 1971.
It reported that the council was seeking a transfer of ownership of the land from the New
South Wales Department of Education to the council, while promising the community it
would be used for civic purposes. More plans came and went, but then, some 40 years after
that article was written—it is older than I am—the community had, it seemed, finally agreed
to a plan. This was a plan that saw the council, who is the responsible authority to determine
the location of a regional performing arts centre, move away from the proposal to build it on
the public school site—land it did not own—and to a proposal to build it on adjacent land.
That land was Gosford Memorial Park; land that the council is responsible for and land that it
can, if it chooses to, build on.

But in recent days we have seen an announcement by Gosford City Council that it is no
longer proceeding with the plan for the performing arts centre to be built on Memorial Park,
now known more colloquially in the community as Poppy Park. In the same breath,
councillors also ruled out putting it back on the school site—a decision it first made, it would
seem, some four years ago. Back in March this year, when the state government announced its
$12 million commitment, it looked like we finally had our house in order. With the council's
own $12 million commitment, all that we needed was a commitment of $10 million from the
federal government—a commitment I am fighting to deliver.

I can well understand the confusion expressed by my community at this recent decision. It
breaks my heart to see the community tearing itself apart about a cultural heart that we all
want to see beating, just because nobody can seem to agree on which piece of land to build it
on. Community groups—ironically led by Labor and Greens representatives—are demanding
it be built on the school site, with not one commitment by Labor MPs to buy the land from the
state government to even enable this to happen. Now the New South Wales state government
is saying their $12 million is tied to the Poppy Park site. Enough is enough. Today I call on
the civic leaders of our community—council, state government representatives and the pre-
eminent advocacy group for this building, Friends of the Performing Arts Precinct—to come
together and agree on a plan. I again restate my own commitment to fight for a cultural heart
for Gosford. Just as I have fought for an economic heart with 600 jobs, I will fight to ensure a
cultural heart.
Sinnathamby, Mr Maha

Mr RIPOLL (Oxley) (11:47): Today I want to acknowledge in the parliament a dear friend and a great man in Maha Sinnathamby, or the 'Chairman', as he is known to many. He is also known as the visionary behind the multi-award-winning, master-planned city, Greater Springfield. In 1992, Maha and his business partner, Bob Sharpless, purchased an unwanted 7,000 acre parcel of land for $7.2 million. It had no access, no transport and, to most people, no hope—to most people, but not to Maha. He said this about the land:

I saw a beautiful parcel of land with wide open spaces, children going to school, couples taking romantic walks in the park, families building the dream home and busy professionals taking the train to work. It was so clear my mind. The next step was to take what was in my mind and make it into a reality.

Twenty-two years and more than $12 billion later, Greater Springfield—comprised of Springfield, Springfield Lakes, Springfield Central, Augustine Heights and Brookwater—has emerged as one of the most incredible property developments ever achieved in Australia. It is not only home to my family but it is also home to 30,000 other people; the Brookwater Golf and Country Club; the state headquarters of General Electric; the beautiful, brand-new Mater private hospital; a new state-of-the-art police station; the University of Southern Queensland; the Orion shopping centre, now going through its second stage; two train stations, which are absolutely 21st-century; 10 schools, both public and private; 11 childcare centres; the Polaris Data Centre; the Robelle Domain parklands; the new water park; dozens of restaurants; and some great coffee to rival Melbourne's. We have great people, and we have created jobs and opportunity—all this because of one man's vision. Greater Springfield was recently awarded the World's Best Master Planned Community by the International Real Estate Federation and the UDIA's national award for the best master-planned development.

Greater Springfield is now that beautiful community with wide open spaces, children going to school, couples taking romantic walks around the lakes, families building dream homes and busy professionals taking the train to work. In recognition of Maha's great leadership, last week, in Kuala Lumpur, he was presented the BrandLaureate Great Entrepreneur Brand ICON Leadership Award 2015. Maha now joins the ranks of people like Steve Jobs, Mark Zuckerberg, Nelson Mandela and Hillary Clinton, and deservedly so.

This wonderful recognition from the desk of the President, Dr KK Johan, on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Brands Foundation, recognises and confers on Maha Sinnathamby the BrandLaureate Great Entrepreneur Brand ICON Leadership Award. It talks about Maha's contribution and refers to a range of things. In particular, it says that to become a Brand ICON you have to be an 'eminent leader in your country.' You have to be a 'visionary of high esteem, respected and admired'. Maha is all of those things. The person has to have 'contributed to the development of the nation and the economy with their innovative thoughts', and Maha certainly is a person that did not just talk the talk but walked the walk. He is a doer. He has never accepted 'no' as an answer, because he always believed in his dream. It is a person who has 'strong conviction, values and principles' and follows those principles in their life—a person of 'great resilience and tenacity.' It talks about the incredible and spectacular work that they have done, and particularly talks about 'passion and commitment to your cause of creating a lasting legacy.' Everybody who knows Maha Sinnathamby knows that all of this
is exactly what he has done. He has had great leadership. It states that there is ‘passion and
dedication … second to none’, and that is also very true.

All great projects, though, are not without great challenges. These things do not come easy. In
those 22 years, there have been many trials and tribulations. Most people would have given
up; most people would not have had the vision. Most people would have just made their
money, carved up the blocks of land, retired and had an easy and comfortable life, but at a
young age—I think it starts with a 7 in front of it—Maha still continues to work most days
and believes in his vision.

I would like to finish by saying this: Maha and his family—Yoga and all of his children—
and everyone associated with them are great people. They have contributed a lot to our
community. Maha has done an incredible job. He has not just built infrastructure, bricks and
mortar but built a community. It is a real thing. It is where I live, it is my home and it is home
to so many other people. But perhaps the best way to sum up Maha's principles in life would
be to refer to Mahatma Gandhi from Young India in 1925: you cannot have 'politics without
principle', 'wealth without work', 'pleasure without conscience', 'knowledge without character',
'science without humanity' or 'worship without sacrifice'. That is the best way to recognise
Maha Sinnathamby for his great contribution to our nation and to the Greater Springfield
project.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Prentice): Thank you, Member for Oxley. I clearly
support your complimentary remarks about Maha Sinnathamby.

Flynn Electorate: Roads

Mr O'DOWD (Flynn) (11:52): I want to draw the House's attention to the great work we
are doing to improve the infrastructure on the Bruce Highway in the Flynn electorate. For
example, we have been proactive in improving the highway on several projects: $170 million
has been spent on the Yeppen Floodplain south of Rockhampton; $7.65 million on the
upgrade of the Benaraby junction, with double overtaking lanes; $1.8 million on lane
widening north of Benaraby junction, which is to begin very soon; construction of a new
Eight Mile Creek bridge near Bajool; the $155 million crossroads at Calliope; the grossly
needed upgrade north and south at Gin Gin, where we took out the Big Dipper, which was
one of the worst spots on the Bruce Highway; and $25 million at the Kin Kora roundabout in
Gladstone, 50 per cent federally funded and the rest by the state. On the Bruce Highway,
generally the basis for funding is broken up on the ratio of four parts to the federal
government and one part to the state.

But we do need to do a lot more work on our internal roads to support our agribusiness and
to back up our FTAs that we have recently signed. For example, the Proston-Booondooma
Road in South Burnett deserves attention. Upgrading this road has economic benefits for all
local businesses, including the Smithfield Feedlot. Smithfield have 20,000 head of cattle in
their feedlots, employ about 40 staff and contribute about $2.3 million in wages each year to
the local economy around Proston. They move around 1,700 B-doubles a year. The last 30
kilometres of the road are not accessible by B-doubles. Smithfield currently pay $6 per tonne
for feed and $5 per head in additional transport costs. It would be a shame to lose this
business to feedlots in the south, out of my electorate. The estimated cost of road upgrades
is about $16 million to $20 million, but the upgrade will save jobs and improve business
productivity.
The road from Gladstone to Biloela is a well-used road, but there are six bridges on that road which have weight restrictions, and this stops road trains from coming into Gladstone. This is essential if the Gladstone port, which is one of the largest ports in Queensland, is to thrive and prosper with new products and new primary production, including the transport of cattle and other products produced in the Central Highlands and the Callide and Dawson valleys. It will also improve safety for people travelling on those roads. Every time you unhook a road train, it will cost time and energy and a lot more movements of the prime mover on the road.

I want to finish the job started by the Queensland government and the federal government on the Monto-Mount Perry Road. This is another piece of infrastructure that we certainly need to address. This is at a cost of $12 million, and where are all these dollars going to come from? But I think the question is that the amount of extra dollars produces an income, and it is economically viable for those businesses to have better roads.

The Theodore to Cracow road needs upgrading. It is partly done from Cracow to Eidsvold, but it needs the other 30 kilometres linked to that road so it gives a through bypass, which will benefit cattle movements, and there is a gold mine at Cracow that also creates a lot of transport. The other roads in the area are very numerous—Springsure to Tambo, Rolleston to Blackwater, Taroom to Bauhinia Downs and Bauhinia Downs to Woorabinda. All of these roads need to be upgraded to allow efficient movement of cattle and other products including grain along these highways.

The Mundubbera-Duong Road is necessary. Blueberries are a new industry in my part of the world. Blueberries are now being flown direct from Toowoomba at the Wellcamp airport straight into China for consumption on the very next day. This will continue as our free trade agreements begin to work. In Agnes Water and Baffle Creek, the Deepwater National Park road hook-up is also essential. So there are many projects we need to work on, but of course they all take money.

**Diesel Pollution**

Mr KELVIN THOMSON (Wills) (11:57): Last year I indicated my intention to personally devote more parliamentary attention to health issues, and the scandalous revelation that Volkswagen deliberately modified the engine management systems in their diesel vehicles in order to cheat the regulators and their customers has highlighted the well-known hazards of diesel exhaust pollution, a matter often ignored by governments in this country.

Diesel engines produce around 20 times the mass of hazardous oxides of nitrogen produced by a petrol engine of similar power, as well as large amounts of carcinogenic soot particles. Following considerable evidence of harm caused by those pollutants, in 1998 the California Environmental Protection Agency identified diesel exhaust as a 'toxic air contaminant' with the potential to cause cancer, premature death and other serious health problems. That 1998 decision was based on over 30 epidemiological studies that demonstrated that people regularly exposed to diesel exhaust had a 40 per cent increase in the incidence of such disorders. Based on 2006 to 2008 emissions in a population roughly double that of Australia, diesel exhaust was found to have contributed each year to approximately 2,000 premature deaths in that state, with an uncertainty of approximately plus or minus 400.
Of course, no-one is going to deliberately expose children to oxides of nitrogen to see if they develop asthma, but anecdotal evidence suggests that oxides of nitrogen from diesel exhaust may be responsible for the onset of asthma in children in areas with large numbers of diesel truck movements. Despite the difficulties of demonstrating a causal link between diesel exhaust and asthma, a 2004 study published in the *International Journal of Epidemiology* of children exposed to oxides of nitrogen produced by unflued gas heaters in New South Wales schools and homes provides persuasive evidence of an association between exposure to oxides of nitrogen and the respiratory health of children with asthma. Anecdotal evidence that diesel exhaust may be causing an epidemic of asthma or that the Californians declared diesel exhaust a toxic air contaminant in 1998 should be sufficient to encourage the government to investigate this issue more closely. If not, then surely the blunt 2012 statement that 'Diesel engine exhaust causes lung cancer in humans' by Dr Christopher Portier, the chairman of the Working Group of the International Agency for Research on Cancer, a subsidiary of the World Health Organization, should be a matter of some concern. Dr Portier continued:

Given the additional health impacts from diesel particulates, exposure to this mixture of chemicals should be reduced worldwide.

While the World Health Organization has warned that diesel exhaust is comparable to cigarette smoke in carcinogenicity, under the Howard Liberal government the consumption of diesel fuel increased by approximately 20 per cent as diesel trucks replaced freight trains, railway lines were torn up, and in New South Wales over 100 pollution-free electric locomotives were cut up for scrap.

In contrast, and in response to the need to reduce carbon dioxide and toxic emissions from burning diesel, the rest of the world is rapidly electrifying its railways and governments worldwide have undertaken a massive expansion of high-speed electric train services and electric rail freight. For instance, China began its high-speed electric train services in 2007 and by 2014 had 20,380 kilometres of high-speed electric passenger and freight lines. It is still building new lines. In the UK, nine rail companies operate high-speed electric trains; and Europe is covered in a sufficiently dense network of high-speed trains such that airline services have all but disappeared over many shorter routes. In the United States, there is a high-speed electric train service running between Washington and Boston and construction of the California High-Speed Rail is underway.

Yet, as we know, thanks in considerable part to the Howard government's refusal to support the Speedrail consortium in 2002, Australia has no high-speed electric trains, with the exception of coastal Queensland and between Sydney and the Blue Mountains and Hamilton and Kiama. All regional railways operate diesel-hauled trains. Surely it is time that Australia catches up with the rest of the world and heeds the warnings of the World Health Organization.

**Infrastructure**

Mr EWEN JONES (Herbert—Government Whip) (12:02): I would like to thank the employment minister, Michaelia Cash, for taking a meeting with me yesterday to discuss how we could get better value for money for (a) the taxpayer and (b) for regional economies from government infrastructure. The issue I am trying to propose here is that the tender process should be revisited. I will give an example of where the taxpayer is not being protected or getting best value. There was a stretch of road in the Flinders shire which the local council
had advised me was worth about $9 million of their money to fix. Because it was above the $5 million threshold, it had to go to tender. The tender was won. The company that won it drove in their plant and equipment, drove in their camp, flew in their team and did the road. It cost the taxpayer $27 million and the local economy, not even the pie shop, got a lick out of it.

What we have to do here is recognise the role of government infrastructure. Yes, it is about the nice new shiny bit of road. Yes, it is about the nice new building or the university block. But in regional Australia it is also about making sure that federal government money washes through our economy more than once. There is nothing wrong with the tender process per se, but when we load it up with conditions and caveats that disallow any local contractors or any local subcontractors from having a go at that tender, there is a problem. Where the subcontractor then carries all the debt and all the risk in a government contract because only the person who has signed the contract with the government gets the money or gets any guarantee of money, we have a problem. When we have a system where our tender process has grown during the years in terms of workplace health and safety, investment grade and quality assurance—all of these things which make it harder and harder or make it more and more expensive for the local contractor to have a go—our regional communities are being disqualified.

When you have a situation—and we have all seen it—where the government tender comes in and it is a nice big thick document, they all turn it over and get to the back page and this one is $1 billion and this one is $990 million, that one gets the job. It is all done on price. What we have to do is get to the stage where we can break these tenders down from a regional perspective. The reason I am saying 'from a regional perspective' is that it does not matter where the profit goes when you are in the big cities. In the big cities, like Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, the companies are based there. All the work is based there and all the equipment is based there, so the profit does wash through that economy. When it comes to places in regional Australia, you find tier 1 organisations no longer build anything. They are project managers. They do not have their bags on, they do not have their tool kits, they do not have to drive a truck with a trailer; that is done by the subcontractors. We make sure money is set aside by the winning tenderer for training but, because they do not employ anyone who actually does any work, our local apprentices and local markets are not getting jobs. Your subcontractor, who is being squeezed for price because the profit is not staying in the town, is basically working for wages, and sometimes for less than wages. They are the ones that we need to bring on to give the apprentices jobs. This is why as a country we are continually seeing boom and bust periods where governments come along and say, 'Why don't we have any builders? Why don't we have any electricians and plumbers?' It is because the money that has been set aside for these things is not washing through.

Speaking for my city of Townsville, whilst national confidence may be up, local confidence is poor. It is very fragile. We are walking on eggs. We have massive youth unemployment problems and we are fighting the rest of Australia when it comes to getting our infrastructure and our jobs up. The Carmichael mine in the Galilee Basin is a case in point. In the same time as the Adani corporation has built a new port, two new power plants and three big factories in India, we still have not turned a sod at the Carmichael mine. With big jobs here, it is not about big business; it is not about exports to India. It is about the jobs
from the port—the stevedore at the port, all the way to the roads and bridges that have to be
fixed and built out to the mine and back along the standard gauge rail track to the port. That is
where the jobs are sustained. That is where we can anchor our renewable energy programs.
That is where we can do those things. But it starts with making sure that the profit stays in our
regions and that the profit from these jobs becomes part of where we live. That means we buy
our cars there, our kids go to school there and the profit is invested in property and those sorts
of things in our city. It is an issue, and I thank Michaelia Cash for taking it seriously.

Remembrance Day

Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (12:07): Yesterday I had the opportunity to commemorate
Remembrance Day at three very special events. The first was with you, Madam Deputy
Speaker, at the Australian War Memorial, where it was very wet but, as always, a very
moving event. It was a great honour to be there as the shadow parliamentary secretary for
defence. After that I had the opportunity to go to the French embassy, which each year
conducts a ceremony to honour what the Australians did for the French people, particularly in
Villers-Bretoneux but also through the Western Front. Again, that was a very moving
service, and I take this opportunity to thank the French embassy and His Excellency the
Ambassador for conducting that service and honouring the significant contribution that
Australian soldiers made in the First World War.

In the afternoon I had the great pleasure and honour of officially opening the Gallipoli
Garden, which was timed to coincide with Remembrance Day. The Gallipoli Garden is
located within Fetherston Gardens in Weston, in my electorate. The Fetherston Gardens have
been around since 1973 and were established on the old Canberra Institute of Technology
horticulture site. The gardens have special significance for Canberra because Fetherston
Gardens are named after a gentleman called Gerald Henry Fetherston MBE, or Tony
Fetherston, as he is known here in Canberra. He was head of the school of horticulture, where
he served from 1947 to 1979, and was a passionate gardener, a passionate educator and a
great communicator. He was deeply committed to educating Canberrans and horticulturalists
on the importance of the role that horticulture, decent gardens and decent open spaces play in
a civilised community and in realising the vision of our garden city. It is wonderful that these
gardens have been named after Tony Fetherston, acknowledging his significant contribution
to Canberra.

The Gallipoli Garden was established by the Fetherston Gardens Friends committee. They
first approached me with the idea for the garden more than 18 months ago, and it was a
pleasure to help fund it through Labor's Anzac Centenary Local Grants program. As we
know—we have all been part of the Anzac Centenary Local Grants program—it is a great
initiative that supports community based projects that commemorate the service and sacrifice
of Australian service men and women in the First World War.

A number of Canberra organisations submitted grant applications. They were then assessed
by a panel that I established, which included representatives from the War Widows' Guild, the
Woden Valley RSL, the Vietnam Veterans Association and our local cadet unit, TS
Canberra—I was very keen to get young Canberrans involved. A total of $125,000 in grants
was announced. In Canberra, there was funding for the Canberra Glassworks, the Street
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Theatre, the Children's Book Council of Australia, the Woden Valley RSL, the ACT Jewish Community, Namadgi School and others.

As part of the program, $13,744 was given to the Fetherston Gardens for the establishment of the Gallipoli Garden. That was supplemented by funding from the ACT government as well as Defence Housing Australia—there is Defence housing flanking these gardens and the work DHA funded was to introduce pathways into the DHA estate to create a seamless connection with that community. Yesterday, as we know, was pretty wet, but the opening of these gardens was a wonderful event, commemorating those who served and sacrificed at Gallipoli. The gardens are going to include a Lone Pine, a Gallipoli oak, an arbutus, a Gallipoli rose and Gallipoli rosemary. I saw when I was there that they had already started to plant a hedge of rosemary and cistus. What is special about the Lone Pine plantings is that a woman called Anna donated them—one of her relatives served at Gallipoli. She wanted to plant two Lone Pines: one to honour his contribution, his service and the contributions of Australians to the First World War, and another to acknowledge the contribution of the Turks in that war—the sacrifices made by both our nations. It was wonderful to be at the event and I thank the Fetherston Gardens friends for inviting me.

Tasmania: Shipping

The Advocate-IGA Junior Sports Awards

Mr WHITELEY (Braddon—Government Whip) (12:12): Australia's leading shipping and stevedoring company, DP World, last week announced that it had entered into an exclusive agreement with TasPorts for a $30m international container terminal at the Port of Burnie. This is a massive vote of confidence in the Tasmanian economy, with 40 new local jobs and, more importantly, cheaper freight options for exporters throughout the state. The development will see Panamax-sized container ships servicing Burnie and carrying up to the equivalent of 4,250 20-foot containers.

I am not surprised that this international company has picked Burnie for its next major development. The Tasmanian economy is finally heading in the right direction on many of the most significant indicators. Employment is at record levels, unemployment—which was over eight per cent when the Liberals came to government—is now 6.2 per cent, the national average, and our producers and advanced manufacturers are poised to take full advantage of the three free trade agreements signed by this government.

But there are threats to the DP World announcement and threats to Tasmania's economic recovery. Those threats come from the Labor Party and others that are trying to scuttle the very reforms that are leading to economic growth for the entire Tasmanian economy. Key to ensuring the DP World development proceeds is the passing of the coastal shipping legislation. This legislation is an economic enabler for Tasmania. It creates the conditions that allow private businesses to expand and create jobs throughout the state. Under the coastal shipping amendments, a new international container shipping service out of Burnie would cut freight costs to China by nearly 50 per cent. That means every Tasmanian exporter would potentially save about $1,200 per 20-foot container.

At a time when Australia has signed three free trade agreements in Asia that will cut tariffs on the very best products, produce and services that Tasmania has to offer, it is inconceivable that any political party would make it more difficult for Tasmanian businesses
to get those products to market. But there are three political parties actively opposing this legislation: Labor, the Greens and the Jacqui Lambie Network. They want the federal government to artificially keep export costs high for all Tasmanian exporters, which will cost thousands of jobs. This is tantamount to running a protectionist racket for the MUA workers at the expense of others. It is at the expense of good government and at the expense of economic prosperity for the entire state. They, along with the MUA, seem to forget that Tasmania has no other option but to use shipping. Our goods cannot go by rail; they cannot go by road. They must be shipped. Under the Labor Party, Bass Strait has been turned into the most expensive stretch of water in the world and it is hogtying our economy. The coastal shipping legislation before the Senate will now work hand in hand with the federal government’s $203 million boost to the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme and the $60 million investment in northern irrigation schemes. Labor has once again shown why it cannot be trusted with the economy. It seems to care more about protecting union jobs while putting others at risk—thousands of others. I call on all crossbench senators to consider the massive benefit of the coastal shipping amendments to the Tasmanian export business and to pass this legislation.

Sport is a crucial part of our economy and our community. Not only does it contribute to the health of our nation but it brings together people who sometimes have nothing else in common. Attending the north-west football finals are a great thing to behold. Locals from across the electorate join together to cheer on with their family and mates—Saturday and Sunday morning netball, hockey and soccer with young children, young adults and older generations coming out to take part. Local groups get together to improve themselves in some of the less common sports like canoeing, archery, equestrian and squash. The list goes on and on. In my electorate it is no different. There are many young people who have excelled to represent Tasmania, and even Australia, in a range of sports. It is critical that we as parents and community members encourage and support our young sportsmen and sportswomen, whether they are just learning or competing at a national level.

This week the *The Advocate*-IGA Junior Sports Awards have listed their finalists for this year. This is a great way to recognise the dedication that these young people are showing to improving themselves in sport and in life. These individuals awards are for many sports. Not only do the junior sports awards recognise many of the great sports and the people in my electorate; they also recognise coaches, volunteers and officials. We would not be able to do what we do without their help. I wish all those nominated in *The Advocate*-IGA Junior Sports Awards the very best. Irrespective of the results, all of them are winners.

**International Development Assistance**

**Ms HALL** (Shortland—Opposition Whip) (12:17): I would like to read into the *Hansard* a letter I received from Emma Field. She writes:

I am a student of Belmont High School and soon to be a younger voter in your electorate. I am writing to you today to bring to your attention the outrageous inequalities in this world, in hope of you bringing this to the government's attention and increasing our foreign aid. In Australia we are currently ranked in top 5 of the wealthiest countries in the world yet Australia spends $5.03 billion on foreign aid – that's only 0.32% of our gross national income; we should increase this. Recent cuts by the liberal government have drastically lowered our aid spending. New cuts recently introduced from the May Federal Budget lowered Australian aid to 22 cents in every $100 of our national income. This is the lowest level ever of Australian aid in its 60-year history. We should be increasing our aid and striving to
meet the UK's national aid of 70 cents in every $100. I strongly believe with the labor party on my side we can change the world for the better by making the simple necessities available to everyone; things such as shelter, food, water, and education. Help the new generation have the choices we do.

Water is a vital necessity for human life. People use it to wash, cook, drink and water crops. The world is roughly about 80% water yet there are thousands of people in countries such as Africa, Asia and Latin America that die from dehydration or other water related deficiencies each day.

In Africa, accessing water means walking long distances to collect in containers each day. This is typically done by children and women each day like you and I. How would you like to walk for hours every day in blistering heat to collect water that you aren't even sure is safe to drink? In Australia we are lucky enough to have access to clean drinking water due to the dams and places that improve water quality, in places like Africa they can't afford to have as many as these as we do and only the rich can afford this.

Shelter inequality is getting to far out of hand as the population grows and there is a lack of access to shelter in many places. Hunger is related very much to poverty. Poverty traps people in a downward spiral or cycle — lack of food which leads to poor health, which leads to even greater poverty and the cycle, continues. Many of the world's cities are growing at such rapid rate which makes it hard for proper housing to be provided. People move from the country to find work in the city. Nairobi Africa is a large rapidly growing city and the poor people that go to work there end up on the outskirts in slums. These 'slums' have a lack of access to basic services such as water, sewerage and electricity.

There is enough food to feed everybody in the world but food is unequally distributed in the world. An adequate diet is essential for life. Poor diet causes malnutrition. Without a healthy body, malnourished people face a greater risk from infections and other diseases. Around 850 million people worldwide are considered to be malnourished, and most of these lead in poorer countries of the world. Over 9 million people die each year from hunger and malnutrition. Out of these, 5 million are children. In the world today, a child dies every three seconds as a result from the poverty they are forced to live in. What if one of these children were yours, how would you feel knowing that you could do nothing about it? Many of these deaths are in Africa. Africa needs our help now, but rather than helping them we have cut funding, as the Australian government thinks we have our own problems that need help.

Australia should be helping as many countries as possible to make allies, if a country tries to invade Australia, what is there to stop them as they have no army. Help the world become a better place and help innocent people to have the choices we do.

Emma has shown a lot of insight. She understands that our aid budget should be much greater than it is. She understands that there are many people in the world living in poverty. She understands that water and shelter are vitally important for people's quality of life. She really implores this government to listen to what she is saying. I have brought her message to the House today because as a young high school student she can see what this government misses. I think it is vitally important that we address the issue of aid and support those countries that are in need. (Time expired)

**Calare Electorate: Shop Small**

**Mr JOHN COBB** (Calare) (12:22): I am very excited to announce that we are launching Shop Small in my electorate of Calare tomorrow. Small businesses are the engine room of our economy, particularly the economy of Calare, and the coalition is committed to do everything we can to support them and help them take advantage of opportunities now and into the future. The Shop Small campaign is about encouraging locals across the electorate, whether they live in Bathurst, Orange, Parkes, Lithgow, Forbes, Blayney, Oberon, Millthorpe, Canowindra or Molong, to stand behind small businesses this Christmas.
In Calare we are spoilt for choice when it comes to small business. We have nearly 13,000 operating in our region. I can guarantee whether you after a heck of a good coffee, a Christmas present for your parents or something for yourself or the anklebiters, you will be able to find it in Calare. This campaign will not only remind locals to shop in town but it will also ask them to tell us about their favourite store. Calare residents will be able to head to my website and nominate their favourite business where they get well looked after when they go to shop. I ran this campaign last year and am glad to say it was a big success, with well over 100 local businesses nominated by their customers. It was great. I am proud to see the community get involved and give recognition to small business owners who know them, look after them and want to keep doing it. They work incredibly hard to provide these fantastic services to our community and also to create local jobs.

Small business has never been more important than it is now, employing over 4.5 million Australians and contributing $340 billion to our economy. We as a government understand this and that is why we have delivered our recent $5.5 billion Jobs and Small Business package. This includes an immediate tax deduction for small businesses for every eligible asset costing less than $20,000 purchased until the end of June 2017. We have also introduced 1½ per cent tax cuts for small businesses and a five per cent tax deduction for unincorporated small businesses.

It is a great opportunity for us to recognise the incredibly important role business men and women play in our community. Most of this is at their own risk—investing their savings and setting up a business about something they are passionate about or a unique idea. There is nothing more heartening than to see a young couple start out in their own business, running their own show and each day providing outstanding customer service and going above and beyond. Tomorrow I will be launching the campaign from two great small businesses in Orange. Jumbled is a fantastic retail business owned by Pip Brett, who is an incredible entrepreneur and also operates another successful retail business in Orange called iglou. Tomorrow I will also be at A Slice of Orange, which is run by two sisters, Lisa and Jess. They really do embody the concept of ‘local’—only selling produce within a 100-kilometre radius of Orange.

I encourage everyone in Calare to get behind the Shop Small campaign. While small businesses might be small, their impact is huge. I would like to leave you with the final message of Shop Small and that is to think big—and that is not about the Melbourne Cup.

**Medicare**

**Ms O'NEIL** (Hotham) (12:26): When Labor introduced Medicare to the Australian parliament, the Prime Minister at the time, Bob Hawke, said that without it two million people faced potential financial ruin in the event of major illness. In one real policy statement, Labor was able to take a health system that was unfair—that was not working properly—and create a new health system which all Australians would be able to benefit from. There are some very simple core principles that sit under Medicare and the health system that we have been able to create and to defend over the last 30 years.

One of those core principles is very clearly that all Australians should have access to high-quality health care. We also believe that contracting a major illness—a chronic disease—should not automatically mean that a person and their family descend into poverty. Over the last 30 years Labor has had to fight tooth and nail to protect Medicare and to protect the
integrity of our healthcare system. Unfortunately it is something that I have had to do, something I have had to work very hard at over the last two years that I have been a member of parliament, because what we have seen over the last two years is more or less constant attacks on the principles that underpin this system. We saw a particularly egregious example last weekend when the health minister, Sussan Ley, announced that she would be putting into the field a private health insurance survey which asks some very clearly leading questions about how Australians feel private health insurers, in order to calculate what a person's premium should be, should be rating the risk that person presents to the insurer.

This probably sounds very technical and innocuous, but it is absolutely not. It is fundamental and is a very clear indication of this minister's constant attempts to try and Americanise our Australian health system. I want to explain to those listening what is so important about this principle. In Australia, the risk of patients to healthcare providers is calculated using something called a community rating. What that means is that under Australian law a health insurer cannot charge you more for your health insurance because you have, for example, a long family history of breast cancer. They cannot charge Australians more for health insurance because they live in a part of the country where there are much higher rates of obesity. They cannot charge elderly Australians, who are entering a period of their lives involving higher healthcare costs, more for their insurance because of those increased risks. This is fundamental to our system. We need to have an insurance based system which ensures that, whatever walk of life you come from, you get the same risk rating. This is absolutely essential to the system we have in place. That is why Labor has come out so strongly this week to say that this is unacceptable and that we do not support a change to the way that risk is calculated for Australians. What is so disappointing about this is that it is part of a broader pattern that we have seen over two years of this government—first the Abbott and now the Turnbull government—trying to undermine the planks of our healthcare system.

People often do not believe politicians when they talk about our relentless efforts to undermine systems, so I actually want to articulate some of the cuts and attacks that we have had to defend. More than $60 billion has been cut from our hospitals in the forward budget and $370 million has been cut from preventive health care. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been cut from dental health care. We have seen millions stripped from mental health budgets and from Indigenous health care. And let us not forget the GP tax—again an attempt to impose more costs onto the people of Australia who are consuming health care. Alongside the GP tax, of course, we also saw attempts to change the cost of medicines under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. In almost all cases Labor has opposed these changes. We will always be defenders of the great healthcare system we have in Australia.

I say that we will continue to defend the system not just because it is fair, and not just because it fits so perfectly within our values as Labor people, but because this is a system that really works. In fact, most Australians probably do not know that we have one of the best healthcare systems in the world. We know that, because we get fantastic health outcomes, with low infant mortality rates and really long life expectancy compared to other countries, and our healthcare costs in this country are kept quite low when we look at other countries who are achieving great results. I see our health budget as an investment in the welfare of the people that we represent. Nothing could be more fundamental to us as members of parliament
in protecting that. I will continue to stand with Labor to do that over the course of my life as a member of parliament.

**Dunkley Electorate: Youth Services**

**Dunkley Electorate: Frankston North Schools Family Fun Day**

Mr BILLSON (Dunkley) (12:31): I am thrilled to be able to display to the chamber this magnificent work of art so that its creator, Indi, can actually say there is some of her work displayed in the nation's parliament. So, this is it—Indi Lea McLean, a great talent. That was a gift provided to me at the opening of The Corner youth services hub in Mornington. The greatest gift, though, was to get that project finished. This will bring together a single focal point for the northern Mornington Peninsula for all the youth service providers. Indi's sister was the MC and Indi's other sister was very involved. How do I know this? When I was checking out Indi's details she came up on their phones as 'Indi Poohhead'. Isn't that love shared between siblings? And her mum was there as well! Anyway, it is a great project and a great outcome and Indi, whatever her siblings call her, has got a great future ahead of her. The project is now known as The Corner. The Corner is a place where we hope young people who might be experiencing some challenges and who may have some issues and a bit of chaos in their lives can get some guidance, services and support which will help them turn the corner for a better life. It is a single focal point, a safe place, for the Mornington Peninsula Shire Youth Services.

Headspace—what remarkable work they are doing with young people experiencing emotional health challenges. It is a place where friendships can be built, confidence can be nurtured and capacity can be engineered by bringing together all the knowledge and support of youth service providers in our community so our young people can be their best selves. This is a time of extraordinary opportunities, but sometimes that is so overwhelming—so many choices, so much dynamism. Young people are looking for some pathways and some sure guidance to make a go of their lives, and that is what that centre is about. That is why I was so excited about the opening of that centre.

Another highlight for me recently was returning to my old school, Monterey Secondary College. In Frankston North there is the Pines community—great characters, great people—and all the schools in the area came together for the Frankston North Schools Family Fun Day last weekend. Monterey Secondary College, Mahogany Rise Primary School and Aldercourt Primary School brought all of their know-how and their networks together for a great day. There were many different types of events and it was great to see the community coming together. It reminded me of my time at the school—great people. There are so many good things about a community that has so much going for it.

I caught up with Stuart Jones. He is the principal at Monterey Secondary College. He started this year with energy, enthusiasm and a clear sense of the positive difference that the school can make for young people in Frankston North. I keep saying your postcode does not determine your potential. It is a community not without its challenges, but it has got young people with great potential and a great future. Stuart's positivity alongside that of the college council president, Deb Wood, was evident at this function. I also caught up with school captain Caitlyn Barker. She is a very impressive young woman, achieving much this year and looking forward to uni next year. Caitlyn has also been a key contributor to my Stronger Communities Program selection committee, and I wish her all the very best for her future.
There was face painting, there were rides, you could check out whether your bike was legal and lawful—everything was there for young and old: it was a terrific day. The Rotary movement was there in strength. It was terrific to see Peninsula Rotaract talking about their programs and activities for 18-30 year olds, their twice-a-month meetings, the networks, the socialisation, the ideas and the activities they are involved in. One program I am particularly proud of is the alternative schoolies program. My old Rotary club is Frankston Long Island. It is still my Rotary club, but I am never there. Hopefully, I will get a leave pass for today. I introduce myself as a visiting Rotarian to my own club because I am so rarely there. But one of their great enduring initiatives is their alternative schoolies program. Rather than going to the Gold Coast, as lovely as it is, and maybe getting into some mischief, we encourage young people, at the end of their secondary years, to spend a fortnight in Cambodia with our properly qualified people. For the first week, they are tourists. They get to see Angkor Wat, Phnom Penh and all of the great, fascinating and, in some cases, confronting aspects of Cambodia's story as a nation. In the second week, they volunteer at an orphanage. They get to learn that life has challenges and that, whatever our difficulties might be as Australians, we have won life's lotto by being here. This program builds the character of these young people. They are internationally engaged; they get a new perspective. To see Peninsula Rotaract and their leadership—Hayley, Alex, Chris and Olivia—there was great.

But it went further. On the day, Monteract Rotary Club was there. This is a Rotary activity involving Monterey Secondary College students. I would like to thank Tannon Wood, Ruby Seymour and Aaron Van Den Akker for the energy they displayed in leading this initiative to help the students at Monterey Secondary College be their best selves and reach out for the support and wisdom that is around them. This is about a community coming together to make the very best of the opportunities in their reach. I commend them for that effort and that enterprise.

**Tom Uren Memorial Fund**

Ms PARKE (Fremantle) (12:37): The devastation, both human and environmental, seen in Japan in 1945 demonstrated conclusively that humanity and nuclear weapons cannot coexist. Yet, while the threat of nuclear weapons may seem like a thing of the past, right now there are nine nations that possess more than 15,000 nuclear weapons, 1,800 of which are on high alert, with the ability to be launched within minutes. Nuclear-armed countries spend more than $143 billion per annum on maintaining and updating their arsenals, diverting public funds from critical services such as education and health care, yet nuclear weapons are ineffective and counterproductive in addressing global and national security challenges. Effective in annihilating everything? Yes. Making the world safer? Certainly not.

The late Hon. Tom Uren AC, a member of parliament for 32 years who served as a minister in the Whitlam and Hawke Labor governments, was a passionate antinuclear and peace activist. A prisoner of war at the Omuta camp located 80 kilometres from Nagasaki, Uren witnessed the second US atomic bombing:

I will never forget, as long as I live, the colour of the sky on the day the Americans dropped the atomic bomb on that city on 9 August 1945. The sky was crimson.

Upon returning to Japan 15 years later, Uren's attitude, that 'no nation should use nuclear weapons against any other member of our human family,' was affirmed as he witnessed the ongoing devastation. The Tom Uren Memorial Fund, created after his passing in January this
year, supports the work of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, or ICAN. ICAN is an Australian civil society initiative that has been pivotal to the success of three major government and civil society conferences over the past three years that have put the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons, and the need for a nuclear weapons ban, squarely on the global political agenda. I welcome representatives from ICAN in the chamber today.

This morning, Anthony Albanese and I were honoured as patrons, together with our colleague Senator Lisa Singh, to host the federal Labor launch of the Tom Uren Memorial Fund in support of ICAN. We were delighted to welcome Tom's family, including Michael and Jan, Tom's widow Christine Logan and ICAN back to Parliament House on this special occasion. The ICAN-commissioned Nielsen poll in 2014 indicated that 84 per cent of Australians want the government to work towards a treaty banning nuclear weapons. With biological weapons, chemical weapons, land mines and cluster munitions banned, nuclear weapons remain the only weapons of mass destruction not yet explicitly prohibited under international law.

It is a matter of deep regret that at the recently concluded session of the UN General Assembly's First Committee, which deals with disarmament and international security matters, Australia was the de facto leader of a loose grouping of nations that worked to prevent progress towards the negotiation of a treaty prohibiting the use, production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons. Australia refused to join the overwhelming majority of the international community in declaring that nuclear weapons should never be used again under any circumstances. It objected to the words 'under any circumstances'. This raises the question: under what circumstances does the government believe that nuclear weapons should be used?

I am pleased that, despite Australia's best efforts to undermine moves towards a ban, the First Committee adopted a Mexico-led resolution to establish a subsidiary body of the General Assembly that will begin discussions in 2016 on the elements for a treaty banning nuclear weapons. The Australian delegation failed in its bid to limit civil society access to the body and to impose strict rules of consensus—a recipe for eternal deadlock.

The complete eradication of nuclear weapons is vital. As Richard Butler, Australia's UN Ambassador from 1992 to 1997, argued:

There is, in fact, an axiom of proliferation. It states that as long as any state holds nuclear weapons, others will seek to acquire them. Australia must remove itself from its extended nuclear deterrence policy and shift its national security strategy towards an effective and sustainable security paradigm, like the vast majority of nation states that reject any role for nuclear weapons in their defence.

I urge parliamentarians who have not yet signed ICAN's Global Parliamentary Appeal for a Nuclear Weapons Ban to do so, and I call on the Australian government to follow over 150 governments, the UNSG and the Red Cross movement and support the complete eradication of nuclear weapons. To quote the UN Secretary-General, 'There are no right hands for wrong weapons.'

Tom Uren passed away at 1.15 am on Australia Day this year at the age of 93. Just three years earlier, on Australia Day in 2012, nearly 800 Order of Australia recipients, including former prime ministers, governors-general, foreign affairs and defence ministers, premiers,
governors, High Court judges and chiefs of the armed forces, called on the government to adopt a nuclear-weapons-free defence posture and work towards a nuclear weapons convention. One of those 800 Order of Australia participants was Tom Uren. Another was Malcom Fraser. In this week of remembrance in the year these warriors for peace died, let us commit to take those steps towards a nuclear-weapons-free world.

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

Mr IRONS (Swan) (12:42): The case for a national redress scheme for those who suffered whilst staying in an institution as a child has been raised again in the media and, I must admit, also by the opposition leader. I do not know why the opposition leader all of a sudden decided to pop his head up on this issue, but I thank him for it, and I also understand that he did recognise the advocacy I have done along with other members of this parliament to achieve a national redress scheme. I hope that it is the urging of the members for Corio, Blaxland and Jagajaga that has helped the opposition leader to decide to join the call for a national redress scheme.

To give you some context, back on 18 August 2009, I said in a speech in this very place:
… I can only begin to imagine the horrific experiences people suffered.

Only a couple of months ago, I met with the members of the Care Leavers Australia Network, otherwise known as CLAN, an organisation that provides support for people who have suffered in care. I sat with the 'clannies' for the tabling of the Community Affairs References Committee report Lost innocents and forgotten Australians revisited. It was an emotional day and I felt privileged to share that moment with them. The report describes the progress that has been made towards objectives in the reports tabled in 2001 and 2004. The term 'lost innocents' is used to describe a generation of child migrants brought to Australia from the UK. Responsibility for their safety was passed from the Commonwealth to the state governments and then on to various other agencies. The term 'forgotten Australians' is used to describe Australians who have experienced institutional and out-of-home care. I am reliably informed that that terminology is no longer relevant and should not be used, so I will try and restrain myself.

As we approach 16 November, I advise that it is the date of the sixth anniversary of the Apology that was made to the thousands of children who spent time in institutions and out-of-home care and the UK migrants, and we still have not established a national redress scheme. In regard to a redress scheme, I have been advocating that for some time and I hope it will be one of the outcomes of the royal commission into child sex abuse. I note the member for Blaxland did a speech in parliament on this issue just the other day.

On 16 November 2009, I stated in a speech in the main chamber these very words:

I welcome this apology and support the motion and encourage all my fellow colleagues to support it and the forgotten Australians. We must not forget reparation. I call on the governments, churches and charities to deal with this now, not later. We can now only be judged as a nation by our ability to repair and rebuild these Australian lives, because we have failed these children in the construction of them. We have failed them in the nurturing and care that they would have expected to get from institutions, the nurturing and care they would have got in a family home. We have failed them by treating them with systematic abuse.

Everyone asks about the reasons for children being in orphanages—whether it was an economic situation or a breakdown of the family unit. There are numerous reasons, and I have even heard of
people putting their children into orphanages to prevent them from being a burden on the rest of their family.

In closing, today we have heard stories from forgotten Australians with a range of emotions and experiences. We have heard about having trouble creating relationships, about having trouble trusting particularly authorities but anyone, about the abuse that these individuals suffered and about the lack of nurturing and care and love.

I continue to call for a national redress scheme that the churches, charities and relevant organisations contribute to and for them to be held to account for the terrible pain and abuse that they have visited upon too many children who are our fellow Australians. Thank you.

Question agreed to.

Federation Chamber adjourned at 12:46
QUESTIONs IN WRITING

Special Minister of State: Ministerial Staff Separation Payments
(Question No. 705)

Mr Conroy asked the Special Minister of State, in writing, on 9 February 2015:

For each Ministerial office since 7 September 2013, excluding payments associated with the change of Government, (a) what is the total cost of separation payments to Ministerial staff, and (b) how many Ministerial staff have (i) resigned, and (ii) been made redundant.

Mr Brough: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

(a) For the period 7 September 2013 to 9 February 2015, the total cost of separation payments (severance benefits) paid to Ministerial staff is $511,498.93, excluding leave entitlements.

(b) (i) For the period 7 September 2013 to 9 February 2015, 55 Ministerial staff have resigned (including 19 who returned to Public Sector employment). In addition, 5 Ministerial staff ceased by reason of age retirement.

(ii) Nil.

Special Minister of State: Ministerial Staff Employment Termination
(Question No. 706)

Mr Conroy asked the Special Minister of State, in writing, on 9 February 2015:

(1) As a result of changes to the Ministry announced on 21 December 2014, how many Ministerial staff had their employment terminated, and of those, (a) what is the (i) date of termination for each employee, and (ii) total cost of separation payments (as a lump sum), and (b) how many were subsequently re-employed.

(2) Of those subsequently re-employed, what was the commencement date of re-employment for each employee.

(3) If the date of termination for any staff member falls outside of the normal notice period for Members of Parliament (Staff) employees, what is the (i) reason for this extension, and (ii) total cost for all such extensions.

Mr Brough: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

(1) and (2) On 23 December 2014 the then Special Minister of State signed Direction 2014/10 to defer the termination of the employment of the affected MOP(S) Act staff until 30 January 2015. On 23 January 2015, the Prime Minister's Office advised that the termination of employment for two staff had been further deferred until 13 February 2015.

Of the affected personal staff, 77 were re-employed, 16 were terminated due to loss of office.

Total severance benefits paid to the 16 personal staff terminated due to loss of office was $599,203.57.

(3) The normal notice period for Ministerial staff is two weeks, excluding elections. Extensions are approved by the Prime Minister or Special Minister of State. The total cost for the period beyond two weeks is $143,760.43.
Department of Finance: Advertising
(Question No. 1010)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance, in writing, on 17 August 2015:

What sum was spent by the Minister's department(s) on advertising and associated services in 2014-15, and what policy areas did this relate to.

Mr Morrison: The Minister for Finance has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

Advertising expenditure 2014-15—Department of Finance *

The three Medibank-related items in this table relate to the successful Medibank Private share offer which returned $5.7 billion in proceeds, to be re-invested in job creating infrastructure.

Transaction costs for the Medibank Private share offer were provisioned in the 2014-15 Budget, providing a total of $90.9 million over two years to support the sale (Budget Paper 2, p. 117).

The full value of each of the Medibank-related contracts was reported on AusTender on the following dates:

- Belgiovane Williams Mackay Pty Ltd 3 October 2014
- Newgate Communications Pty Ltd 15 April 2014
- Mitchell and Partners Australia Pty Ltd 7 November 2014

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<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Expenditure ($, including GST)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Belgiovane Williams Mackay Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Advertising agency services for the Medibank Private share offer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adcorp Australia Limited</td>
<td>Advertising for the 2016 graduate programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mitchell &amp; Partners Australia Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Information notices, bulk recruitment advertising and office relocation advertising ($41,166.03 for Outcome 3)</td>
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<td>Newgate Communications Pty Ltd</td>
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<td>Total payments over $12,565</td>
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<td>Total payments under $12,565 **</td>
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<td>Total payments</td>
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* This table has been compiled using the reporting Requirements for Annual Reports for Departments, Executive Agencies and other Non-Corporate Commonwealth Entities' with regard to advertising and market research. Under these requirements, Departments are required to disclose payments of $12,565 or more for advertising and market research.

** For the purpose of responding to this question, payments under the threshold have been included but are shown as a total only.
Mr Conroy asked the Ministers listed below, in writing, on 17 August 2015:

In respect of staff in the Minister's office in 2014-15, how many (a) were employed, and what roles did they perform, (b) staff members ceased employment, and what roles did they perform, and (c) new staff members commenced employment, and what roles did they perform.

1084 Prime Minister.
1085 Minister representing the Minister for Indigenous Affairs.
1087 Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development.
1089 Minister for Foreign Affairs.
1090 Minister for Trade and Investment.
1091 Minister representing the Minister for Employment.
1093 Minister representing the Attorney-General.
1094 Minister representing the Minister for the Arts.
1095 Minister for Justice.
1096 Treasurer.
1097 Minister for Small Business.
1098 Assistant Treasurer.
1099 Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources.
1100 Minister representing the Minister for Education and Training.
1102 Minister for Social Services.
1104 Minister for Human Services.
1105 Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science.
1106 Minister representing the Minister for Defence.
1107 Minister for Veterans' Affairs.
1109 Minister representing the Minister for Communications.
1110 Minister for Immigration and Border Protection.
1112 Minister for the Environment.
1113 Minister representing the Minister for Finance.
1114 Special Minister of State.
1115 Minister for Health.
1117 Minister for Sport.

Mr Brough: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

(a) As at 30 June 2015 there were 391 staff employed across all Ministers' offices,
(b) In 2014-15 80 staff ceased employment in all Ministers' offices,
(c) In 2014-15 85 staff commenced in Ministers' offices.

Individual roles of staff employed by Ministers are agreed between them and their employing Minister, and are not known by the Department of Finance.
Government Departments: Ministerial Office Staff Redundancies
(Question Nos 1136 to 1169)

Mr Conroy asked the Ministers listed below, in writing, on 17 August 2015:

In respect of Ministerial office staff, (a) how many redundancies were made in 2014-15, and (b) what is the total cost of payments associated with these redundancies.

1136 Prime Minister.
1137 Minister representing the Minister for Indigenous Affairs.
1139 Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development.
1141 Minister for Foreign Affairs.
1142 Minister for Trade and Investment.
1143 Minister representing the Minister for Employment.
1145 Minister representing the Attorney-General.
1146 Minister representing the Minister for the Arts.
1147 Minister for Justice.
1148 Treasurer.
1149 Minister for Small Business.
1150 Assistant Treasurer.
1151 Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources.
1152 Minister representing the Minister for Education and Training.
1154 Minister for Social Services.
1156 Minister for Human Services.
1157 Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science.
1158 Minister representing the Minister for Defence.
1159 Minister for Veterans' Affairs.
1161 Minister representing the Minister for Communications.
1162 Minister for Immigration and Border Protection.
1164 Minister for the Environment.
1165 Minister representing the Minister for Finance.
1166 Special Minister of State.
1167 Minister for Health.
1169 Minister for Sport.

Mr Brough: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:
(a) There were 31 redundancies in 2014-15, in respect of all Ministerial office staff.
(b) $1,339,022.32.

Special Minister of State: Ministerial Staff Lost and Stolen Equipment
(Question No. 1218)

Mr Conroy asked the Special Minister of State, in writing, on 17 August 2015:

In 2014-15, what sum was spent on replacing lost, stolen or misplaced equipment of Ministerial staff, and what goods were replaced.
Mr Brough: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

Nil.

Special Minister of State: Ministerial Media Events
(Question No. 1374)

Mr Conroy asked the Special Minister of State, in writing, on 17 August 2015:

In respect of ministerial costs for media events and photo opportunities in 2014-15, what (a) date was each event held, (b) location was each event held at, (c) sum was spent on each event, (d) announcement and/or issue did the event relate to, and (e) was the expenditure for.

Mr Brough: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

The former Special Minister of State incurred nil costs for media events and photo opportunities in 2014-15.

Department of Social Services: Ministerial Conferences
(Question No. 1414)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Social Services, in writing, on 17 August 2015:

Did the Minister host any conferences in 2014-15; if so (a) on what date(s) did each conference occur, and at what location(s), (b) what total sum was spent on each conference, and of this, what sum was spent on (i) meals and accommodation, and what are the details, (ii) travel, and what are the details, and (iii) social events, and what are the details, and (c) what outcomes were achieved at each conference.

Mr Porter: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

The Minister did not host any conferences in 2014-15.

Special Minister of State: Ministerial Conferences
(Question No. 1426)

Mr Conroy asked the Special Minister of State, in writing, on 17 August 2015:

Did the Minister host any conferences in 2014-15; if so (a) on what date(s) did each conference occur, and at what location(s), (b) what total sum was spent on each conference, and of this, what sum was spent on (i) meals and accommodation, and what are the details, (ii) travel, and what are the details, and (iii) social events, and what are the details, (iv) travel, and what are the details, and (c) what outcomes were achieved at each conference.

Mr Brough: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

Nil. The former Special Minister of State did not host any conferences in 2014-15.

Special Minister of State: Ministerial Hospitality
(Question No. 1478)

Mr Conroy asked the Special Minister of State, in writing, on 17 August 2015:

In respect of catering and hospitality by the Minister in 2014-15, (a) what total sum was spent, (b) for what functions was the catering and hospitality, (c) on what date(s) did each function occur, and at what location(s), and (d) for each function, what sum was spent on (i) meals, (ii) drinks, (iii) hospitality staff, and (iv) other costs.

Mr Brough: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:
For the former Special Minister of State:
(a) Nil.
(b) to (d) N/A.

Parremia Hilton
(Question No. 1545)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Health, in writing, on 15 September 2015:
In respect of the $19,037.38 tender to Parremia Hilton for 'Venue hire & meeting facilities' (CN3290791), (a) to which event does this tender pertain, (b) who was in attendance, including (i) Ministerial staff, and (ii) departmental staff, (c) what is the objective of the event, and (d) what is the itinerary for the event.
Ms Ley: The answer to the honourable members' question is as follows:
My Department has advised that:
(a) The event that this tender pertained was the 2015 Aged Care Changes Roadshow sector briefings, Perth session on 24 March 2015.
(b) 260 people from the sector were in attendance:
   (i) no ministerial staff were in attendance
   (ii) seven officers were in attendance from the Department of Social Services.
(c) The key objectives of the 2015 Aged Care Changes Roadshow were to:
   (i) provide comprehensive information to the aged care sector about the 1 July 2015 changes to aged care
   (ii) provide an update to the sector on the Department of Human Services' (DHS) payments system
   (iii) offer an opportunity for stakeholders to ask questions, and
   (iv) mitigate the risk of confusion or misinformation amongst stakeholders.
(d) The itinerary included four sessions over a full day covering the following topics:
   (i) Session 1: Home Care Packages – Consumer Directed Care presentation
   (ii) Session 2: DHS aged care update
   (iii) Session 3: My Aged Care presentation, and
   (iv) Session 4: Commonwealth Home Support Programme.
Please note the expenses were incurred when Ageing and Aged Care was managed under the Portfolio of the former Minister for Social Services, Scott Morrison MP.

Sofitel Sydney Wentworth
(Question No. 1574)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Social Services, in writing, on 12 October 2015:
In respect of the $19,021.10 tender to Sofitel Sydney Wentworth for venue hire and meeting facilities (CN3291004), (a) which event was this for, (b) how many (i) Ministerial staff, (ii) departmental staff, and (iii) other parties, were in attendance, and (c) can his department provide an itemised account of all costs incurred associated with this event.
Mr Porter: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:
(a) The event was for the National Roundtable Responding to Violence against Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Women and their Children and the meeting of Commonwealth, state
and territory Ministers responsible for the implementation of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*.

(b) (i) 12 Ministerial staff attended, (ii) 14 Department of Social Services staff attended (iii) Other parties, 15 officials from all jurisdictions and 85 participants attended.

(c) There were other associated costs with supporting the event. Itemised account of the $19,021.10 for the Sofitel Sydney Wentworth venue and catering costs for Roundtable and Ministerial meeting is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catering – morning tea and lunch</td>
<td>$14,175.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit card surcharge</td>
<td>$215.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room and equipment hire</td>
<td>$4,630.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL – venue and catering costs</strong></td>
<td><strong>$19,021.10</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Department of Employment: Ministerial related expenses**  
(Question No. 1682)

**Mr Conroy** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Employment, in writing, on 15 October 2015:

In respect of the Minister's appointment on 21 September 2015, will the Minister's department provide an itemised account of all associated costs, including

(a) signage,
(b) stationery, including business cards and letterheads,
(c) web design and IT services,
(d) vehicular signage and painting, and
(e) marketing materials, including logos, pamphlets, and audio-visual materials such as DVDs.

**Mr Pyne:** The Minister for Employment has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

As at 15 October 2015:

(a) no costs were incurred for signage
(b) $1,676 for stationery (envelopes and business cards). Letterheads are made available online through the department's intranet and letters are only printed as needed.
(c) Web design and IT services costs are performed in-house, within existing Departmental resources where possible.
(d) no costs were incurred for vehicular signage or painting
(e) no costs were incurred for marketing materials.

**Rainey, Ms Trudy**  
(Question No. 1748)

**Mr Mitchell** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance, in writing, on 22 October 2015:

When will the Minister or the Minister's department provide a determination on an application lodged by my constituent, Ms Trudy Rainey, with the Department of Finance under section 65 of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 in March 2015.

**Mr Morrison:** The Minister for Finance has supplied the following answer to the honourable member's question:
A determination of Ms Rainey's act of grace application was made by the Assistant Minister for Productivity, the Hon Dr Peter Hendy MP, as my authorised representative, on Wednesday, 4 November 2015.